



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Northumbria Police & Crime Panel Report

October 2018

Panel members

I am really sorry that I cannot be with you today, I hope you will excuse my first absence in nearly six years – this is because I have been asked to attend a meeting organised by HMICFRS in London and their meeting clashed with the Police and Crime Panel, as much as I would like to be able to control Whitehall diaries to avoid such clashes, on this occasion it has not been possible.

It continues to be a busy period for my office, I continue to engage with local residents in relation to specific issues they have about policing, whilst meeting community groups and representatives to ensure the policing they receive is what they expect. In addition to my responsibilities in Northumbria, I sit on a number of Ministerial led groups, which allows me direct access to the heart of government to raise local concerns at Whitehall.

As we look forward to the next few months, we will receive the funding settlement in December. I hope the Home Secretary listens to what I and many of my fellow PCCs have been saying - that the settlement is unfair and policing budgets can't be cut back any further. I do suspect that Ministers will expect the police precept to pay for more of the police budget, this is a burden on council tax payers and I have made that clear – if we want a properly funded police force, it needs to be paid for by central government. Let's see what they will do.

Change in Senior Leadership for Northumbria Police

At the beginning of September, the Chief Constable announced the appointment of a new Assistant Chief Constable – and they will be welcoming back a familiar face as Debbie Ford has been appointed to the post. Debbie joined Northumbria as a PC in 1993 before rising through the ranks and serving as the Force's Head of Crime until 2015.

She was temporarily promoted to Assistant Chief Constable but left the Force eight months later to take a permanent position at Greater Manchester Police. During her time in the North West she oversaw a number of areas including serious crime and public protection, and was Gold Commander for the tragic Manchester Arena bombing. Debbie knows Northumbria communities well and has a passion for delivering outstanding policing - she will be a real asset to the Force.

Ponteland site sold – resources reinvested back in to policing

The previous HQ at Ponteland, which is no longer needed for operational policing, has sold for a total of £21m. The site has had many uses over the last century, including a children's home for over 300 children and a teacher training college – throughout negotiations I was passionate about maintaining the heritage of the site as the listed buildings around the green will be refurbished and brought back into use as new homes.

Tough negotiations took place to ensure the best price possible was received and I have assured local residents that the money raised from the sale will be reinvested back in to policing across the Northumbria force area supporting my commitment to maintain neighbourhood policing and ensuring officers remain in the community. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the sterling work that the force and OPCC Director of Finance, Mike Tait and Northumbria Police's Estate Manager,

John Leslie undertook, the sale was a long process and it thanks to them that we had a smooth transition to completion.

New Business Apprentices

When I was first elected in 2012, I gave a commitment that I would appoint a business apprentice to give them hands on experience of working in an office environment. Our previous apprentices have been a real success, two now work for Northumbria Police and one moved on to work with Barclays Bank. It is great that we have been able to help provide these young people with the skills that employers are looking for and supporting them in the world of work.

In August we started the process of recruiting a new business apprentice, we received over 100 applications and the standard of those interviewed was very high. This year, I am pleased to inform panel members that we have been able to offer two young people an opportunity. Jordan Dodds has been appointed on an 18 month apprenticeship scheme. The interview panel were impressed by graduate Holly Thornton and we were able to offer her a six month placement within the OPCC.

Princess Royal visits Victims First Northumbria

In early October Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Patron of the Restorative Justice Council, visited Victims First Northumbria to present them with the Restorative Service Quality Mark award. She also spoke to staff about their work and the crucial services they provide to victims.

This is a great achievement as VFN are one of the first victim services in the country to receive this award which recognises the quality of their work. The Princess Royal's visit has allowed us to showcase our outstanding work and explain how this can enhance the recovery of victims of crime. I offer my congratulations to all the team at VFN who have made this happen.

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

1.1 Planning for 2019/20

From 1 April 2015, the majority of support services for victims at a local level became the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioners. Annual funding is provided from the Ministry of Justice to Police and Crime Commissioners that must be used for direct work to support victims and their family to cope and recover from their experience of crime.

