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POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Northumbria Police & Crime Panel
Report

February 2018

Panel members

Since the turn of the year, I've been working with my team to consult with local residents about the Police Precept, I will mention this more in my report, however, I stand by my belief that government should properly fund policing, by implementing a fair and transparent funding package that addresses the needs of individual forces it is wrong that the burden continues to be moved on to council tax payers. Other work I have been focusing on has included reviewing the applications for grants from those who provide victims services – all in all it has been a busy start to the year.

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

1.1 Supporting Victims Fund 2019-20

Background

My fifth 'Supporting Victims Fund' was launched in early December to strengthen and enhance victim services across Northumbria. The aim of my Supporting Victims Fund is to build capacity and maximise the potential of organisations to help ensure the improved provision of vital services to support victims of crime and help them cope and recover from the impact of crime.

In early 2015, a comprehensive mapping and consultation exercise was undertaken to identify the services needed for victims of crime in Northumbria. Funding priorities each year are refreshed to ensure that we continue to target funding in the areas that are needed.

Extensive mapping and consultation work has taken place over the last two years to inform my commissioning and understand the victim services landscape in Northumbria and more recently work has been undertaken to develop victim's service funding priorities for 2017-18. This understanding and insight into the needs of the most vulnerable victims of crime in Northumbria has been used to shape priorities and aims in relation to victims, and most specifically, the need for Northumbria Police to continue to provide timely and comprehensive information to victims about their individual cases and to enhance safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people.

When pulling together the priorities, I consider a wide range of information including but not exhaustively:

- Police and partner data with regards to levels of crime, crime type and emerging crimes
- Numbers of personal victims and victimology such as geographic location, age, gender, ethnicity
- Victims Code of Practice with regards to vulnerable and repeat victims
- Victim Satisfaction surveys and the Safer Communities Survey
- 'Victims Voice' consultation, Victims Advisory Group and service user feedback

In addition to this, Community Safety Partnerships were also provided with an opportunity to influence my funding priorities for 2019-20.

Each year we prioritise services and projects that directly support victims to cope and recover from their experience of crime - this is in line with the strict grant conditions that are attached to our main source of funding from the Ministry of Justice.

National funding

The national picture with regards to funding victim services remains complex and continues to change at a pace. Local organisations are vulnerable to different funders taking decisions without understanding the impact on local services.

Whilst additional investment from the Government is welcome, competitive bidding rounds like recent opportunities for disabled victims of domestic abuse does complicate matters further. Parallel to this investment we continue to see the reduction in mainstream budgets for statutory services, often many of whom provide vital services to people who have been victims of crime.

The introduction of grant programmes in place of mainstream funding further puts fragile victim resources at risk due to the competitive and unknown nature of funding.

Local funding

As the financial landscape continues to change at a national level this has significant ramifications for local budgets and provision. Local government has already delivered savings targets, following cuts of 40% in funding since 2010. Reductions on this scale have created huge financial challenges for councils and local services in Northumbria and puts vital services such as refuge and domestic abuse provision at risk. Furthermore, evidence suggests that central Government grant reductions have disproportionately hit the areas with the highest need the hardest, such as the North East.

Victim services budgets continue to be provided to the PCC by the Ministry of Justice on a one year basis, despite calls to provide the budget over a three year period, which would help to build, grow and sustain vital local services. One year settlements from Government mean that services in Northumbria will continue to be grant funded on an annual cycle for the 2019-20 period.

Purpose of the fund

Victims of crime can be of any age, gender, race or sexual orientation and can be vulnerable due to these characteristics or other factors such as a disability, their mental health, religion/belief or the type and nature of the crime committed. In Northumbria we are striving to ensure that victims with the greatest need have access to support that is tailored to meet their needs and help them to best cope and recover.

We want to ensure that victims of crime feel confident to seek help when they need it and when they do, the right type of support is available to them.

Victims First has been established in Northumbria to deliver a coordinated approach to victim care and the PCC Supporting Victims Fund has been established to enhance and strengthen our overall offer to victims in Northumbria.

