



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Northumbria Police & Crime Panel Report

July 2018

Panel Members

Firstly I would like to express my continued pride in Northumbria Police and in particular two Northumbria Officers recognised for their bravery after winning the North East Regional Award at the national Police Bravery Awards. PC Gary Sharpe and PC Vicki Threadgold were called out to a domestic violence incident in the Springwell area of Gateshead where a woman had been assaulted. PC Threadgold removed the female victim from danger. Both officers were then confronted by her drunk and aggressive partner who was threatening them from behind a child safety gate at the top of the stairs. The offender – known to have a history of violence – encouraged his two Staffordshire Bull Terriers and a German Shepherd to attack the officers.

He then brandished a large samurai sword but PC Sharpe was able to stay calm and eventually persuaded him to put it down. The man dropped the weapon but suddenly produced what appeared to be a black metal handgun which he pointed at PC Sharpe's face. With quick thinking, PC Sharpe was able to pull his CS spray before he successfully disarmed and restrained the violent man while PC Threadgold came to his aid. The offender was eventually jailed for a year after being convicted of possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence in June of last year.

I am delighted that their heroic actions were recognised by the Police Federation who nominated them in the North East category of their annual Police Bravery Awards in London. Gary and Vicki have once again shown why Northumbria Police officers are the very best. I'm very proud of Gary and Vicki's bravery – their bravery and actions went above and beyond and they put their own lives at risk, without hesitation. Everyone is rightly proud of them and I wanted to make panel members aware of the success of our officers at a national event.

New Deputy Chief Constable

Following the appointment of Winton Keenen as Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, this created a vacancy for the position of Deputy Chief Constable.

A number of applications were received for the role. As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have no formal role in the appointment of the Deputy Chief Constable, but as in previous appointments for this job, my office have been afforded the opportunity to be part of the process as the OPCC work very closely with the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable and the panel decided that Acting Chief Constable Darren Best was the preferred candidate. I have worked closely with Mr Best since he joined Northumbria Police as Assistant Chief Constable, the decision of the panel is welcomed as I know Mr Best is committed to improving policing further in our force area and he is determined that the public receive the very best service possible from all who work at Northumbria Police.

Vera

Section 1 - How is the PCC making commissioning decisions, and what are her future intentions?

1.1 Commissioner's Community Fund

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 anti-social behaviour (ASB) and build community confidence.

The work that these groups do in Northumbria communities to support the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 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 in previous years we have strengthened the assessment process for the Commissioner's 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 key people 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 in improving their local community.

Applications were received from all local authority areas with a particularly high response in Newcastle. I have been impressed by the creativity and keenness from local communities who want to work to deliver change for the good in their local area which means that 77% of the groups that applied for funding received some level of award, this is compared to only 63% in 2017/18. By supporting these groups and projects it further supports my Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 providing crucial assistance to the work being carried out by Northumbria Police.

In total £98,272.57 has been awarded, which has been made possible by the savings I have made to the cost of my office.

In the areas where there has not been a high turnout of applications, we have liaised directly with local authorities to identify groups and organisations that may be suitable to bid for funding. The outcome of these additional bids is still to be determined and will be available to view on my website in due course.

Although the theme of the bids focused on reducing anti-social behaviour and building community confidence, the projects supported include work in the following areas:

- Youth diversion and ASB
- Education and awareness
- Drugs and alcohol
- Hate crime

- Community cohesion
- Crime prevention

Further information about the current successful applications are available to view now on my website – www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

Section 2 - How is the PCC building effective partnerships?

2.1 Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)

The last report provided members with an overview of the changes to the Local Criminal Justice Board including the appointment of myself as Chair in accordance with the draft protocol issued late last year by the Ministry of Justice.

The LCJB brings together key partners and senior representatives of criminal justice agencies operating within Northumbria, allowing for collaboration and partnership working. Northumbria LCJB is responsible and accountable for the service provided to victims and witnesses, the delivery of the criminal justice system (CJS) targets in this area, improvements in the delivery of justice, securing public confidence and reducing reoffending.

Since the April panel meeting much work has been undertaken and the Board and sub groups have met. As you know the board members, alongside myself, include representatives from a number of organisations; Northumbria Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, Youth Offending Teams, HMP Northumberland, Victims First Northumbria and the Legal Aid Agency. The Judiciary are also represented on the board as observers their presence and contribution invaluable to achieving our aims.

These organisations are also represented on the four sub groups and have been working with the LCJB Business Manager to develop the priorities for their subgroup and also a performance management framework for the LCJB to measure achievement of these priorities. The four sub groups are Victims and Witnesses, Prevention and Rehabilitation, Performance, Public Confidence, and their identified priorities are as follows:

Victims and Witnesses

1. Develop a multi- agency approach to monitor and improve compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and Witness Charter.
2. Introduce an enhanced service to the most vulnerable and persistently targeted victims of crime ensuring their needs are identified and understood at first contact and that they are supported to cope and recover.