In Northumbria we have worked to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence and promote the importance of reporting such crimes so we can bring offenders to justice. The increase in local awareness, as well as more robust crime recording has led to an increase in referrals to victims services across the board.

The one year funding settlement for victim services is unsatisfactory and with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the national Victims Commissioner I continue to lobby Ministers for this to change to a more sustainable solution for future years, bringing stability to the victim services sector and therefore victims of crime. One year settlements from government mean that services in Northumbria will continue to be grant funded on an annual basis.

An announcement on the funding level is expected late this year or early in 2019. Once we understand the funding settlement for 2019-20 the fifth year of the Supporting Victims Fund will be launched. Crime and victim levels are currently being analysed and we are looking at demands for services and victimology to develop key themes for the grant fund to ensure the provision of suitable services to meet the demands of victims of crime in Northumbria in 2019-20. Views of Community Safety Partnerships alongside findings from the Police and Crime Plan consultation and other public and victim views will also be considered when developing the key themes and criteria.

Section 2 - How is the PCC building effective partnerships?

2.1 Safetyworks!

Panel members will know I am a huge fan of the Safetyworks! project, which is based in the West End of Newcastle

Even though we are heading towards the half term holidays, since schools went back in September the centre has seen an influx of young people attending the innovative safety centre which teaches children about crime prevention and keeping safe by involving them in real-life scenarios are gearing up for a busy autumn term.

The centre was extensively refurbished in 2016 and has become increasingly popular among young people for its realistic lessons and interactive training geared at informing them of crime trends relevant to them. The facility was established by,

and is managed by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, working in partnership with my office, Northumbria Police, Nexus, St John's Ambulance and Sainsbury's.

The staff at the centre work hard with all classes to teach them about healthy friendships and relationships, to stay safe online, and to call out and report dangerous or reckless behaviour when they see it. We understand that children will not ditch their devices, so we teach them to be safe while using them. The dedicated advisors are also keen to offer online advice and guidance to parents to help reinforce their online safety message.

It's clear to see that Safetyworks! has a vital role to play in teaching young people how to stay safe and is a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about issues that directly impact them. It's great that we have this facility in Northumbria and I encourage everyone to get involved and take advantage of these workshops.

Panel members may wish to consider having a future meeting at Safetyworks so the work of the centre can be seen first-hand.

2.2 Fire Collaboration

Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service, the OPCC, Northumbria Police and other partners have developed a successful track record of collaborating, which has resulted in co-location at a number of sites and improved operational and preventative activities. At a previous meeting members asked for more information about this work.

The principles of collaboration for all partners is to seek to maximise value for money; e.g. reducing costs through joint procurement, removal of duplication and to optimise utilisation of resources, including co-location; with any cross partner recharge being on a full cost recovery basis only and is in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Best Value principles. Whilst nothing in the statement of intent is binding upon each party, nor does it preclude the parties from collaborating with other agencies, the spirit in which the principles are approached is key to successful collaboration

Successes have included –

- Ongoing community safety delivery at Safetyworks, in partnership with my office and Northumbria Police, which received particular praise by Sir Tom Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, in the State of Policing 2017 report.
- An antisocial behaviour (ASB) workshop organised by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS), Northumbria Police and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). 70 stakeholders were in attendance, including representatives from the OPCC (as ASB is one of the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan), the five local authorities of Tyne and Wear and Northumberland County Council. Hot spot mapping and multi-agency initiatives were discussed to identify joint solutions to reduce and mitigate the effects of ASB.

- Working together to further enhance joint safeguarding messages during home safety visits and other community engagement interventions.
- Police officers are co-located in a number of fire stations across the force area, this helps increase collaborative work and provides reassurance for members of the public.
- Tyne and Wear Fire Service have provided training facilities for Northumbria Police Marine Unit, conducted confined space training for police officers and have supported in arranging training with Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) teams.
- Developing a scheme between the fire service, police and ambulance service for driving training, each organisation is looking at their delivery models to identify common themes and opportunities.
- My office have offered coercive control training and domestic violence training to TWFRS, NEAS and NFRS.
- The emergency services continue to collaborate on a number of public events, including Pride and recruitment.
- Northumbria Police Funding Officer has delivered training to TWFRS Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on grant funding and bidding opportunities.

