



REPORT OF ACC HELEN McMILLAN

CAUSES FOR INCREASE IN VIOLENT CRIME AND THE STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH IT

1. Purpose

1.1 At the Police and Crime Panel on 24 April 2018 (minute 65 - 2018/19 refers) the next themed report was agreed as:

- Causes for increase in violent crime and the strategies for dealing with it.

2. Background

2.1 In order to enhance its scrutiny role with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Northumbria Police and Crime Panel have a 'themed section' at each meeting. It was agreed the themed topic for the Panel's meeting in October 2018 will be causes for an increase in violent crime and strategies for dealing with it.

2.2 The Home Office launched a Serious Violent Crime Strategy in April 2018, which sets out the Government's response to serious violence. This report considers Northumbria Police's position against that strategy. It does not include violent crimes that are also safeguarding crimes, such as domestic abuse, rape and human trafficking. The Force's response to these crimes is well documented in the Police and Crime Panel Performance Report.

Causes of Serious Violence

2.3 As there are different types of serious violence, there are different causes for these crimes, which impact the volume reported over time. Analysis has identified a number of causes which can be grouped into the next broad categories:

Drugs

2.4 There is strong evidence nationally that the drug markets drive changes in some serious violent crime, either by fuelling robberies to service drug dependence, or through violent competition between drug dealers. Violence can be used as a way of maintaining and increasing profits within drugs markets and resolving disputes between groups. Northumbria Police work with a range of agencies to tackle the harm caused by drugs including tackling and disrupting organised crime under Operation Magnet and working with other agencies, such as health, to support families impacted by drug misuse.

Alcohol

- 2.5 A proportion of serious violence reported nationally and within Northumbria Police is linked in some way to alcohol. The use of alcohol by victim, perpetrator or both can be seen in a range of violent crimes prior to the offence occurring. In the Northumbria Police area we include alcohol under our neighbourhood priorities where communities tell us that it is an issue which concerns them and have developed a Night Time Economy Plan as discussed later in the document.

Changes to Policing Policies and emerging crimes

- 2.6 Improvements in recording practices have increased the volume of recorded crime. The Force also recognises increases to certain crime types can be attributed to emerging crimes such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking. Improvements in response to underreported crimes such as domestic abuse can result in improved confidence and an increase in reporting.

Focused police activity can impact the recording of serious violence. For example, targeted policing campaigns such as Operation Spectre mentioned in the knife crime section can cause a short term increase in reported crime over the time they are active. Conversely policing activity can reduce serious violence at a slower pace over time by working with other agencies to problem solve problem locations, such as the night time economy, or targeting the biggest harm causes.

Reduction in preventative activity and support services

- 2.7 There is a range of evidence that confirms the benefits of prevention, early intervention and diversion activity. A national reduction in public funding and the subsequent reduction in availability of these activities may impact crime levels; although no research has been undertaken to establish how this has impacted serious violence in the Northumbria Police area.

Violent Crime – categories

- 2.8 A violent crime is when someone physically hurts or threatens to hurt someone, and also includes crimes where a weapon is used. The Police record a crime as violent if the offender clearly intended to physically harm a person, regardless of whether or not it resulted in a physical injury. Violent crimes can include assault, violence involving weapons such as knives, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, hate crime, violence relating to the Night Time Economy, robbery and homicide. The categories included in this report are:

- Knife
- Firearms
- Homicide (actual occasions of murder and manslaughter)
- Attacks using corrosive substances
- Robbery
- Drugs trafficking (with specific mention of County Lines activity)
- Alcohol related violence (as indicated through violent crimes associated with the Night Time Economy)

Knife crime

2.9 As can be shown in the next chart (chart 1), recorded knife crimes have reduced over time, which is in contrast to the national picture where knife crime has increased (chart 2).

