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**POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**

**violence  
reduction  
unit**

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



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# Introduction

A year ago I launched my new Police and Crime Plan. Since then, my office and the Force have been focussed on delivering on the priorities of our communities. Tackling crime and the individuals that bring misery to residents, working hard to prevent disorder in the first instance, and creating environments that give our young people the best start in life, it's all important. I am proud of the work that has been achieved to date, and throughout this report you will see some of the steps that we have taken to achieve the above, and the successes that should be celebrated.

Let's be clear though, there is still a very long way to go. If anything, the 12 months since launching the plan have brought about further challenges. We are seeing even further divides across society, and more and more families and communities marginalised due to the cost of living crisis, which is only going to get worse. It is absolutely vital that we ensure our struggling families and communities are supported, and that no-one is preyed upon or exploited because of their increased vulnerability.

My refreshed plan reflects this challenge, and outlines how we will work to reduce inequality, improve life opportunities and continue to support the most vulnerable. We know that those living in deprivation are more likely to become a victim of crime, and no-one should be more at risk because of their situation. Let's focus on fighting poverty, and in turn, our fight against crime will become a lot easier.

Thank you for your continued support

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, loopy initial 'K' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that tapers off to the right.

**Kim McGuinness**

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner

# Priorities

In my Police & Crime Plan I set out 6 key priorities under 3 core pillars:



In this annual report, I will update you on the progress made on each of these priorities over the year (2021/22).

# Pillar 1: Fighting Crime

## Priority 1: Reducing crime

I committed to working with the Chief Constable to reduce crime. In the Police and Crime Plan I set several areas of focus under this priority and I summarise below the highlights of our progress to date:

### Giving the force the tools to do the job

- From April 2020 to September 2021 the Force has welcomed 649 new officers – these new recruits will help replace retiring officers, while increasing existing officer numbers as well. Northumbria continues to make good progress in relation to the National Police Uplift Programme. The Force will not only have met but exceeded its target by 31 March 2022, with recruitment set to achieve up to 110 officers above government targets for the second year of the programme.

### Early intervention and reducing reoffending

- My Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has commissioned a range of interventions aimed at providing intensive engagement and diversion for those involved in serious violence and vulnerable to wider criminality. The approach aims to bring key agencies together to provide an operational and problem-solving response in areas of most need, identifying and working with those who are at risk of causing the most harm to communities.
- Overall levels of serious violence in Northumbria reduced by 1% (164 offences) to 17,865 offences in the 12 months to 31/05/2021.



## **The illegal drugs trade**

- Operation Venetic, co-ordinated by the NCA and involving the North East Regional Special Operations Unity (NERSOU) and Northumbria Police, delivered excellent results in its targeting of OCGs involved in drug supply. For example, in one week of May 2021 alone, the force held a successful County Lines Intensification Week, which saw 23 arrests being made and more than £20,000 in criminal money seized.
- My VRU also delivered projects this year which aim to fight the illegal drugs trade. These projects focus on supporting those with substance addiction to move away from criminality through recovering from addiction and receiving support to rebuild their lives.
- For example, the VRU is working with the Recruitment Junction and Northumbria Police to deliver an Employability Pathway for men subject to an Out of Court Disposal (OOCDD) – an alternative to short prison sentences. Individuals will have the opportunity to join the Recruitment Junction’s employability programme or access other specialist provision if their underlying level of additional support needs (substance addiction, mental health, unsettled accommodation for example) are likely to be barriers to entering the employment market.

## **Rural crime**

- Operation Checkpoint is an ongoing fighting crime initiative that targets suspected criminal activity and works to protect rural communities guided by local intelligence and emerging crime trends. Checkpoint is supported by a network of volunteers who provide valuable local insight and knowledge to officers. Since July 2021, the number of Operation Checkpoint volunteers has risen from 30 to 52, with plans to increase this to 60 in the coming months. In July, I revealed in the last 12 month period there had been 517 fewer rural crimes recorded compared to the previous 12 months – and I want to keep this number down.

