



## Report to Police and Crime Panel – September 2019.

Welcome to my latest report for members of the Police and Crime Panel. I have endeavoured to provide a mixture of the work I have been doing as well as my community engagement work – I hope this format will generate discussion and I will get a better understanding of the particular interests that members have. I will be referring to police data, but if you would like to read the comprehensive performance data it can be found on my website at [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk) under the Police and Crime Plan section.

### Police Funding: Home Secretary.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement that there will be 20,000 new police officers on the streets of England and Wales, I contacted the Home Secretary to ask how much funding Northumbria would secure, when it would be available and how many new police officers are to be committed to our force.

Since 2010, Northumbria's budget has been cut by more than 30%, which has resulted in 1,106 less police officers – so you will appreciate why I am keen to get the information from government to start recruiting.

I have also sought a commitment from the Home Secretary that the cost of the new police officers does not fall to hard working council tax payers through the police precept. The government must ensure that the next Comprehensive Spending Review includes the full costs of these police officers. After a decade of austerity and uncertainty, the Home Secretary must not move the cost of these new police officers from central government to council tax payers.

Whatever number of officers we are allocated, we can start the recruitment immediately. I want local people recruited as these are the people who know our communities well and are proud to serve the region they live in. In addition to this, I will be looking at our spending commitments to see how many police officers we can add **on top** of what is being allocated through the Home Office.

I will continue to keep panel members updated on this matter.



MIND – Washington



Belsay – Northumberland



VFN – North Tyneside

## Tackling Hate Crime.

One of my pledges during the election campaign was to take a zero tolerance stance in relation to hate crime.

I recently met with the Community Engagement team to discuss putting my pledge in to action. To build a picture around the work already happening on hate crime and to see how it is tackled I spoke with officers and staff whose role it is to engage and communicate directly with communities.



It is vital that communities feel heard and have the confidence to report any incident of hate crime. I will not tolerate someone facing abuse because of who they are – it is totally unacceptable. Victims need to feel reassured that they are being listened to and that police and partners are doing everything possible to tackle the issues they are faced with. Hate crime can have a devastating effect on victims, and I will stand together with Northumbria Police, our partners and the community to stop this type of prejudice.

Meeting with officers and staff today has been incredibly beneficial in helping me understand where we currently stand in the fight against hate crime, and how we can proactively move forward to build confidence in victims, prevent further incidents and ensuring those responsible are brought to justice.

We also work closely with Victims First Northumbria and other partners to provide help for victims throughout the criminal justice process and beyond to ensure they are fully supported. I will continue to encourage all victims of hate crime to report any incidents to police directly or to a local support service.

Hate crime will not be tolerated in Northumbria – I'm here to make sure of it. I will continue to work with our partners including Paul Giannasi, (National Police Hate Crime Advisor) Citizens UK and the Law Commission to tackle these issues.

## Delivering for Northumbria.

Part of my role is to ensure that the Chief Constable delivers the Police and Crime plan. This is the document that determines the priorities of the force, but more importantly is set by the public. In addition to this, I have included the promises that I made to local residents when I was elected as Police and Crime Commissioner in July 2019.



I meet with Chief Constable Winton Keenen on a regular basis. At our meetings we discuss force performance, local and national issues and it is an opportunity for me to focus thinking on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

Our police officers and staff do a great job, but I know we can be even better than we are. I want us to be an outstanding force, the Chief Constable shares my vision and we are committed to delivering improvements. Local residents are rightly proud of their police force and together 'Team Northumbria' will improve further.

### **Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)**

The Home Office recently announced funding for Violence Reduction Units and I was pleased £1.6 million was secured for Northumbria.

Whilst this money is welcome, it must be remembered how such problems in part came about. Nine years of sustained austerity and cuts from central government have stripped away vital public services and violent crime has risen as a result. The Northumbria VRU will support our police officers to deal with violent crime on the ground. We know that the police can't tackle this on their own. We need to work with local authorities, health, housing, charities and a range of others to tackle the real causes of violent crime and get to the root causes.