The fund is managed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria and is in place to support work across the Northumbria area, including

the local authority areas of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Funding is available for organisations providing support to victims of crime to help them cope in the aftermath of a crime and to help their long-term recovery.

The Supporting Victims Fund will support delivery of the Police and Crime Plan priority “Putting Victims First” and will help to achieve the following:

- More victims encouraged to come forward
- A specific tailored approach to victims of personal crimes like sexual and domestic violence burglary and hate crime
- Increased opportunities for restorative justice
- Improved victims and witnesses experience at court
- The most vulnerable victims of crime are identified and provided with personal support and firm action
- Victims have access to appropriate advice and a high quality practical and emotional support service tailored to their needs.
- Victims have access to specialist services where these are needed to help victims to cope and recover from their experiences.

Organisations can apply for funding individually or in partnership with other organisations.

Grant themes and funding priorities

To help us identify the victim services we require in Northumbria we have analysed information from a wide range of sources including crime trends and victimology, public and partner priorities, demands on existing victim services and demand for services where need is unmet.

Understanding the victim landscape in Northumbria allows us to best provide services that fulfil our vision “to ensure that victims of crime feel confident to seek help and when they do, they are provided with a choice of high quality support tailored to meet their individual needs”.

We particularly welcome applications that provide support to those most vulnerable in our society and who under the Victims Code of Practice are entitled to enhanced support. Taking this into consideration with what we know about our vulnerable victims in Northumbria we have identified the following grant themes:

Domestic abuse

- Specialist support for male and female victims of all levels of risk of domestic abuse
- Enhanced outreach provision for minority ethnic victims including support for honour based abuse and FGM victims
- Emotional and practical support for victims of stalking and harassment
- Support for isolated/marginalised victims of domestic abuse for example victims 55 plus, LGBT, rural victims and those with a disability

- Emotional and practical support for parents who are subject to domestic abuse by their adolescent children

Sexual assault and abuse

- Specialist trauma informed support for male and female victims of sexual assault and abuse, providing opportunities for victims and survivors to recover, heal and rebuild their lives
- Swift access to counselling for victims and survivors
- Specialist support for male and female adults who have experienced historic child sexual abuse
- Specialist support and counselling for victims of sexual exploitation leading to long-term recovery
- Initiatives to support implementation of the six core priorities of the Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services – Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018-2023

Young people under 18

- Therapeutic and advocacy support for young people following a crime
- Support for young victims of domestic abuse
- Support for young victims of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, providing opportunities for victims and survivors to recover, heal and rebuild their lives
- Therapeutic support for children who are living with or who have witnessed domestic abuse
- Emotional and practical support for young victims who experience cyber related crime, exploitation and harassment

Victims of hate crime

- Personal emotional support for victims and repeat victims of all hate crime with a specific focus on race, disability and LGBT hate crime
- Building community cohesion and support for victims of race hate crime
- Peer-based support to assist victims cope and recover
- Therapeutic or counselling support for victims of hate crime

Victims with mental health needs

- Specialist support and counselling for those victims of crime who are vulnerable due to a mental health need

Victims with other vulnerabilities

- Specialist and trauma informed support for victims of trafficking, modern slavery and labour exploitation
- Support for victims of cyber-crime and fraud including those at risk of exploitation and support for older people
- Specialist support and practical guidance for victims of crime with regards to criminal injuries compensation and understanding the criminal justice system

Strengthening services

Grants are available to cover any costs relating to work which builds the capacity and maximises the potential of organisations working to support victims of crime. This could include a range of activities including:

- Widening geographical coverage
- Enhanced provision through the increase in training
- Strengthening operating procedures and referral routes to maximise victim engagement
- Recruitment and training of volunteers
- Changes to operating practices to meet victim demand
- New and innovative approaches and techniques to supporting victims

Key dates

The deadline for applications was 10th January 2019. Assessments took place immediately after this date and organisations will be informed of the outcome at the earliest opportunity. All services and projects must be in place and be ready to deliver from 1st April 2019.

Section 2 - How is the PCC building effective partnerships?