## **Responding to the needs of the public**

- In my Police & Crime Plan I committed to ensuring that each call to the police is met with an appropriate response and that the force continue to focus on response times.
- In my report to the panel in July 2021, I reported that 89% of 999 emergency calls were answered within call handling standards, on average within 8 seconds. This is an improvement on the 12 months to April 2020 where 85% were answered within call handling standards, within 10 seconds on average.
- In addition, area commands found that 85% of volume crime victims were satisfied with their service as a whole. This was a statistically significant improvement compared to the previous year (12 months to April 2020) when 81% of victims were satisfied.

## **Online crime**

- Disrupting offending: Northumbria Police has adopted the regional ‘Cease & Desist’ supportive intervention tool, promoting voluntary engagement with subjects that have been identified as involved in or being on the periphery of cyber-crime, but not met the threshold for arrest, to prevent possible offending or to stop ongoing offending.
- Awareness raising: Improving the Force capability and response to cyber investigations has been addressed in a number of ways this year. This included a six week media campaign to raise

awareness of the Cyber Unit and its capabilities both externally utilising local radio and local radio as well as internal engagement. In addition, the force established drop-in advice sessions and contact facilities for officers outside the specialist cyber team who require investigative support and ongoing training in the different aspects of cyber.

### **Serious and organised crime**

- NERSOU continued this year to provide specialist capabilities to tackle serious and organised crime (SOC) in support of Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland Police forces. For example, under Operation Sentinel, Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland police join forces and work alongside NERSOU to highlight regional activity tackling serious and organised crime across the region.
- Operation Venetic saw significant success this year, with Northumbria Police overseeing recovery of circa 22.5kg of cocaine (value £1m), 2.5kg of heroin, several firearms and ammunition, and £1.03m in cash.

### **Priority 2: Anti-social behaviour**

#### **I committed to reducing anti-social behaviour. This year:**

- Work began to re-develop the ASB Case Review. My office met with the police and representatives of all six local authorities to review the current position across Northumbria and identify any opportunities for development. The revised process will identify vulnerable victims and provide residents with an easily accessible and transparent route to have a review of cases where they are persistently experiencing ASB. This will also be complemented by the ASB Victim Support Network that the OPCC currently contributes £30,000 into across the region.
- I continued to invest in youth services to prevent and divert young people from ASB, through the Violence Reduction Unit, Operation Payback Grant Fund and other community grants.
- My office has met with the senior leadership team within the force to look at coordinating the strategic direction for addressing ASB in Northumbria and we have been in touch with other forces up and down the country to benchmark what they do and identify any good practice that might fit within our vision.
- Since my report to the panel in July 2021:
  - A Strategic ASB Board has been established, to oversee and support the approach to ASB and victims of ASB across the region. The first meeting was held in January 2022 with full commitment from all six LAs, both Fire Services and Police.
  - We have begun the recruitment process for an ASB Champion to sit within the OPCC team.

# Pillar 2: Preventing Crime



## Priority 3: Preventing violent crime

We need to prevent people, particularly young people, getting into a life of violent crime. In the Police and Crime Plan I set out 3 areas of focus under this priority:

### 1. Prevention, utilising a public health approach

#### Highlights of this financial year:

- My Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) continued to prevent crime by taking a direct approach to intervening with those who are showing signs of vulnerability or are on the fringes of criminal/anti-social activity. This takes the form of direct intervention with young people as well as working with other services and organisations to address the wider needs of other family members such as siblings. I set out examples of the successful projects being undertaken in my October 2021 report to panel.
- Youth services: In 2021, my office conducted research into the state of the youth services sector in Northumbria, following hefty cuts to funding nationwide. 111 organisations responded to a survey and/or attended a 'launch' event to share their views on past, present and future concerns for their organisations. I published a report which shows that there has been a 75% decrease in local authority spending on youth services in Northumbria since 2011. In the report I make 6 urgent recommendations to Government to rectify the situation and I plan to lobby Government to act.
- Anti-social behaviour: Operation Vita in Wallsend was launched in January 2020 and has achieved a 47% reduction in youth related ASB in the Wallsend and Howden wards. The project

treats violence and ASB as a public health issue and aims to divert young people away from ASB and violence and into alternative community activities.