The above is just a snapshot of the ongoing work. In addition to the above, I serve as a member of the Tyne and Wear Fire Authority, this provides a real opportunity to look further at how the fire service and police can continue to develop better working practices together. For the first time, Fire Services, including Tyne and Wear will be inspected by HMICFRS – they will use a comprehensive framework as they have with policing. There will be challenges, as there always are when new schemes are implemented, but I am keen to see colleagues in the police service support the fire service in their endeavours to achieve a good inspection.

2.3 – Funding opportunities

Over the Summer a number of funding opportunities were identified by my office and work carried out with partners from the public and voluntary sector to access funds to support work in the Northumbria Force Area. We submitted 4 bids to the Home office and Ministry of Justice.

<p>Home Office – Early Intervention Youth Fund £91,575 for 18/19 & £280,057 for 19/20</p>

Earlier this year the Government published its Serious Violence Strategy to respond to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. The Strategy sets out a multiple strand approach that is not solely focused on law enforcement but places a new emphasis on early intervention and prevention and aims to tackle the root causes of violence and prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place.

The Strategy includes a key commitment to deliver a new Early Intervention Youth Fund (EIYF). Which aims to support communities in tackling serious violence by engaging in early intervention and prevention programmes with young people Following lobbying from PCCs and other key stakeholders an announcement by the

Home Secretary was made to double the fund to £22m which is available to cover 18/19 and 19/20.

PCCs were invited to work with partners to bid for funding to support targeted early intervention and prevention activity with young people (and in some instances young adults). My office worked with all Community Safety Partnerships and youth offending teams/services from across Northumbria to develop a joint bid for funding. In total we have requested £91,575 for 18/19 and £280,057 for 19/20.

Our bid proposes to use a collaborative approach with partners in the 6 local authority areas to provide purposeful intervention at the first presented opportunity to young people who are identified as being on the periphery of becoming involved in serious violent crime. We will identify these young people using multi-agency forums, partners in Education and Neighbourhood policing teams and once identified refer them to specialist workers and an assessment of need will be completed. The assessment we will use is the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) tool that is currently used in Scotland and considers social factors linked to childhood forms of abuse. This tool is not yet used routinely in England and Wales and would provide an innovation approach to diverting young people who are identified away from serious violent offending by further understanding their vulnerabilities.

Following interaction with the Youth Offending Worker a young person can be directed to one of three pathways-

1. If a referred young person is identified as being actively involved with a Youth Intervention Service the specialist worker will alert the YOT officer responsible for the child thus ensuring information is shared and appropriate action or intervention is provided;
2. If the young person is identified as requiring a low-medium level of intervention they will be referred to a 'Street Doctor' where a peer education approach will raise awareness of the risks of serious violent crime.
3. If the young person is identified as having a greater need they will be referred to a mentor for one to one intensive intervention.

Ministry Of Justice - Female Offender Community Investment Fund for Women's Community Support and Whole System Approaches – Bid - £163,000
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In July the MOJ sought applications to a £3.5 m fund for one off grants to improve community provision for female offenders, and other vulnerable women who may be at risk of offending. Funding was available to support female offenders with a focus on those with experience of domestic abuse. The MOJ anticipated funding to be used in the sustainability, improvement or development of women's community support or a whole system approach that specifically targets female offenders. Consortium bids were welcome and bids could be up to the value of £250,000.

My office worked with Changing Lives and submitted a bid for £163,000 that seeks to address the factors that can lead to female offending, such as domestic abuse, at a much earlier or lower offending point, than previously trialled. It seeks to offer eligible female offenders the opportunity to divert away from the CJS and to receive a disposal that is non-statutory and not generally disclosed, thereby mitigating the effect on their current/future employability.