2.1 Collaborative budgeting with NHS England

This year we are collaborating with NHS England to ensure the right services are in place to support the long-term recovery of victims of sexual assault and abuse. Earlier this year NHS England published their 'Strategic direction for sexual assault and abuse services - Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018 – 2023'. This document acknowledged this priority and their own role in support for victims of sexual assault and abuse, something that has not previously been acknowledged or taken on in this way. I welcomed this commitment by NHS England and by working together at a local level we can offer an effective and efficient service that places victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse at the centre, which in turn will enable us to offer the support and care when and where it is needed. This is a new and innovative approach to victim services commissioning and we are seen nationally as leading the way on joint working.

Commissioned services for sexual assault and abuse must deliver against our victim service priorities as well as NHS England's six core priorities within their new Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services – Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018-2023:

- Strengthen prevention
- Promote safeguarding and the safety, protection and welfare of victims and survivors
- Involve victims and survivors in the development and improvement of services
- Introduce or adhere to consistent quality standards
- Ensure an appropriately trained workforce
- Drive collaboration and reduce fragmentation

This strategic document outlines how services for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse, in all settings of the health and care system, need to evolve between now and 2023.

NHS England have also recently talked to PCCs in the North East about future commissioning for Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). NHS took over responsibility for commissioning SARCs in April 2013 and they provide:

- a small but significant part of the overall pathway of care for survivors of sexual assault and abuse
- one stop access to immediate and short term medical care and counselling for male and female victims of recent sexual assault or abuse
- an environment/framework which can assist police investigation which includes forensic examination.

They have identified that across the north east region there is a lack of consistency in regards to what and how services are commissioned, and by who across the force areas. NHS England have sought PCC views and future engagement on the way forward for commissioning and it has been agreed that they will develop options for an integrated regional service which include SARC management, clinical governance, forensic examinations and crisis support within one service to ensure that there is a consistent approach to service provision across the North East.

2.2 Funding Opportunities

In the last report we told the Panel about four applications for funding. We are pleased to inform the Panel that two of our applications for funding were successful. Both projects will be delivered in partnership with Local Authorities and voluntary organisations

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1. **Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund** (£91,575 in 18/19 and £280,057 in 19/20) – we will use a collaborative approach with Youth Offending Team 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 connect young people to the right intervention either via Street Doctors group work or one to one mentoring provided by the Newcastle United Foundation and the Foundation of Light.
2. **Operation Encompass - The Next Step Bid** (£745,000) - Working with the founders of the national organisation Operation Encompass 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 to ensure that Operation Encompass is in place in all schools. We want to build on successes to date and create new roles of

'School Safeguarding Liaison Officers' (SSLOs), who between them will be responsible for all 584 schools within the Northumbria police force area.

Project plans are currently being developed with partners for both projects and involvement of the six local authorities is vital to ensure delivery of agreed project outcomes. We will bring a further report to the Panel once our projects are more developed and are having an impact locally.

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

3.1 HMICFRS - Policing and Mental Health – Picking up the Pieces

In 2017, as part of the PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) inspection programme, HMICFRS carried out a thematic inspection of how effective police forces are at protecting and helping those with mental health problems. Northumbria were not one of the forces inspected, however as with all thematic reports, the force will provide the PCC with a report on their self-assessment against the findings of the report and compliance with force specific recommendations and will produce an action plan.

During the inspection, HMICFRS examined how well forces: identified people with mental health problems when they first contact the force; identified and recorded the number of cases involving people with mental health problems to provide the right support; and make sure expert help is available from other organisations, in particular, health professionals.

The findings indicated that the police approach to people with mental health problems is generally supportive, considerate and compassionate. However, concern was raised that too many aspects of the broader mental health system were broken and that the police were being left to pick up the pieces and responsible for the safety and welfare of people that other professionals would be better placed to deal with.

Areas were identified where the police could do better, although it was recognised that the recommendations only go so far and that a longer-term solution was required. HMICFRS felt that when it came to mental ill-health, the police should be the last resort, not the first port of call. A public survey commissioned by HMICFRS found that only two percent of those surveyed felt it was the police's responsibility to respond to mental health-related calls.