Prevention and Rehabilitation

3. Integrated Offender Management (IOM) governance: oversight of a revised approach to IOM
4. Restorative justice and community resolution: a partnership approach to reducing re-offending.

Performance

5. Improved file quality

6. Increased guilty pleas at first hearing

Public Confidence

7. To develop an internal and external communications strategy for the LCJB that is able to 'reach' all members of the public (irrespective of age) through a variety of engagement methods.
8. To create a common identity and brand for the LCJB that is recognisable and promotes the partnership work undertaken by the Board to achieve successful outcomes.

The next stage will be the development of a Business Plan and I will update members of the panel with a copy of this document when published.

2.2 Youth Crime Reduction and Sport

In 2017 I was one of six PCCs that formed a successful 'Youth Crime Reduction and Sport' bid to the Home Office Police Innovation Fund. The project has been led by Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner with support on the ground from Street Games.

The pilot project focused on sports based interventions to reduce youth crime. In Northumbria we worked with Bright Futures to focus on girl's empowerment and how to build their ability to resist the demands of controlling influence through enhanced confidence and self – esteem.

Following the pilot Derbyshire PCC has now successfully secured funding for this programme over a three year period. 25 PCCs have committed to supporting the next phase of the programme which will create and build support for a national framework that confirms the best ways to use sport to reduce youth offending and secure the maximum value of sport to crime reduction.

The four aspects of crime reduction that the programme will focus on are:

- Youth generated ASB and desistence of crime
- Early intervention strategies and best practice
- Youth referral framework that combines the youth justice and community sports sectors
- Supporting and influencing smarter investment into youth crime prevention activities

This will be achieved through increased cooperation and coordination between police, the criminal justice sector and community sport. Involvement in this programme of work has been welcomed by Northumbria Police and over the coming months a delivery plan will be developed which will include plans for partner and public engagement.

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

3.1 Northumbria Police Stop & Search Annual Report

As part of my scrutiny programme I regularly review the stop and search work of Northumbria Police. I recognise that interactions with the public can have a significant impact on public confidence so I am determined to ensure that each interaction is conducted fairly and ethically and in a manner which creates a professional and positive image of the force.

Northumbria Police have recently produced their annual report on the use of stop and search to provide an update on their performance during 2017-18 and to also outline their plans for improvements for 2018/19.

In 2017-18 the top three reasons for stop and search were drugs, stolen goods and offensive weapons and 30% of searches resulted in a criminal justice outcome.

Northumbria Police work hard with local communities to ensure that their approach is fair and transparent. Their work with the Strategic Independent Advisory Group (which is representative of the diverse communities within the Northumbria area) and various youth panels' ensure that communities can provide feedback on the forces approach to help them continuously improve.

Northumbria Police also use a 'lay observer' scheme where independent observers accompany officers during operations and view body worn video footage used during stop and search to review, learn and develop their approach.

I have provided robust scrutiny and have asked for the following actions to be taken to help strengthen the forces overall practice in this area:

- Provide more evidence based examples of where public feedback on stop and search has assisted learning and development, demonstrating Northumbria Police are continuously improving their approach.
- Stronger presence of BAME young people and those working with BAME young people on all public scrutiny groups.
- The introduction of an area on Northumbria Police website where public feedback on stop and search can be given and complaints made.
- Strengthened engagement of BAME members of the community in Northumbria Police's monthly meeting to analyse all performance data in relation stop and search.
- Carry-out an assessment of impact of stop and search training. Designed by the College of Policing the training is authorised professional practice which includes the Codes of Ethics and the National Decision Model. All front line officers received this in 2017 and we are eager to understand if this training has had the desired impact.

Northumbria Police's own plans for 2018-19 include:

- More young people involved in examining the forces approach to stop and search
- Develop a better understanding of the impact of stop and search on local communities
- Increase the number of applications for the public to observe the forces approach

- Increase the use of body worn equipment to help develop and improve practice
- Develop safeguarding measures for children after being stopped or searched.

3.2 HMICFRS Child Protection Inspection Report, June 2018

HMICFRS inspected Northumbria Police's child protection work in January 2018 and examined the effectiveness of police action at each stage of their interactions with or for children, from initial contact through to the investigation of offences against them. They also scrutinised the treatment of children in custody, and assessed how the force is structured, led and governed in relation to its child protection services. No grading is applied to the inspection.