In doing so, it builds on an existing pilot of community support for women receiving conditional cautions to deliver a second support pathway that offers:

1. A telephone-based needs assessment - in exchange for receiving a community resolution rather than a simple caution
2. An opportunity to engage with wider support services - through onward referral or through attendance at one of the 'women's hubs' developed by the CRC to offer statutory and non-statutory offenders a safe, women-only environment
3. To be diverted from the criminal justice system by trained police officers - who understand the possible origins and impact of their offending on both themselves and their families
4. To be contacted by assertive outreach workers - where they lack the confidence and/or freedom of movement (due to the controlling behaviour of an abusive partner, for example) to voluntarily engage with the support available
5. To be further supported, as needed, by domestic abuse services - that have also been trained to understand their offending histories and offending-related support needs.

Home Office Funding for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Fund

1. Operation Encompass - The Next Step Bid - £745,000
2. Supporting Children's Involvement in Domestic Homicide Reviews - £526,000

In July, as part of the Government's commitment to tackling Domestic Abuse they made funding of £8m available to provide interventions designed to support children affected by Domestic Abuse. Two bids were submitted.

Working with the founders of the national organisation Operation Encompass our bid, Operation Encompass: The Next Step, bid builds on the extremely successful and valuable work of Operation Encompass and takes the next step providing early intervention for children living with domestic abuse, and giving them the best possible chance to cope and recover from being exposed to this harmful and damaging behaviour. Working with local authorities Northumbria Police and all six local authorities in the force area have worked closely and ensure that Operation Encompass is in place in all schools. Operation Encompass, a unique police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, ensures the reporting to schools before the start of the next school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening. The information is given in strict confidence to a school's Key Adult to enable support to be given dependent on the needs and wishes of the child.

With this valuable process in place we want to build on this and the bid proposes the creation of new roles of 'School Safeguarding Liaison Officers' (SSLOs), who between them will be responsible for all 584 schools within the Northumbria police force area. SSLOs will have 3 main responsibilities:

- Delivery of inputs to key stage 1 - key stage 4 children in each school through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, in relation to awareness of domestic abuse and healthy relationships;
- Delivery of inputs to all staff within schools in relation to understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and how to support them;

- Creation of a drop-in facility at each school to allow parents, children or school staff to seek advice and support from SSLOs.

Inputs for the children and school staff will be developed and delivered in partnership with the SSLOs, the Operation Encompass team and Barnardo's.

The project seeks to provide a Whole System Approach to tackling domestic abuse and provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children in a safe environment. This approach also supports the Government's National Violence against Women and Girls Strategy objective to deliver appropriate PHSE and will act as a pilot for a national roll out if successful.

A second bid Supporting Children's Involvement in Domestic Homicide Review has been made in partnership with the PCCs from Wiltshire and West Midlands, Barnardo's and Frank Mullane the founder of AAFDA. In addition the Local Authority Domestic Abuse coordinators across Northumbria are aware of and are supportive of this bid.

Nationally there is evidence that the voice of the child is largely absent from Domestic Homicide Review (DHRs). Being included in the DHR process can nonetheless help children to come to terms with what has happened and to answer any questions they have about the agencies and organisations involved both prior to and after the homicide took place. It can also help professionals involved in the review process by securing information about the victim and the perpetrator from a unique perspective, based on lived experience within the family home.

Our proposal seeks to improve outcomes for children who have lost a parent to domestic homicide, and to develop the framework needed to ensure that they can contribute, if they wish, to the DHR process. It seeks to pilot the support service needed to help a child consider whether and how they might contribute, the training/resources that specialist children's workers, DHR chairs and members will need to facilitate and use their contribution and a support package for family guardians who have assumed responsibility for the child's future welfare. It also seeks to develop the national framework needed to roll this work out across the UK.

All four bids were submitted in September and we will notify the panel if we are successful and receive funding.

'Specialist Domestic Violence Courts – How special are they?'

You may have seen in the press in August that I published the report 'Specialist Domestic Violence Courts – How special are they?' In a similar manner to the 'Seeing is Believing' court observations that I commissioned in 2015 volunteer court observers, mainly from the North of England Soroptimists, trained by CPS and the Courts Service, observed 223 cases in magistrates courts at Bedlington and South Tyneside.