Significant concerns were highlighted regarding the degree to which police are involved in responding to mental health problems and HMICFRS suggested that police forces had an inadequate picture of the extent and nature of the demand they faced. HMICFRS noted some of the areas that will ensure the best service provision:

- Better identification of people with mental health problems at first contact
- Providing the right response when the police arrive – in the report the

- Forces must be sure they are identifying, safeguarding and protecting vulnerable victims of crime with mental health problems
- Forces need to have a clear picture of mental health demand, patterns and repeat callers
- Making sure expert help is available from other organisations
- Use of Mental health triage, or street triage
- Effective Leadership and communication
- In terms of the workforce, recognising how police work can negatively affect mental health and make a positive investment in keeping the workforce healthy

Northumbria Police will carry out a self-assessment against the recommendations made in this report and an action plan will be agreed and delivery subject to scrutiny.

3.2 HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspection update

Members were advised in July 2018 about the findings of this HMICFRS report in respect of Northumbria Police. To allow inspectors to assess the progress each force is making to improve services for the safety and protection of children, HMICFRS are carrying out post inspection reviews. This review was undertaken in January and a further report will be produced by HMICFRS. Members will be updated when the report is received.

3.3 HMICFRS Integrated Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Assessment - 2018/19

Members will be aware that in previous years HMICFRS have conducted their PEEL inspections over the course of a year looking at four different aspects Efficiency, Effectiveness, Legitimacy and Leadership.

From 18/19, whilst the scope of the PEEL inspection will still be considering effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy, HMICFRS will assess forces against all three pillars of PEEL together in a single, risk-based, Integrated PEEL Assessment (IPA). The integrated approach is intended to allow a focus on those aspects of forces' work that HMICFRS assess as presenting the greatest risks to the public. Assessment involves: information from continuous monitoring; more regular data collection; other evidence collected outside the main inspection fieldwork; and the self-assessments provided by forces in their force management statements. HMICFRS hoped that this risk-based approach would result in a lighter feeling inspection footprint in many forces.

The headline questions for 2018/19 are:

- a) Effectiveness: How effective is the force at reducing crime and keeping people safe?
- b) Efficiency: How efficiently does the force operate now, and how sustainable are services to the public? and
- c) Legitimacy: How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?

As with last year, HMICFRS will publish graded judgments (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate) against nine core questions and have one overall graded judgment each for effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.

Northumbria Police will be inspected over the next couple of months and an update will be provided when the final report is received.

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

4.1 Engagement with Communities

We continue to engage with communities across the force area. I continue to meet local groups, I was delighted to recently meet with the South Tyneside charity, Bright Futures, who are working on an initiative to support homeless people across the North East. The charity is providing 'winter homeless packs' to help vulnerable young people during the harsh weather.

I have also worked closely with Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland (RCTN), a charity that provides services to women and girls who live, work or study in Tyneside and Northumberland, this year they will have been operating in the area for 40 years. I supported them during 2018 with their ambitious target to raise £40,000 in a year to mark their 40th year. I recently visited their new premises and agreed to provide a special grant – an amount of £2,150 to reach the £40,000 target.

Over the course of year, RCTN played host to a range of fundraising events, including a Cabaret on International Women's Day; two hugely-successful Comedy Nights; an exhibition in collaboration with students at Northumbria University, and the Her Story conference, which centred on sharing the success stories of women across a range of industries. Not to mention the members of the public who got behind the campaign, going to extraordinary lengths to show support for the charity, such as one supporter who cycled 5,000km from Canada to Mexico, raising over £5,000 in the process.

Although, of course, I wish there was no need for such a service - I hope they are able to continue this vital work for another 40 years or more.

4.2 Precept Consultation

Our police precept consultation has been the focal point of our engagement over the last 6 weeks or so. The engagement has included – on the first day alone - nearly 7500 people reached on Facebook and on Twitter more than 23,000 people saw the tweets urging local residents to take part in the survey. Local media also supported the survey by providing the details to their readers and across the area the Berwick Advertiser through to the Sunderland Echo covered the survey.