The benefits to communities and the criminal justice system of addressing health inequality and deprivation and improving people's lives to reduce crime are proven to work. This funding will allow us to kick start this work, to bring the right partners together and we will set out clearly what needs to be done – ranging from addressing the chronic lack of youth provision and early years intervention through schemes like Sure Start, to tackling drugs and alcohol and social issues that cause people to commit violent crime.

The funding is available until March 2020, when the programme will be concluded. I am determined that the Northumbria VRU will be a success, however, it is disappointing that the Government have only committed to this programme until March 2020- money has to be spent and programmes delivered and completed by then. We can't arrest our way out of the complex issues that lead to violent crime, we need a long term programme that addresses the causes and provides solutions, and this can't happen in just nine months. I hope government will show continued support for this proven method of preventing crime by announcing a long term funding strategy for this initiative so we can make a real difference, not just this year or next but for this generation and the next generation of young people. That's the right thing to do.

We are currently in the process of recruiting experienced staff to set up and establish the VRU, this will ensure that we have the right people in post, delivering a service that will make a difference in every community of Northumbria – from rural Northumberland to our towns and cities.

### **Northumbria Police – seeing the work they do first hand.**

I recently visited the communications team at Northumbria Police – these are the people who deal with all 101 and 999 calls. When you consider the stressful environment they work in, the job they do is amazing.

The empathy and compassion the team give to callers is second to none. If you would like to see the work our call handlers do when dealing with emergency calls, let me know and I will facilitate a visit.

**Commissioners Community Fund.**

Over the last few weeks I have been visiting groups across the Northumbria Force area who were awarded funding from my Commissioners Community Fund to tackle hate crime and support mental health services.

One of the groups I visited was the Sunderland Bangladesh Centre who received a £2,000 grant to support their ongoing work in the local community tackling hate crime.

I also met with staff and youngsters at Wooler Drop in Centre for Young People, they provide a range of services for younger members of the community.

The photographs to the side of this article are just a small range of the groups I visited. It was great to see first-hand how local community groups are making a real difference across Northumbria.

Whether it was Sunderland or Wooler and everywhere in-between, it was so rewarding to see local people making a positive difference in their community. By coming together we achieve so much. The Commissioner’s Community Fund may only award small grants, it makes such a difference. We know in our region, people look out for their neighbours and these projects focus on tackling hate crime, reducing anti-social behaviour and making sure residents feel safer and more secure, which is crucial.

I’ll certainly be staying in touch with all the groups awarded funding. The Commissioner’s Community Fund awards grants to neighbourhoods and communities across Wearside, Tyneside and Northumberland who run activities or projects that support tackling hate crime, reducing anti-social behaviour and increasing community confidence. Details of all grants awarded can be found at [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)



**Wooler Drop-In – Northumberland**



**Age Concern – South Tyneside**



**Sporting Chance – Newcastle**



**Peace of Mind – Gateshead**



**Bangladesh Centre – Sunderland**



**North Tyneside Disability Forum**

### **Scrutiny Performance.**

Every month I meet with the Chief Constable and relevant senior officers to discuss the performance of the force.

At our August meeting we focused on performance for quarter one of 2019 / 2020. The areas that we focused on included –

- Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Putting Victims First
- Effective Criminal Justice System
- Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour
- Cutting Crime
- Community Confidence

There is much the Force is doing well at and you can read more on my website under Police and Crime Plan. At our meeting I focused on the 101 system. I want to make sure it is working for local residents. The wait times at peak periods are too long for my liking. When you need to contact the police I want local people to get the most appropriate response that meets their needs and situation.

Tackling anti-social behaviour remains an important issue, whilst they may not be affected by it, they want to know action will follow if they report such crimes. I will continue to monitor how Northumbria Police tackle reports of ASB and how they link in with local authorities to provide a seamless partnership approach.

We also discussed custody arrangements in the force, focusing on the treatment and conditions of those detained. The work of our independent custody visitors is invaluable in supporting my drive to ensure those in custody are treated with dignity and respect.

No-one should be a victim of crime simply because of who they are. Taking a zero tolerance stance to hate crime is a priority and I will be monitoring closely how the force deal with such crimes.