Specialist domestic violence courts (SDVCs) were rolled out nationwide from 2005. They are 'problem-solving courts' copied from the Canadian and Australian models

which bring specialist focus to issues which are hard to deal with in the ordinary courts. Magistrates, CPS, police and court staff were all trained that the essence of domestic abuse is a pattern of coercive control using physical sexual psychological emotional and financial abuse which make the victim helpless and too frightened to seek help. Victims were to be given expert input to help them feel safe in engaging with the justice agencies and to manage their risks.

Over the last decade many reviews have shown these courts to be effective if that training and input, together with a series of 10 other components such as separate listing of abuse cases, courses for convicted perpetrators and the engagement of children's services are maintained.

However the Northumbria observations point to those elements being weakened. Observers found a significant number of gaps in the system but we believe that if both funding and training were improved SDVCs would work as was originally intended. The final report also identifies the 'gaming of the system' that perpetrators of domestic abuse have been able to undertake and the absence of effective advocacy and support for too many victims relying on the courts for safety and justice. Further information on the findings is provided below:

1. Gaming the system:

In 21 cases, at one court centre, defendants entered a not guilty plea and asked for a trial. On the various dates fixed, no fewer than 12 of them pleaded guilty as soon as the victim turned up. She (all but 2 complainants in the 223 cases were women) didn't have to give evidence, just walk through the door. The courts shrugged and took it in their stride, it seems sentencing discounts for early guilty pleas don't cut much ice. Only one judge said that 'gaming the system' should stop. These were all guilty men hoping to escape if their partner stayed away. In domestic abuse cases that's pretty sinister. Would it be blandishments they'd use or violence? And it's an unholy, if unwitting, pact with the court, who can almost be guaranteed to dismiss the case at trial if the complainant doesn't turn up. In 13 cases out another 32 observed, that's exactly what happened. The cases were dismissed, in over half of them despite arguments to the contrary from the CPS. In the crown court, judges having read case papers, frequently ask what's the defence? It is a legitimate challenge, all the more when what's at stake is the safety of a partner alleging abuse.

2. Understanding coercive control:

Scrapping all those cases when the complainant doesn't attend also calls into question how much these courts understand coercive control. The obvious fear is that while the change of plea cases may have been unsuccessful attempts at keeping her away, the non-attendance cases were successful ones. Plenty of research shows that when a domestic abuse victim tries to get help, for instance from the courts, the perpetrator resists and tightens their grip. Questions for the court before dismissing these cases might have included: how high did the police assess his risk to her? Does he have convictions against her already? But they weren't asked.

More concerns about understanding coercive control came from some Courts' willingness to vary bail to facilitate child contact. Complainants don't need to

attend the preparatory or guilty plea hearings where these applications took place and their professional advisers (Independent Domestic Violence Advisers) were rarely there. That means that despite CPS often trying to ring IDVA offices there was rarely information at court, from the complainants perspective. Child contact is well known as a mechanism by which abusers can try to re-impose control over a victim. It should be determined in the family courts. In one scary case, the defendant said that his mother could supervise child contact and, in time but coincidentally, the CPS lawyer remembered prosecuting him for assaulting his mother.

3. Sentencing

This raised similar concerns. Some mitigation arguments don't work in domestic abuse, for instance that a defendant has a good reputation in the outside world. That can't mitigate a serial crime committed at home and kept secret by controlling the victim. Nor does being drunk excuse anything; abusers are just as controlling when sober. Sentencing Guidelines make such points yet both these mitigations were used frequently, with the courts making no comment on their irrelevance and -possibly giving them weight.

4. Provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs)

A different problem was the absence of IDVAs. These well-regarded professionals who support complainants in domestic abuse cases can make sure that decisions are informed from both sides. Local authorities in Northumbria have boosted IDVAs, despite deep funding cuts, but they simply can't keep up with the increased numbers of complaints. IDVAs and training for justice staff are two of the key components without which these specialist courts will not work as they should.