We also connected with over 600 local residents by telephone to find out their thoughts. The telephone survey isn't as easy as it sounds, as some people are unable to talk so it takes far more than 600 calls to deliver the results. It's important

to note that once 500 surveys are complete that gives the same indications as if 1000 or 2000 calls were made.

Local Authority	Surveys Completed
Sunderland	108
South Tyneside	108
Gateshead	100
North Tyneside	100
Newcastle	100
Northumberland	104
Force	620

Our consultation also took us to each local authority to meet and chat with nearly 650 local residents to find out their thoughts on policing.

Local Authority	Location	Contact
South Tyneside	The Nook, Prince Edward Road.	103 people
North Tyneside	Killingworth Centre.	106 people
Sunderland	The Bridges	125 people
Gateshead	Trinity Square.	98 people
Newcastle	West Road.	110 people
Northumberland	Morpeth High Street	105 people
Total		647 people

It was really good to get out and about and I will discuss the findings at the meeting.

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

5.1 Hate Crime Action Plan

At the beginning of January, the Chief Officer team provided me with an updated action plan in response to the internal hate crime inspection that took place in December 2017, with a number of recommendations and an action plan. The force have been robust in addressing the issues raised and developed significantly further their work in this area.

- Hate crime flags are in place for all the protected characteristics and Community Engagement Teams within each area command quality assure hate crimes and incidents and provide feedback on any issues identified.
- Online hate is monitored through the application of a cyber-enabled crime flag and this is regularly reviewed to ensure accuracy.
- The Force works with partners such as Victims First Northumbria to try and gain a better understanding of the issues facing hate crime victims and to identify further how improvements in reporting can be made.

Northumbria have also used the findings of the HMICFRS thematic inspection into the initial response to hate crime from forces across the country, though not specific to Northumbria, these recommendations have been reviewed and built upon and form part of the comprehensive action plan. A lot of good work has taken place by Assistant Chief Constable, Debbie Ford and her team in ensuring the recommendations from the internal review and the thematic review allow Northumbria to remain “ahead of the game” in delivering the best service possible for victims of hate crime.

5.2 Raising Investigative Standards

In the 2017 PEEL ‘Effectiveness’ inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), they identified that Northumbria Police should ensure that all investigations are completed to a consistently good standard and that victims’ receive regular and meaningful updates. I challenged the Chief Constable and his senior team to drive this change and I am pleased that they have been working hard with officers and staff to deliver focused activity to improve overall standards.

Some of the improvements that have occurred are:

- The need for training for communications staff in order to improve the recognition of vulnerability. THRIVE training has been delivered to all Communications and Front Office staff during 2018. The October audit identified a significant improvement of the application of THRIVE, with a 92% compliance rate against expected standards. I now want Northumbria Police to aspire to an ever higher compliance rate.
- There has been development of the force’s understanding of Evidence Led and Victim Focused investigations – they have used effectively the Through the Eyes of a Child video.
- Ongoing work is being undertaken between Northumbria Police and the CPS to improve referral rates to the CPS by understanding the reasons for cases failing after charge. The CPS has indicated an increase in the referral rates from Northumbria police and the force are working closely with the CPS to ensure a robust challenge of CPS decision making where appropriate.
- CDD have developed a performance framework to improve the file quality measures to provide supervisory oversight of performance.
- To further improve standards around disclosure, appropriate officers and staff have received additional training in order to take on the role of disclosure champions. These roles are to support their colleagues around disclosure and to act as disclosure champions.

The above is just a snapshot of some of the work that has been taking place to improve investigative standards. If panel members wish, I can arrange for a presentation to be given that covers all the areas that have been worked on by Northumbria Police to drive up further the force’s work in this area.

