

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

14TH JANUARY 2020

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER REPORT JANUARY 2020

The last few months have really reinforced my belief that the decisions we make now can have long term benefits for policing and public safety in the Northumbria area. The force continues to face challenges in some key areas, from the ongoing impact of austerity to the issues identified in the recent PEEL report and discussed elsewhere on this agenda. As Police Commissioner I am working with the Chief Constable to address these issues, at the same time as working to prevent future generations having to deal with the problems we can start to address today.

I will go over some of the wider challenges and responses in this update report, but if you would like to read the comprehensive performance data it can be found on my website at www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk under the Police and Crime Plan section.

1. Launching the Violence Reduction Unit

When I last presented to the panel my team were in the early stages of creating a Violence Reduction Unit built on my strong belief that if we improve the lives of those at risk of crime we can in many cases prevent crime. It is right that our response to rising violent crime is seen through the actions of the police force and the criminal justice system, but I haven't met anyone yet who thinks we can just arrest our way out of this problem. The more we see of the evidence the clearer it is to me that a public health approach is key here.

I was delighted then to be able to announce the first round of funding for the community organisations already dedicated to providing an alternative to desperation and crime. Some 30 organisations across the Northumbria area have been awarded a share of £930,000 as part of joint efforts to reduce violent crime, ensuring much needed investment in vital youth and community services suffering after ten years of austerity.

The chosen projects will focus on ensuring that the violent crime seen in other cities does not become a reality in the North East, and this first round of funding will focus on early intervention, youth diversion, mental health, and drugs, alcohol & homelessness.

Projects benefiting from the funding include:

- The Foundation of Light's Kicks Town scheme, using sport to give young people worthwhile activities.
- Increasing the reach of the YOLO project across the Northumbria area. The scheme works with 8-14 year-olds who are at risk of slipping into a life of crime and prevents them from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, knife crime and serious youth violence.
- Changing Lives' street support officers, helping address the issues which lead people to begging and becoming at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of serious violence.

- A Newcastle United Foundation scheme dedicated to helping young people avoid violent behaviour.

Our aim in the Northumbria area is to coordinate a public health approach to tackling serious violence through a VRU that will build on the excellent partnership work that already exists and strengthen the coordination of stakeholders to deliver results. This multi-agency approach, bringing together police, local government, health, communities and other key partners together will work to tackle violent crime and identify key drivers that lead individuals to become victims or perpetrators of serious violence.

Reducing violence and tackling the root causes is a long term commitment and will take more than four months to achieve. To fully embrace a public health approach will take time and commitment from partners to change the culture and develop new and innovative ways of working. The aim of the next few months is to build the foundation for this to happen, identify our key issues and continue to shape the vision for Northumbria.

To ensure the effective delivery of our objectives a VRU team has been recruited that will co-ordinate overall progress, build on current and future partnership working and explore future opportunities to develop new ways of working.

Over the Christmas/New Year period the Home Office announced additional year of VRU funding will be available for 2020/21, including a further £1.6m for Northumbria. This is welcome news, but it is vital the Home Secretary takes a longer term view and provides a multi-year settlement that allows for real change. Put simply, we will not stop young people picking up a weapon with one-off money announced by the Home office during a quiet news period.

2. Police Recruitment

While work continues on preventing crime, the other major focus has to be on tackling crime as it happens. I want Northumbria Police to be a force that has the resources, from staff to software, to keep us safe. As part of that I'm pleased to say the force has begun its biggest recruitment campaign since at least 2010.

Austerity has seen the force lose more than 1,100 officers, as well as civilian staff that play their role in fighting crime. Repairing this damage will not be easy, and again, we will not see results overnight, but I'm heartened by the interest so far.

In the first three months of the recruitment campaign Northumbria saw more than 3,000 people register their interest, with more than 1,000 of these going on to submit applications. Of those going on to apply after the initial expressions of interest nearly 9% were from BAME backgrounds, and 34% were women.

Both myself and the Chief Constable are committed to ensuring the force reflects the make up of the Northumbria area population, and as part of this there has been continued targeted-marketing in to the New Year to encourage the widest possible up take. The force will be adding to these efforts in the coming months.

There have also been place-focused events have been held in Hexham, Berwick, Rothbury and Haltwhistle to continue attracting further applicants from rural areas and I'm pleased to say some 10% of applications came from rural locations.

Since the start of the recruitment campaign I'm pleased to say we have already started training the first 78 new recruits. Recruitment continues in to the New Year, and I'll report back on further progress. Clearly, we have a while to go before we reverse the losses of previous years, but this is a great first step.

3. Police Funding

At the time of publication, the Home Office had still not confirmed the Police Grant for the coming financial year. As part of the budget process it is my job to set the police precept in consultation with the public and in light of the needs of the police. Alongside this I will be speaking to the six council leaders in our area to seek their views on the police precept. Since the start of austerity measures in 2010, Northumbria Police has seen its budget cut by more than 30%, losing more than 1,100 officers in the process. Clearly, it is important the force has a stable financial base from which to repair this damage, but at the same time we must be mindful that households in the North East have experienced hardship as well, and our precept setting process will need to reflect this.

I will report back on this process at the next Police and Crime Panel.

4. Standing up to Domestic Abuse

Across the Northumbria area, we've made great progress in ensuring women and victims of domestic abuse have a voice and turn from victims to survivors.

But despite that hard work, we know domestic violence and coercive control is still widespread. This month I've joined people dedicated to tackling this as we ask of ourselves, what more can be done?