The report contains a number of recommendations and work has begun with the Local Criminal Justice Board Victims and Witnesses sub group to ensure progress against these recommendations.

In respect of the absence of the IDVAs, the solution, agreed with the 6 local authority domestic abuse leads, is to pilot two Specialist DA Court Advisors who will be based in each of the two local SDVCs, cover SDVC and remand court hearings, be employed by Northumbria Police and use their systems to access victim contact details. They will work alongside VFN and local specialist services to make contact with DA complainants, provide information to the court on their individual circumstances and support needs and ensure the complainant receives timely feedback on case outcomes. Supported by a multi-agency task and finish group, it is anticipated that these new staff will be in post by the end of the year.

Domestic abuse complainants deserve a justice system that understands their needs and our report "Specialist Domestic Violence Courts – How special are they?" shows that there are gaps, in funding and even in understanding. Victims expose themselves to enhanced risk when they engage with the criminal justice agencies and full appreciation of that should feed every step taken by the those agencies thereafter. A wider review of how these long-established courts are working would be advantageous as we focus on preparing to legislate a new Domestic Violence Bill.

The links below are to The Guardian and the Times who picked up on the importance of this report in terms of the contribution it can make to improving practice in the Criminal Justice System and the insight it can offer to those developing the new DA Bill.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/magistrates-dismissing-domestic-violence-cases-too-quickly-0mm0ffkzt>

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/05/defendants-gaming-system-to-see-domestic-violence-cases-dropped?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Gmail

The final report can be found on my website <http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/volunteers/court-observers/special-domestic-violence-courts-special/>.

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

3.1 Workforce Attraction, Recruitment, Retention and Progression

Effective delivery of the Police and Crime Plan depends on Northumbria Police having a representative workforce that aligns the right skills, powers and experience to meet the challenging requirements. Whilst Northumbria Police seeks to be an employer of choice and representative of the communities it serves, statistical data indicates there is some way to go if the police is to be truly reflective of the Force area demographics in terms of BME representation. Of 3225 officers, 54 are BME, of 1757 police staff, 20 are BME (Northumbria Force area is made up of 5.4% BME based upon the 2011 census).

The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) has developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which is supported by an Attraction, Recruitment, Retention and Progression delivery plan and toolkit.

Northumbria Police has developed a positive action plan based on the NPCC toolkit and a report produced by my office which took the learning from previous recruitment campaigns and made recommendations to increase representation of individuals from a BME background. The positive action plan has been developed to identify and deliver tailored support to overcome potential barriers that may have an adverse impact on BME candidates. This includes providing candidates with a clear understanding of the service and role. The proposed approach will extend across all future workforce attraction and selection activity.

3.2 Rural crime matters

Over the summer, the National Police Chiefs' Council published two strategies and pledged to look to continue to improve how wildlife crime is policed and how best to use resources to prevent crime and protect our rural communities. This is something that I very much support, as it is important that those who live, work or have an interest in rural issues feel just as connected with their local police force. It is important that we continue to educate officers about wildlife crime and policing rural issues.

The launch of the new strategies reaffirms our commitment to tackle this type of crime. In Northumbria we have a large rural area and it is crucial that our officers are correctly prepared to deal with crimes and issues that affect those communities. The Chief Constable and I are keen that our rural communities continue to speak to officers and report crimes. Northumbria Police take part in a number of proactive initiatives to tackle wildlife and rural crime. This includes training officers in how to best deal with these types of offences and support victims, taking part in FarmWatch schemes and community groups, and promoting livestock and machinery tagging and crime prevention methods.

We will continue to police our rural communities effectively and ensure the style of policing fits. We also work with local residents to ensure they continue to receive the very best service from Northumbria Police.

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 religion 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 were instrumental in the development of the Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 and have helped to shape my scrutiny of Northumbria Police over the last year and are currently helping to shape my response to government consultations on a wide range of issues including the review of stop and search powers and my evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group looking at financial crimes and scamming.