5.3 Complaints Legislation

Members will be aware that the government are planning to change legislation so complaints appeals that would normally be undertaken by the Chief Constable in relation to complaints dealt with initially by Northumbria Police will now come to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to strengthen independence in the process. Some PCCs have created a new role, to save money I have added the role to the remit of the Director of Governance and Communication, as it's the most appropriate place for this role to be and the member of staff currently manages the Triage team and deals with complaints that are sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The OPCC are working closely with Northumbria Police Professional Standards Department to ensure a smooth transition. However, it is likely that Brexit will delay the legislation being placed before the House of Commons – we are ready to get started whenever the time comes. Members will know that the new legislative changes that are affecting how police forces deal with complaints originated here in Northumbria, we set up the Triage scheme in 2013 and it has become the new model that the government are implementing – this is great news, it reinforces that our passion to deliver outstanding customer service is the right thing to do and it also gives Northumbria Police the opportunity to learn from any issues that may be raised.

5.4 Brexit Update

The Brexit bandwagon continues to rumble on and due to no agreement in Parliament, we see the problems that a no deal will cause, however it is crucial that a deal is sorted or we could see irreparable harm to the UK's ability to prevent and detect crime, in particular, cross-border offending like human traffickers, drug smugglers, organised sex offenders and those involved in terrorism. These are now frequently thwarted by exchange of intelligence, joint investigation, speedy evidence collection and the European Arrest Warrant, all shaped, practised and integrated EU-wide over the past 30 years – a shield for our security which is effective.

What is in place works. With just a matter of days until we leave Europe, there is nothing to replace it.

The European Arrest Warrant (EAW) has transformed the extradition of suspects both from the UK to other EU countries and, importantly, into the UK from across the EU so that they can be put on trial for crimes committed here. An example is when Husain Osman, suspected of a failed attack on at Shepherd's Bush underground on 21st July 2005, fled to Italy. His data was put onto the Schengen Information System, a warrant issued for his arrest and in less than two months he had been seized in Rome and returned to the UK.

The EAW is underpinned by that information system - SIS2 - by which real time wanted alerts are loaded immediately onto the central database. Closely linked are the Prum decisions, which deal with the fast track exchange of DNA, fingerprint and vehicle data for combatting terrorism and serious crime.

Prior to EU Joint Investigation Teams, police in the UK had to issue a letter of request in a local court to ask a foreign court to authorise police to obtain material abroad. Now one officer will ring up an EU counterpart to use his local powers in pursuit of evidence for the UK inquiry. Europol is supported by the US and other non-EU governments but it is nonetheless governed by European Union countries. From 2013 it has hosted the European Cybercrime Centre - EC3 - responding both to cyber-criminals and to attacks by terrorists and foreign intelligence agencies.

It is important that wanted criminals should not be at large, endangering the European public for a single extra day yet prior to the EAW, extradition processes was irregular. Some states who now fully operate the EAW would simply not, before its implementation, extradite their residents. They included Germany, France and Poland, meaning that if someone was seriously assaulted in the UK and their assailant went home there could be no justice for the victim of a German, French or Polish person in this country.

Once we are no longer signatories to the Treaties, without a deal that underpins agreements there will be uncertainty as to what intelligence, which evidence and what processes could and could not be shared with us in this inevitably legalistic territory around public protection. Norway has been trying to negotiate its way into the European Arrest Warrant, from outside the EU for more than ten years. Despite what others may say, there is absolutely nothing in place if we leave with a “no deal”.

Meanwhile, the UK would be exposed to risk, unable to reach suspects we need urgently to apprehend or to remove from the UK and this in turn will be letting down victims. Ironically the then Home Secretary Theresa May, told the Home Affairs Select Committee, on 10th May 2016, that these provisions make the UK “Safer and more secure in the EU than out”.

Northumbria Police are working with partners to discuss the effects on policing after leaving Brexit; the National Police Chiefs Council is also engaging in active conversations as are Police and Crime Commissioners.

6 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.

- **Home Office Stop and Search Consultation**

The Home Office consulted on how effective and proportionate it would be to extend the power of reasonable grounds to 'stop and search' the criminal misuse of drones, laser pointers and corrosive substances.