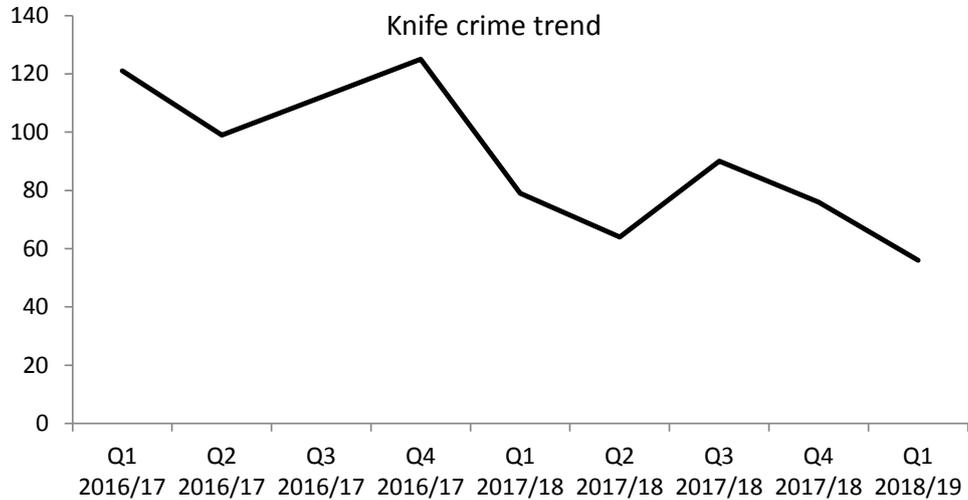


Chart 1

Knife Crime trends per 10,000 population

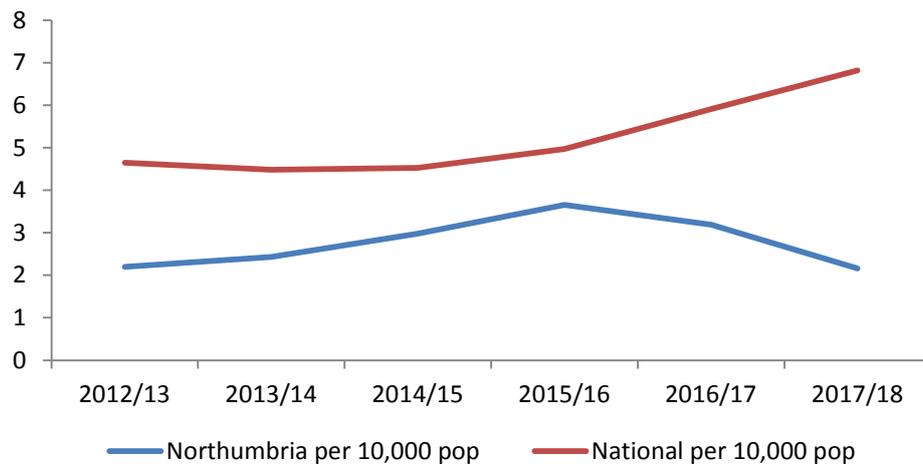


Chart 2

2.10 Using an intelligence led approach, Northumbria Police maintain a robust approach to knife crime through their support of the National Operation SCEPTRE, launched by the Metropolitan Police Service. Tactics utilised include the identifying and targeting of habitual knife carriers, working with our partners in licensed premises and transport networks through the use of knife detection arches and investigation of offences of importation of offensive weapons into the UK, which have been intercepted by the UK Border Force. Northumbria Police have undertaken several National SCEPTRE weeks of action two of which occurred in 2018, all of which have yielded positive results.

Firearms

- 2.11 The discharge of firearms in Northumbria remains low in comparison to other forces. Of the discharges that do occur, 18% are linked to suicides or suicide attempts (8 of 44 discharges with injury) and the remainder are associated with organised crime although the North East of England has a low proportion of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). The number of firearms discharges is shown in the next table. The increase seen in 15/16 is linked to four suicides and a high profile investigation involving known organised crime groups.

Financial Year	Discharge causing injury (including suicide)	Discharge causing damage only	Discharge no injury or damage	Total
13/14	9	2	1	12
14/15	5	5	6	16
15/16	20	4	6	30
16/17	7	3	4	14
17/18	3	6	2	11