- Business crime: Between March-September 2021, 12 webinars were delivered to businesses, covering different aspects of NCSC guidance, such as Mitigating Malware, Ransomware Attacks and Cyber Security Toolkit for Boards. In my last Preventing Crime panel report (published October 2021), I reported that a total of 250 businesses had attended these webinars to-date.
- Tackling and preventing extremist activity: The National ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) awareness campaign was rolled out across Northumbria. ACT is delivered at strategic, corporate and operational levels and the new e-learning package has now been cascaded to thousands of businesses, statutory and third sector partners across the county.

## **2. Reducing reoffending**

- My VRU has undertaken much work to reduce reoffending across the Force area.
- For example, Out of Court Disposal (OOCDD)/Conditional Caution programmes have been established which aim to tackle the root cause of crime in order to prevent reoffending. The Conditional Caution process is designed to improve victim satisfaction, rehabilitate the offender, change their behaviour, reduce reoffending and realise efficiencies. The success of the VRU-established commissioned pathways is evidenced in the high compliance and low reoffending rates of the people who have received intervention from the Women's pathway and the 'V-Aware' programme. As I reported in October 2021, the VRU saw:
  - 83% compliance rate for women's pathway,
  - 72% compliance rate for V-Aware
  - 83% of women who complied with the pathway did not re offend    86% of those who complied with the V Aware programme did not re offend

## **3. Roads policing**

**I am committed to reducing harm on the roads and promoting safer driving. This year:**

- The force launched a number of digital campaigns focussed on the safety of two wheeled road users.
- The force continued to successfully conduct Operation Dragoon which sees a proactive team within the force's Motor Patrols department focus on high risk drivers, for example those driving while disqualified, and criminals who use vehicles to commit offences, such as drug supply or burglary. The unit is an effective proactive asset who receive intelligence-led taskings and use road traffic powers to disrupt such offending.

#### Priority 4: Neighbourhood policing

The Chief Constable and I have agreed that neighbourhood policing is a top priority, alongside working with other organisations such as local councils to help keep our streets safe. This year:

- The Force commenced a new Neighbourhood Strategy which provides our dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams with clear objectives. The Neighbourhood Strategy has a strong emphasis on intelligence-based prevention of crime and ASB.
- In February 2021 a new Harm Reduction and Communities Team was created to oversee Force wide delivery of neighbourhood, external engagement and serious violence strategies. This team provide strategic leadership and guidance to Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Engagement Teams, developing policy and processes, and providing expert support and leadership on crime prevention, problem solving, engagement, and early intervention.
- Northumbria Police developed and delivered a multi-agency training package on problem solving methodologies to all Neighbourhood officers and staff and 50 key partner agency staff from the six local authorities and private housing companies. The package was designed to improve skills, share good practice and improve collaborative working. At the request of the Home Office the Force approach to developing bespoke problem solving plans to address serious violence hotspots has been shared nationally as best practice.
- The Force developed a new standardised Neighbourhood profile report to be maintained by each of the Neighbourhood teams across the Force. These detailed reports describe the sector, provide demographic data to inform engagement activity, identify key local partners, identify current priority issues in relation to crime and ASB and summarise plans to address these issues.



# Pillar 3: Improving Lives



## Priority 5: Support for victims

Protecting vulnerable victims is absolutely a priority for Northumbria Police and I will continue to make sure this focus remains. In the Police and Crime Plan I set out several areas of focus under this priority. Highlights of work undertaken this year are outlined below.