We strongly agree that police officers should be allowed to investigate and prevent the misuse of drones, the new offence of using a laser pointer to

dazzle or distract a person in control of a vehicle, and also the possession of a corrosive substances in a public place. I am committed to ensuring the use of stop and search in Northumbria is based on evidence and intelligence in order to support force priorities and any disparities are minimised. The force has an established system of independent scrutiny which enables issues and concerns to be highlighted at an early stage and we envisage this would continue in regard to new powers.

- **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Consultation on the Crimes Against Older People Policy Guidance**

The CPS are publishing revised policy guidance on crimes against older people which comprehensively sets out how these crimes are approached. This policy guidance was developed with input from National Scrutiny Panels, which consists of members with experience and expertise from the community and academic perspective. This consultation was launched to gather the views of complainants and witnesses, as well as the general public, on the policy guidance to be confident that the CPS understand the serious nature of these crimes.

We welcome the CPS policy in its ability to set out clearly the recognition of crimes against older people, the process and considerations to be taken in prosecution and the support available. Though the policy broadly meets its aims, we suggested it may benefit from some additional explanation. We recommended that the CPS should work with key partners, such as police forces, to increase understanding of crimes against older people – patterns, motivations, dynamics and barriers to reporting.

- **Department for Education (DfE) Consultation on the Draft Statutory Guidance and Regulations of Relationships Education (RE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE).**

This consultation follows on from a consultation we responded to in February 2018, where the DfE gathered views and suggestions on statutory guidance and regulations that would make RE and RSE compulsory in schools. The findings gathered from stakeholders and the public in February 2018 informed the draft statutory guidance, regulations and the regulatory impact assessment. This consultation was to gain views on these draft documents, which we provided with input from some local stakeholders.

Overall, the draft statutory guidance is age-appropriate and would provide children in primary and secondary school with sufficient relationships and sex education, and also sufficient knowledge to help pupils lead a healthy lifestyle. However, there was some areas that were missed. We feel primary school children need to be aware of the dangers of keeping secrets regarding someone who maybe is causing them harm, and also provided with education on the dynamics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Regarding secondary schools, when providing education on domestic and sexual abuse, reference should be made to imbalance of male sexual aggression towards and against young women, girls, and other men, and also how coercive and controlling

behaviour can often be exercised by males that may not identify/be identifiable as intimate partners, as well as by people of their own age. It is very important to effectively consult and educate parents on the proposed content on the RE, SRE & PHSE curricula, so we recommended that publishing all the content of the lessons online for parents to view could further aid their understanding.

- **Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Consultation on the Police Complaints System Statutory Guidance**

This consultation sought views on the draft guidance that has been produced to support the reformed police complaints system, based on regulations from the Home Office and the input of policing and non-policing bodies.

A key recommendation we made was that the guidance should consider a complainant's vulnerabilities and the potential to provide additional support outside of the complaints process, as many complainants may have been a victim of crime or could identify as vulnerable. This would provide a more holistic customer service approach, where complaints handlers could assist/facilitate additional support where possible.

- **Home Office Consultation on Preventing and Tackling Forced Marriage**

This consultation aimed to explore two ways in which the Government might increase reporting of forced marriage, identify potential perpetrators and improve protection for victims. Consideration was given to the possibility of:

- a) Introducing a legal duty requiring professionals to report cases –
Mandatory Reporting on Forced Marriage
- b) Updating the guidance that was published in 2014 – Guidance on Forced Marriage

We support the introduction of a mandatory reporting duty, and it should increase vigilance, raise awareness amongst safe-guarding professionals and as a consequence improve both the recognition of and coordinated response to forced marriage. However, we advised that there is a risk with introducing mandatory reporting, as there could be a risk of forcing victims 'underground' if changes are poorly implemented, and it may lead to victims of forced marriage and honour based violence being at an increased risk of harm from family members, community and perpetrators.

Regarding the 2014 guidance on forced marriage, we suggested that amendments should include awareness raising, access to culturally competent support, support from specialist services included in safe-guarding hubs (such as Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs), assessment and systems training for statutory agencies particularly police and CPS, and recovery support that deters repeat victimisation and promotes safe networks. Due to the direct links between forced marriage and honour-based violence, we also advised that the forced marriage guidance should be broadened to include information on honour-based abuse.