Table 1

- 2.12 A dedicated team in Northumbria Police capture all firearms related intelligence, ensuring a focus on investigation, arrest, recovery of weapons and the disruption of crime groups; all of which result in the prevention of further incidents. In the last quarter (Q1 2018) eleven firearms were recovered in Northumbria before they could be used in crime. This is as a result of proactive police investigations leading to thorough searches and subsequent prosecutions.
- 2.13 Northumbria Police regularly employ tactics to reduce the number of firearms in circulation. Firearms licensing officers robustly regulate those licensed to possess weapons and work closely with Registered Firearms Dealers to control the sale and movement of weapons. In November 2017, Northumbria Police led the way in a national surrender. As a result of Operation Aztec 280 weapons were surrendered locally, of which 131 were viable firearms including pistols, shotguns and air weapons. Weapons were from a varied range including some dating back to World War 1 and World War 2 and believed to have been veteran war trophies. Some had been inherited by families who were in a quandary as to what to do with them for several years and have welcomed the opportunity to safely dispose. Of all of the weapons recovered and examined in Operation Aztec, we found no evidence of any having been previously used in crime. Every firearm handed in is one less chance for a gun to fall into the hands of a criminal and could potentially save a life.

Homicide

- 2.14 In the 12 months to July 2018, Northumbria ranked 9th lowest nationally (of 43 forces) and the lowest compared to most similar forces for number of homicide offences per 10,000 (0.06 compared to 0.12 nationally). The outcome rate over the same time period for most serious violence against the person is 81%

(murder, manslaughter and attempted murder) and an 83% resolved rate for murder. The next chart shows the longer term trends of homicides.

Year	Murder	Attempted murder	Manslaughter	Total
2013/14	14	7	2	23
2014/15	15	5	4	24
2015/16	10	11	5	26
2016/17	12	3	4	19
2017/18	10	10	4	24
Total	61	36	19	116

Table 2

- 2.15 Analysis of homicides over three years show that 70% of homicide victims were male and 30% were female. In 88% of cases the offender was male. Generally the victim and offender are known to each other and can be categorised as domestic homicides, or homicides as a result of disputes between known associates. A smaller number of crimes involve victims and perpetrators who do not know each other, commonly as a result of a dispute which escalated into serious violence e.g. one punch crimes that occur within the Night Time Economy. Of the murders committed in the last five years, 36% were categorised as domestic homicides.
- 2.16 Northumbria Police have a centralised Homicide and Murder Enquiry Team (HMET) comprising of exceptionally experienced and skilled detectives. Their work covers murder, manslaughter, and other major crimes such as corporate manslaughter and gross negligence manslaughter. They work closely with other police teams to ensure the community are reassured following a crime and lessons are learnt.
- 2.17 Northumbria Police work with each community safety partnership to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). They were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. DHRs are carried out to ensure that lessons are learnt when a person has been killed. The purpose of a DHR is to:
- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.
 - Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result.
 - Apply those lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate.
 - Prevent domestic abuse and improve service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

Corrosive substance attacks

2.18 There have been no acid attacks in Northumbria Police area. Offences recorded do include the use of ammonia with the majority of incidents comprising threats as opposed to actual use. However, Northumbria officers are trained and prepared to deal with corrosive substance attacks.

Robbery

2.19 In the 12 months to July 2018, Northumbria ranked 18th lowest nationally (of 43 forces) and the third lowest compared to most similar forces for number of robbery offences per 10,000 (0.6 compared to 0.82 nationally). Around three quarters of robberies are recorded as robbery against a person (75%) rather than a business. As can be shown in the next table, robberies have increased over time with most noticeable increases being within the personal robbery category. Although some of the increases can be attributed to improved crime recording and reporting, it is believed that this crime category may have seen genuine increases. Nationally we know about half of the rise in robbery is due to improvements in police recording. For the remainder, drug-related cases seem to be an important driver.

Crime Type/Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Robbery - Business	87	98	99	129	130
Assault with intent to rob - Business	1	1	6	2	4
Robbery - Personal	347	384	411	581	600
Assault with intent to rob - Personal	18	12	31	47	37
Total	453	495	547	759	771

Table 3

2.20 Through Force tasking and coordinating processes robberies are allocated the right resource and through effective investigation and intelligence gathering, they often result in a positive criminal justice outcome. The current positive outcome rate is 20% for the 12 months to July 18, which is the tenth highest outcome rate nationally. 2% of robberies involve the use of firearms or replicas and 17% used a knife.