HMICFRS found a clear commitment to protecting children and good engagement with partner safeguarding agencies from across the six local authorities. HMICFRS reports that the force governance arrangements are clearly structured and the force already has plans in place to address their weaknesses. It was noted that Northumbria Police: respond to Domestic Abuse incidents involving children in a timely manner; use their powers well to remove children in harm's way; conduct good work under Operation Encompass; have a good initial response to children missing from home and their family members; and invest in the ways they work with children. HMICFRS also applauded the force's Multi Agency Task and Co-ordinating (MATAC) approach to working the offenders and the work in reducing re-offending as innovative and effective practice.

However, there were inconsistencies in the quality of information recorded on police systems such as investigation details, safeguarding measures, and onward planning and the use of multiple systems for recording was considered inefficient and not supportive for the development of effective protective plans.

Following consideration by the Force Chief Officers a report will be presented to the Joint Business Meeting with details of the action that will be taken by Northumbria Police. This action plan will be monitored through my Scrutiny meetings.

3.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Members will no doubt be aware of GDPR and the implications it has.

The new legislation came in to force on May 25th 2018, there were a number of changes that had to be implemented such as a privacy statement and an audit of what data the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner held. At the time of the inception of the new legislation, both the OPCC and Northumbria Police were in a strong position having published privacy notices, individual rights documents and the lawful basis for processing ahead of the new regulations.

The OPCC have appointed Northumbria Police's Data Controller – this will ensure that both organisations are fully up to date with any changes and if any issues arise they can be communicated quickly and effectively. As GDPR continues to evolve, training will be offered to staff so they are aware of the requirements placed on them.

To date there have been no significant issues identified and work continues both in Northumbria Police and the OPCC in respect of records management arrangements and Information Asset Registers to achieve enhanced compliance.

3.4 Complaints

The Triage Team that I established in 2013 is now an integral part of the work of Northumbria Police Professional Standards (PSD) Department - so much so, that latest figures show the value of our small but very effective team. Prior to Triage, all complaints were dealt with by PSD, latest figures for 2018/19 year to date shows that triage have dealt with 52% of complaints received- this has ensured that low level complaints are actioned quickly and efficiently, contact is normally made within a couple of hours and we are proud that we can resolve many complaints within a day of contact.

We continue to encourage those who may be dissatisfied with the service that they have received from Northumbria Police to contact us, so we can strive to make those people friends of Northumbria Police again.

I regularly receive updates from the Chief Constable on the work of how the force action complaints, the drive for continued improvements and to ensure lessons learned are undertaken from every complaint, where appropriate.

The Police and Crime Act 2017 allows Police and Crime Commissioners to change how they deal with complaints. There were three options available to Police and Crime Commissioners. I have chosen to implement the model where complaints are dealt with through our Triage Team (as the Government used the Northumbria Triage model for the legislation), PSD will continue to undertake the investigation of recorded complaints but the appeals that previously sat with the Chief Constable will now sit with my office giving a greater level of independence. I have appointed a senior member of staff from my office to undertake the role of the new appeals officer. This will allow me to monitor the quality of investigations and to work with the Chief Constable to ensure any findings are addressed.

As part of the 2018/19 Audit Plan, approved by the Joint Independent Audit Committee, an audit of how the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Northumbria Police handle complaints was recently completed.

The objectives of the audit were to ensure: all complaints received are recorded, all complaints received are acted upon and the complainant is informed of action taken, performance is monitored and reported on a regular basis, appeals processes are clear and in line with legislative requirements and all departments comply with the corporate complaints policies.

The audit involved dip sampling at both the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Professional Standards Department within the force. I am delighted to report to Panel Members that the audit found control systems are operating well and no concerns were raised. This outcome reinforces our commitment to delivering outstanding service to those who have issues that they

may wish to raise and they can fully expect that we will give the matters raised our full attention.

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

1.4 Nexus Campaign

Northumbria Police and the Metro provider, Nexus have a great working relationship. We have dedicated police officers who work specifically on the Metro to deal with any issues that may arise, this is paid for annually by Nexus.

At times issues can arise at Metro stations, this tends to be anti-social behaviour and such like. Nexus and Northumbria Police are keen to tackle these issues head on when they happen. I was keen to see this partnership promoted and for Metro users to know that the police will tackle any issues that may be raised – a poster campaign has now started at “hot spots” informing people that the police and Nexus are working together to tackle issues of anti-social behaviour. Effective posters have been designed and will be placed in Metro stations. I have asked for an evaluation of this campaign and will update members in due course.

Section 5 How is the PCC improving confidence in the police across the area?

5.1 Mindful Employer

I am delighted to have recently signed up the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria as a Mindful Employer, we have committed to a voluntary charter, which encourages organisations to show a positive attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues. There are more than 1,900 organisations that have signed up.

At least 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life. A survey by Mind revealed that nearly 87 per cent of emergency services staff and volunteers surveyed have experienced stress, low mood and poor mental health at some point while working for the emergency service. As a signatory of the Mindful Employer Charter, organisations should work towards ensuring that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Equality Act 2010, and given appropriate interview skills. Equally, all line managers should have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace.