A flavour of their individual work can be found below:

- **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. The group have visited Etal Lane police station to learn more about how the police work and have advised Victims First Northumbria about how they can improve their response to young victims of crime.
- **LGBT Advisory group** - the group have been involved in shaping Northumbria Police's Community Engagement Strategy and have provided views on the best way to engage with the LGBT community. Engagement is a standing item on the groups agenda and has led to the improvement of how Northumbria Police engage with people at key events such as the Newcastle and Sunderland Pride festivals.

- **BME and Faith Advisory Group** – this year the group have continued to help shape the ‘positive action’ work carried out by Northumbria Police with a particular focus on the recruitment, retention and progression of underrepresented groups in the police workforce. The group have also helped to shape Northumbria Police’s own scrutiny of stop and search and have helped to enhance their connections with BME young men.
- **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 the Crown Prosecution Service’s guidance around older people and Northumbria Police’s approach to tackling hate crime. The group have a wide and varied membership and are keen that the views of older people are reflected in the thinking of the PCC and also other key agencies in the criminal justice system.
- **Gender Advisory Group** – the group continue to consider a wide range of topics in relation to gender specific issues. Members of the group have worked closely with Northumbria Police in Northumberland to improve their understanding and response to BME victims of domestic abuse and so called honour crime. The group are looking at the current Department for Education consultation around Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.
- **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 carried out a review of the Victims First Northumbria website to assess the accessibility of the website and have made suggestions for further improvements, helping to ensure the website has maximum accessibility for those victims of crime and others who have a disability. The group have also advised Northumbria Police and Victims First Northumbria on the development of their key documents in Easy Read format.
- **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. The group have also helped to shape and consider Victims First’s response to best capturing victim and witness satisfaction.

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.

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

5.1 Victims Strategy

In September 2018 the Government published a strategy for victims which sets out their commitment to strengthen the Victims' Code and improve the experience victims have as they journey through the criminal justice system. The strategy builds on the progress made to ensure victims have the right help in the aftermath of a crime and are properly supported in the process of seeing justice delivered.

The strategy outlines additional spending over a 3 year period for victims of sexual violence, the development of an improved delivery model for victims support services and a promise of £8 million to be dedicated to interventions to ensure support is available to children who witness domestic abuse. The strategy references the good work that Victims First Northumbria does and is provided as an example of best practice. The additional £8 million funding has already been launched and is one of the pots of money we have bid for earlier as outlined in section 2.3.

Also, made clear within the strategy is the Government's commitment, that victims should be supported to ensure they understand a court's decision, the implications decisions have on them personally and the implications on the offender. The victims contact scheme that is currently managed by National Probation Service will be reformed and victims will be easier for the victim to 'opt in' and frequent communications will be had to ensure the victim feels informed and supported.

Delivery of this strategy and ensuring victims have the best experience as they journey through the criminal justice system is a key priority for our Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). In my report to panel in July 2018 I outlined work to develop a multi-agency approach to monitor and improve compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and witness charter and will help to embed and deliver our local commitment to supporting victims.

5.3 Dignity in custody

I recently welcomed a much needed proposed change in legislation that will require police forces to deliver appropriate care to female detainees in custody.

Back in January 2018, I urged the Government to change Code C of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which provides a statutory code of practice on the treatment of detainees – as it provided no specific information on the treatment of women. The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) wrote to the Home Office after discovering that many women were not being given sanitary products and when they were some were passed their expiry date and could have caused sickness if used. Now consultation begins on a new legislation that requires all police forces in England and Wales to:

- Enable all female detainees to speak to female members of staff whilst in police custody.

- Ask female detainees, at the earliest opportunity, whether they need menstrual products when in police custody and provide them free of charge.
- Give sufficient care and consideration to the dignity of all menstruating detainees.

Following the results of the ICVA's findings, here in Northumbria we implemented new processes for women in custody straight away, which include private disclosure areas, automatic access to a female officer, regular hygiene packs and guidance on strip searches. Action was needed to protect the dignity of women and girls having their period in police custody and now together with our partners, we are starting to see a much needed change. We need to see an immediate review of policy across the country. Women in this situation should be treated with the respect, sensitivity and the dignity they deserve.