Across a variety of projects and learning conferences I've heard how the key to ending domestic violence is to give women a voice. Abuse such as this thrives on secrecy, and standing up to it on behalf of those suffering domestic abuse is incredibly important. One great example of this was the Digital Me project. Here women used creative digital lessons to show their survival story and give them the opportunity to share their unique perspective.

Their video showed the care they received, how the systems in place helped them move on from traumatic experiences and lets them reflect on ways professionals can improve. I'm proud my office funds projects such as this, and I'm committed to continuing to champion the survivors escaping domestic abuse the staff and volunteers who help make this happen.

That dedication amongst our public sector was on show when I visited Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service as part of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Firefighters were taking part in the White Ribbon campaign which works to challenge male cultures that lead to harassment, abuse and violence. That message of respect was repeated on our streets as part of the #itsnotokay campaign.

Young people's charity Streetwise invited the public to share the things they feel should not be happening in our city, for example #itsnotokay to grope me, harass me, send me indecent images, with the aim to raise awareness of the ongoing issue. It was great to see so many young men and women taking part in this project and standing up to discrimination.

5. Supporting Victims

In early December I launched the latest round of the Supporting Victims Fund, which was first launched in 2015 to strengthen the overall support for victims in Northumbria and to improve and widen the specialist services available to our most vulnerable and priority victims, as set out in the Victims Charter.

PCCs have responsibility for providing key victim services in their area, based on their local understanding of need. The assessment for the 2020-21 year builds on our understanding of services, demand and need since 2015 and is based upon Northumbria wide and local strategic assessments identifying levels of crime, new and emerging crimes and also local research and consultation with victims groups, community safety partnerships and service providers.

The key themes within the Supporting Victims Fund this year are:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual assault and abuse
- Young people and child victims
- Victims of hate crime
- Victims with mental health needs
- Victims with other vulnerabilities

6. Complaints

Organisations have been provided with a more detailed overview of the priorities, fund guidance and clear assessment criteria and have until the 15th January 2020 to make an application to the fund. A further update on victims commissioning funding decisions will be brought to the Police and Crime Panel later this year.

Panel members will be aware that the Government have been working on the final stage of the Police Integrity Regulations reforms, this will see changes to the following regulations and rules -

- Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020
- Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020
- Police (Performance) Regulations 2020
- Police Appeals Tribunal Rules 2020

At time of writing this update, there are likely to be a number of amendments before the document is signed off by the Home Office Minister. We expect the regulations to be laid in Parliament on the 10th January 2020 and will come into force on the 1st February 2020.

Going forward, the major change for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is that the appeals that the Chief Constable used to do in relation to low level complaint

outcomes dealt with by the Professional Standards Department will now become 'Reviews' which will be undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, here in Northumbria the statutory review officer will be the Director of Confidence, Standards and Statutory Reviews. The primary role of a review (where applicable, as some reviews will be undertaken by the IOPC) is to consider whether the handling of the complaint is reasonable and proportionate.

My office has been working closely with the Professional Standards Department to ensure a smooth transition. We will be using the workflow system to store all data in relation to reviews, as this will allow Northumbria Police PSD to send over relevant documents quickly and this in turn will allow the OPCC to provide an efficient service. As Police and Crime Commissioner, I am committed to openness and transparency and will on a quarterly basis upload the outcomes of each review.

7. Priorities for the next quarter:

- Gather together the organisations making the VRU a reality for a public health conference looking at how we can intervene to prevent crime and save lives.
- Secure appropriate funding for Northumbria Police via the Police Grant and council tax precept.
- Ensure successful roll out of the next round of recruitment.
- Meet with Chief Constable to monitor progress towards implementing recommendations raised in the recent HMICFRS inspection

Keeping in contact:

I have committed to keeping partners and constituents updated about my 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

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:

- **Met with Richard Young from Tyne and Wear Citizens UK.**
- Visited by If u Care Share Foundation which supports families affected by suicide.
- **Attended the Victims First Northumbria Board meeting.**
- Meeting with Mayor Norma Redfearn and Director of Public Health, Wendy Burke.
- **Meeting with TWFRS at their headquarters, Sunderland.**
- Meet the frontline visit to Bedlington Police Station, Bedlington.
- **Spoke at a Public Health Approach to tackling serious violence conference.**
- Catch up meetings with the Chief Constable.
- **Walkabout with police and staff from Pallion Action Group, Sunderland.**
- Attended an Operation Checkpoint rural crime briefing with police and volunteers, Alnwick.
- **Attended Acklington Mart as part of Rural Crime Week.**
- Met with colleagues from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- **Met with the National Federation of Independent Retailers to discuss retail crime.**
- Took part in the hate crime walk of solidarity.
- **Met with senior officers in Sunderland to discuss new working model.**
- Presented badges to rural crime volunteers as part of an induction, Alnwick.
- **Visited Oasis Community Group, Gateshead.**
- Attended a female focused recruitment engagement event at Forth Banks Station, Newcastle.
- **Meet the Frontline with officers based at South Shields police Station.**
- Catch up with Paul Hedley, Chief Fire Officer, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Newcastle.
- **Meeting and tour of Beacon of Light, Sunderland.**
- Attended Foundation of Light event, Sunderland.
- **Attended remembrance celebrations, Alnwick and Sunderland.**
- Attended an Action for Children event on serious organised crime.
- **Spoke at the Domestic Abuse Whole System Approach event at St James' Park, Newcastle.**
- Attended White Ribbon event at TWFRS HQ, Sunderland.
- **Attended One Punch North East Christmas campaign launch, North Tyneside.**
- Catch up with Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service, Hexham.