Other areas of discussion included ensuring that the approach taken by Northumbria Police to make sure people with mental health problems receive the extra support they need, and where appropriate they are given healthcare support.

I will continue to robustly challenge Northumbria Police to ensure they continue to deliver the needs of local residents. Where they get it right, I will offer congratulations and ensure we continue to deliver at that level, where Northumbria Police fall short I will expect to see a plan put in place to change standards and for the Chief Constable to keep me updated regularly.

### **Priorities for the next quarter.**

- Establishing the Violence Reduction Unit and appointing key staff.
- Working with partners, including local authorities, health and education in developing the vision and priorities of the Violence Reduction Unit.
- The final changes relating to legislation of how complaints are dealt with should receive Royal Assent over the winter and the changes will be introduced January / February 2020. The major change for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be that the responsible for dealing with appeals that were previously dealt with by the Chief Constable, will come to the OPCC.
- Recruitment of the new police officers following the announcement by the Prime Minister of 20,000 new police officers. At the time of writing this report, we are awaiting the numbers / finances allocated to Northumbria. It is important to note, that in addition to this, locally we continue to recruit new officers above and beyond the government announcement.
- Preparing for the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement, which will come towards the end of the year and will influence the police precept for Northumbria.
- Continuing to engage with local communities to hear their views on policing in Northumbria – what works well and what could be improved.
- Increased focus on crimes affecting rural communities and businesses.
- Reviewing the Late Night Levy to ensure what the funding is spent on is relevant to partners (Newcastle Council and the venues which pay the Late Night Levy).

### **Keeping in contact:**

I have committed to keeping partners and constituents updated about by work by producing a monthly newsletter. This will be emailed to people and uploaded on my website.

It is always good to hear your thoughts at panel meetings, if you would like to contact me between panel meetings, I can be contacted the following ways –

**Email** – [kim.mcguinness@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:kim.mcguinness@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)

**Twitter** - @northumbriapcc

**Facebook** – KiMcGuinness

**Telephone** – 0191 221 9800.

## Out and About

Since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting, I have met the following groups / visits. It's always good to hear first-hand from local residents what the police are doing well, and where improvements could be made. I would like to thank all the people I met for the warm welcome I was given:

- **Visit to Victims First Northumbria, North Tyneside.**
- Met with wildlife police officer Lee Davison, Northumberland.
- **Visit to local businesses in Wooler, Northumberland.**
- Meeting police officers and staff to see first-hand the work they undertake in various departments across the Force.
- **Sunderland, Newcastle and Northumberland. Meeting with Paul Giannasi, (National Police Hate Crime Advisory), Newcastle.**
- Catch up with Show Racism the Red Card team, Newcastle.
- **Celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North East Chinese Association, Newcastle.**
- Visit to Sunderland Bangladeshi Centre, Sunderland.
- **Meeting with staff and volunteers from MIND Washington, Sunderland.**
- Catch up meetings with the Chief Constable, North Tyneside.
- **Attended the formal opening of new play area at HMP Northumberland, Northumberland.**
- Visit to Wooler's Young Peoples drop in centre, Northumberland.
- **Met with Cyber Volunteers at Byker Police Station, Newcastle.**
- Visit to Hexham Police Station, Northumberland.
- **Presentation of laptops to Foundation Futures in Byker, Newcastle.**
- Catch up with North Tyneside Disability Forum members, North Tyneside.
- **Meeting with representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service, Force wide.**
- Visit to Sporting Chance, Cowgate.
- **Visit to Peace of Mind, Gateshead.**
- Met with the team at ACTS, South Tyneside.
- **Meeting with Chief Fire Officer Chris Lowther.**
- CoCo Charity event, Newcastle.
- **Meeting with Linda Bush of Youth Justice Board, Force wide.**
- Newcastle United Kicks Project, Wallsend.
- **Meeting Police Federation members at Whickham Police Station, Gateshead.**
- Meeting with Police Unison Members (Force wide).
- **Operation Encompass update, North Tyneside.**
- Walkabout of the Sunderland night time economy, Sunderland.