County Lines (drugs trafficking)

2.21 There have been no recorded instances of County Lines in the Northumbria force area as yet. County Lines can be defined as: *an organised crime group (or urban gang) from an area such as London, Birmingham and Liverpool who extends their drug dealing enterprise across county boundaries (especially into coastal and country towns).*

2.22 Across the UK in recent years there has been a number of successful investigations into criminals conducting County Lines offences, this includes the use of the vulnerable to facilitate the crime methodology. Police and partner agencies (health, education, probation and social services) within our force boundaries have been given training in relation to recognising the signs of

County Lines and how to report their concerns. The vast majority of criminals involved in this crime type are from the Metropolitan Police Service area exporting to the south east regions of the UK. Other areas that export include the North West and West Midlands. Northumbria Police and partners are alert to the threat this type of offending poses and are constantly seeking to identify any such activity within Northumbria.

- 2.23 Northumbria Police recently underwent a peer review in respect to our management of the threat posed by serious and organised crime. The review team were impressed by the Force's robust, intelligence-led approach to preventing the County Lines drug dealing model from becoming established in our area and commented that not only our robust approach was preventing our region being successfully targeted but also the demographics of our region made us a less attractive County Lines opportunity to criminal gangs.

Alcohol related violence (Night Time Economy)

- 2.24 Perceptions of those who frequent night time economy locations in Northumbria remains high, with 90% feeling safe. The Night-Time Economy Plan is used to effectively target resources to protect the vulnerable and reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder. Neighbourhood Teams hold door staff briefings; this is a two-way exchange of information that works towards preventing crime and disorder and detecting offences that have already been committed.
- 2.25 Northumberland has a significant influx of visitors, particularly during the summer months. In 2016, there were approximately eight million day visitors and 1.72 million overnight visitors to the area. Local briefings and tasking are in place to deal specifically with the increase in population to the area, with a particular emphasis on the Night Time Economy.
- 2.26 Planned events, such as football matches in Sunderland and Newcastle, Freshers' week in each of the three local universities (Sunderland, Northumbria and Newcastle Universities), the Sunderland Airshow and the Hoppings Fair are threat assessed, and patrol plans implemented to prevent violence and disorder. Both Newcastle and Sunderland city centres and other towns with a night time economy have long-running prevention operations to reduce alcohol-related disorder.
- 2.27 In Newcastle City Centre street and taxi marshals are employed to assist the vulnerable and intoxicated through provisions of basic first aid, or assisting them to into licensed taxis to get them home safely. Street pastors assist vulnerable people, reuniting them with friends, administering first aid and waiting with them until they are fit to make their way home, or to hospital. Pubwatch Schemes are in place across the Force area to monitor Night Time Economy offenders and share information between police and partners.
- 2.28 The Force has an active role in local authority licensing decisions and the setting of conditions on the operation of licensed premises. In consultation with Newcastle City Council, a drugs protocol has been added to the Licensing Policy for the city to prevent use and supply of drugs in licensed premises.

Managing offenders

- 2.29 Northumbria Police uses a range of partnership arrangements to manage violent offenders including Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). It is the process through which the Police, Probation and Prison Services work together with other agencies, to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community. By sharing information and agreeing activity, Northumbria Police are able to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders.
- 2.30 Northumbria Police launched a new model of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) on 23 April 2018. IOM is the term used to describe a multi-agency approach to tackling persistent offenders who commit a significant amount of crime and cause damage and nuisance to communities. The model seeks to prioritise offender management activity against a cohort of 300 offenders who pose the highest levels of threat, harm and risk. This assessment is based on the recency, frequency and gravity of their offending.
- 2.31 The Cohort incorporates youth and adult offenders and each of the 300 have been assigned a police officer responsible for assessing the factors driving their offending and working with other agencies to tackle them. Tactics could involve enforcement or diversion activity based on pathways out of offending including: accommodation; education and training; substance misuse; finance management; relationships; lifestyle and associates; attitudes; thinking & behaviour; and mental and physical health. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) model seeks to identify priority offenders using a recency, frequency and gravity (RFG) matrix and improve coordination with partners such as National Probation Service (NPS), Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and Youth Offending Teams (YOT) who are responsible for statutory management of the large majority of the cohort offenders. All cohort offenders are flagged on police systems. If charged with an offence, they are subject to being fast-tracked to appearance before a court. Their status as a cohort offender will factor in the pre-sentence report provided to the court by the National Probation Service (NPS).