Every PCC in England and Wales signed a letter urging the Home Secretary to make the changes. We're doing it here in Northumbria, there is no reason why others shouldn't follow. It's the right thing to do.

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.

- **Prison Reform Trust**

The Prison Reform Trust contacted PCC's to ask for an evaluation of the work completed on the Transforming Lives Programme.

The Transforming Lives Programme aims to improve the experiences female offenders have within the Criminal Justice System including the care they receive whilst in custody, the rehabilitation work completed and early intervention to prevent offending behaviour.

We recommended that more work should be completed with the Magistracy to raise awareness of the provisions available within the community to rehabilitate and support women offenders. The recommendation that a Champion could be appointed to each bench to ensure magistrates are aware of available intervention will work to assist this however, organisations should be encouraged to promote and keep the Magistracy informed.

- **HM Government Consultation on Serious Violence Strategy (SVS)**

The Home Office Select Committee sought responses to the progress made regarding the effectiveness of the SVS and requested recommendation made to increase the success of the strategy. In addition to this we were asked by the APCC to share our views on the strategy to inform discussions regarding the implementation of the strategy.

The SVS focuses on knife crimes, homicide, gun crimes, acid attacks, drug trafficking and gangs. The relatively narrow scope and the omission of

domestic abuse, serious sexual abuse, alcohol related violence and violence against women and girls prevents it from being a comprehensive strategy to deal with serious violent crime.

Recognising that there are low levels of serious violent crime- in comparisons with other areas, here in Northumbria, we were able to demonstrate that our multi-agency approach helps to ensure true collaboration across all areas, including prisons. Focusing on three areas, intelligence, diversion and enforcement we are able to use a preventative approach to combat serious violent crimes.

In order to further prevent serious violent offending investment needs to be made to prevent domestic and sexual abuse and substance misuse, all attributed to serious violent crime and more significant to Northumbria. Through the APCC we have been able to contribute good practice examples around the Building Better Lives fund and our proposed multi agency approach to providing early intervention to young people to divert away from serious violent offending.

- **Home Affairs Select Committee Consultation: Modern Slavery**

The Home Affairs Select Committee asked for responses to their inquiry to allow view to be shared on the progress that has been made in the three years since the Modern Slavery Act was published in 2015 and what, if any, action needs to be taken to further address this type of offending.

The main types of Modern Slavery in Northumbria include sexual exploitation, forced labour and criminal exploitation. The level of this type of offending in Northumbria is significantly higher in comparison to the two other forces in the North East. The inquiry was updated on the development of Northumbria's strategy and improvement plan which reflects the four Ps (prosecute, pursue, prevent and protect). We also informed that since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, Northumbria Police have been able to successfully use new legislation to support them in their investigative work around trafficking for Child Sexual Exploitation.

The OPCC, through the Supporting Victims fund, has commissioned Changing Lives to support victims of exploitation and provide specialist support to hidden victims of modern slavery.

- **Ministry of Justice Consultation: Strengthening Probation- Building Confidence**

Following the transforming rehabilitation programme a diverse range of providers are delivering probation services. A reduction of two percent in the reoffending rates of individuals supervised by CRCs have been reported and in addition, the National Probation Service is performing well supervising higher-risk offenders, advising the courts, and operating approved premises. CRC contracts have faced challenges, evidence suggests that community sentences are more effective than short custodial sentences in reducing reoffending, and if they are to be used more often we need a probation system that judges, magistrates and the public have confidence in, and that

delivers the right balance of proportionate punishment and rehabilitative support to offenders.

One thing we highlighted is that LCJBs are key to supporting greater engagement between PCCs and probation providers. PCCs with their local knowledge; commissioning experience and experience of facilitating partnership working are well placed to take an increasing role in the commissioning of probation services and delivery. We recognise that Probation providers should be measured in terms of the desired outcomes that they have reasonable control over, e.g. successful delivery of community orders/licenses, instead of other outcomes.