Though we are a relatively small office it's important that we make an ongoing commitment to the well-being of our team and those who apply to work with us. That's why we've signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter. We are serious about giving our employees access to help and support they may need, when they need it. People who have mental health issues may have experienced discrimination in the recruitment process – we want to make it that in Northumbria, we show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues.

In 2016 the Chief Constable and I signed the Blue Light 'Time to Change Pledge' on behalf of Northumbria Police demonstrating our commitment to challenge mental health stigma and promote positive wellbeing within the service. That year Northumbria also joined the UK's first emergency service mental health network after Tyneside and Northumberland Mind secured £100,000 in funding to create a North East mental health network for the emergency services.

5.2 Breathalyser Limit

Panel members will recall that the three Police and Crime Commissioners for the North East have regularly campaigned for the government to reduce the breathalyser limit, this is something that we are keen to see happen as we firmly believe it will make a difference. In May, the government announced a number of measures to improve road safety – but missed one important factor, reducing the limit. The regional PCCs welcome any initiative that will help make our roads safer, but we continue to reinforce our call for the government to lower the drink drive limit.

Scotland have already lead the way in reducing the drink drive limit to 50mg and it has had a real positive effect. In the first three months of the new limit, offences went down by 17%. If the government really want to make our roads safer, new legislation to reduce the drink drive limit will achieve this. We will continue to work in partnership to encourage government to take the common sense approach of reducing the limit that will make our roads safer. Lowering the limit would save an estimated £300 million nationally every year, by reducing the cost of the police and ambulance services and cutting hospital admissions. This money could be reinvested back in to our emergency services.

Barry Coppinger, PCC for Cleveland and Ron Hogg PCC for Durham and myself will continue to lobby government, encouraging them to take the common sense approach of reducing the drink drive limit to ensure safety on our roads.

5.3 Day of Remembrance

On July 14, Northumbria Police and I supported the annual Day of Remembrance, which celebrates lives lost to so-called honour killings and forced marriage. The Day of Remembrance was set up by Karma Nivarna, who mark their 25th anniversary this year, are a UK charity that supports victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour based abuse. The date, July 14, is significant as it is the birthday of Shafiea Ahmed, a 17-year-old British girl who was suffocated by her parents in an honour-based killing.

This will be the fourth Day of Remembrance that the charity has held, with their second being hosted in Newcastle upon Tyne city centre in 2016. There's an estimated 5,000 honour killings a year across the world, and of these, around 12 a year happen in the UK, with the figure estimated to be a fraction of the actual amount due to the complexity of the killings.

Northumbria Police are proud to be supporting this day, raising awareness of this type of abuse and highlighting the support that's available to victims. Forced marriage and so-called honour based violence are an abuse of human rights and will

not be tolerated. No one should suffer, especially in silence, and we need to ensure we are doing all we can to protect and safeguard victims so they can live their lives without fear and intimidation.

We have a responsibility to raise awareness of this type of abuse, remember those who we have lost to honour based violence and highlight support for victims. Northumbria's Chief Constable also gave his support, at the time he said "No one should be subjected to fear of violence or abuse. We understand the pressure and personal conflict that victims feel in these situations and we want them to know we are here to help. We will listen to them and we will hear what they have to tell us. We will be as discreet as necessary and I would actively encourage anyone suffering this sort of abuse to seek the help and support they so justly deserve."

5.4 National Consultations and Inquiries

I continue to respond and provide evidence to government consultations and inquiries to ensure the views of Northumbria are considered at both a national policy and decision-making level. It's important that I continue to influence to bring about change for the benefit of the people of Northumbria. In the last three months I have responded to the following requests for views.

- **HM Government Consultation on Travellers and unauthorised encampments** - in May 2018 I responded to a consultation undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice on powers for dealing with unauthorised developments and encampments at a local level and the impact the proposed changes will have on members of the travelling community.
- **HM Government Consultation: Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse** - this consultation sought views on specific measures on domestic abuse that the government set-out in the Queen's Speech, as well as views on other steps that we can take forward through future domestic abuse legislation. Amongst other important issues the key message from the PCC was that to make the government's proposals meaningful, there needs to be a coherent strategy that ties in with a broader VAWG strategy. A narrow focus on DA is inappropriate as all VAWG is interconnected.
- **House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Voyeurism (Offences) (No 2) Bill: Request for Written Evidence** - The PCC welcomes the Bill and its potential to deter and criminalise 'upskirting' and also commented that other image-based sexual offences also need to be considered for legislative purposes. At present the law is not keeping up to pace with the emergence of new forms of sexual abuse which utilise technology.