### 1. Supporting people through the justice system

- As PCC I am responsible for commissioning the majority of victim services in our areas. This year my team oversaw the distribution of over £2 million in grant funding across numerous funding streams. In the first half of this financial year alone, my Supporting Victims, Uplift, IDVA/ISVA and Male Rape Support Funds enabled 14,343 victims of various crimes to be supported.
- I established a Victim and Witness Service Improvement Board to assist me in making continuous improvements to victim support services and ensuring better outcomes for victims.
- I commissioned Northumbria Police to deliver genuine end-to-end support for all victims, resulting in an improved offer to victims and witnesses across the Northumbria area.
- I commissioned a Recovery Group where the police, CPS and courts are working together to reduce court delays caused by Covid-19 restrictions and provide opportunities for victims and witnesses to give evidence remotely.

### 2. Stalking and harassment

- I conducted a Victim Needs Assessment, which has highlighted the increase in stalking and harassment over recent years and the need for more tailored provision to meet victim needs associated with this. This will be reflected in my ongoing commissioning of victim services.

### **3. Hate crime**

- I launched an OPCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Business Plan, which will lead to work in my office focussing on perpetrators of hate and early identification of hate relationships, ensuring that future interventions have the desired impact.
- Northumbria Hate Crime Champions – a nationally accredited scheme – have continued to raise awareness of how unacceptable hate is and how, together, we can help put a stop to it. Champions are there to make getting help easier and I have ambitions to ensure we have them everywhere.

### **4. Community cohesion and extremism**

- I have continued to fund innovative community projects which aim to bring about community cohesion – for example the ‘Edible Elswick Garden Neighbours’ project in the West End of Newcastle. This project brings together the diverse communities of Elswick by providing gardening activities. This has led to increased pride in the local area, breaking down barriers, reducing and combatting the impact of crime and increasing resilience and community cohesion.

### **5. Mental health**

- Mental health continues to be the main support need of victims of crime in Northumbria. This year I continued to commission services to support victims with their mental health, such as Tyneside and Northumberland Mind who provide specialist emotional, practical and counselling support to victims of crime with additional mental health needs.

### **6. Complaints**

- From the 1st February 2020 legislation changes resulted in my office becoming responsible for certain reviews following a complaint that has been dealt with by Northumbria Police Professional Standards Department (PSD). This year we have continued to embed this new role and provide a good service to anybody who feels the need to make a complaint.

### **7. Use of force and stop and search**

- In the Police and Crime Plan I committed to ensure that Stop and Search is only used when police have sufficient grounds to act thereby protecting communities. Where there is disparity between different racial groups, I commit to oversee the force’s work to reduce this rate.
- In July 2021, my office established the ‘Police Powers External Scrutiny Panel’ for communities to provide constructive oversight, discussion and challenge. There is active involvement of diverse communities across Northumbria to address the disproportionate use of police powers which can undermine police legitimacy and risks damaging public confidence.

## **Priority 6: Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence**

I committed in the Police and Crime Plan to make it my business to encourage people to come forward and report domestic abuse and sexual violence, and support them through their experience when they do. This year I have:

- Commissioned numerous specialist services to support victims of domestic abuse (DA) and sexual violence (SV), including through the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Uplift Fund for DA and SV Services, from which we successfully bid for over £350,000. This money went directly to 28 specialist services supporting DA and SV victims to increase their capacity for support. My office were also successful in obtaining £747,681 from the MoJ ISVA and ISVA Fund this year, which will be distributed amongst 10 specialist organisations over 2 years to increase the provision of IDVAs and ISVAs across Northumbria.
- I successfully secured over £1 million from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund to support my vision of helping improve the public's feelings of safety, specifically women and girls and marginalised groups across our region in public spaces. We have been successful with all three of the bid we submitted, receiving 100% of all funds requested. The funding runs until 31 March 2022 and has involved work in parks, night-time economies and on public transport.
- In July 2021 it was confirmed that the OPCC would be responsible for commissioning SARC services in Northumbria. To provide robust governance in respect of the SARC commissioning work I established the SARC Transformation Programme 21-22, which has involved, amongst other work, the commissioning of a new regional SARC service provider and the procurement of a new SARC premises.
- I have ensured support for child victims of abuse, through commissioning specialist support services both through my core 'Supporting Victims Fund' and my 'Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund'. Through the CADA fund alone, I this year funded 9 services to enhance the delivery of DA-specific, trauma-informed: play therapy and counselling services; children's group work; parent and child group work programmes; and specialist provision for Black and minoritised children.
- My Workplace DA Champions Scheme has continued to grow. When I reported to the panel in December 2021, there had been a total of 1,177 employees trained pre-pandemic across 306 different local employers and 112 organisations had a domestic abuse policy in place.
- My VRU commissioned a pilot of the Ask Me scheme across the North of Tyne. This is a preventative and early intervention initiative that trains the community to become active bystanders and empowers them to act as prosocial citizens. By the end of Quarter 2 2021/22, the scheme received 246 applications for training. When I reported to the panel in December 2021, 15 courses have been run so far with 59 people successfully completing their training; 51 had gone on to register as 'Ask Me Ambassadors'.
- In late 2021 my office introduced the Drive pilot into Northumbria. The Drive intervention works with high risk, high harm serial DA perpetrators to prevent their behaviour and protect their adult and child victims.
- The VRU funded Northumberland County Council's Adolescent Service to set up the 'Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) and Exploitation Team' which was established in January 2021. This has led to the development a CPVA pathway and a Non Violent Resistance (NVR) intervention. As at December 2021, the project had 87 CPVA referrals and 34 exploitation referrals. In cases of 'hard to reach' young people the service offers a tenacious, informal and creative approach to build trusted relationships - by December 2021 the team had worked with 51 young people and their families with an engagement rate of 96%.

# Funding your force

For 2021/22 the force received £320.243 million to fund crime fighting and public safety.

The Commissioner agreed a budget and medium-term financial strategy that continued to build on the £8.300 million investment package approved in the previous year.

For 2021/22, in order to address the increase in demand and complexity of investigations, £2.700 million was allocated to deliver an additional 60 police officer investigator posts over and above existing recruitment plans, and the Uplift target set by government.

The table below sets out spending based on the 2021/22 budget.

<b>POLICING SERVICES ALLOCATION</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>
<b>Local Policing</b>	<b>38.2%</b>
<b>Public Protection</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
<b>Investigations</b>	<b>17.8%</b>
<b>Dealing with the Public</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
<b>Criminal Justice Arrangements</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>Operational Support</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>Roads Policing</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
<b>Investigative Support</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner (includes public insurances etc)</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

## How your money will be spent in the coming years

The latest force budget and the Commissioners Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 will ensure that Northumbria Police have the financial stability they need to fight and prevent crime and deliver against the priorities identified by communities in the Police and Crime Plan.

To support delivery of the Strategy the Commissioner has approved an increase in the Council Tax Precept for 2022/23 that will raise an additional £4.000 million of funding for policing in Northumbria. This funding will be used to provide investment in:

- Additional call handlers to improve performance for 999 and 101 services.
- Extra resources to tackle cyber-crime and serious and organised crime.
- More civilian investigators to support investigations and free up officers.
- Workforce investment - supporting our officers to keep them on the beat and tackling crime.

In addition, an approved four-year capital programme of over £80.000 million will ensure continued investment in estates, IT and digital infrastructure, vehicles and operational equipment.

This will include the provision and upgrading of personal issue equipment including Taser capability, body-worn video and body worn armour replacement, protecting our officers whilst ensuring they have the right tools to fight and crime, protect the vulnerable and keep our communities safe.

The Force will continue to drive change and efficiency through transformation which includes significant investment in IT, leading edge technology and digital infrastructure to aid the detection and investigation of crimes, ensuring that Northumbria is a Force fit for the future.

As part of that, I authorised an increase in the police precept to ensure Northumbria Police can hire 60 extra detectives. These will ensure we are taking the fight to organised crime in the years ahead.

We'll also continue with record-breaking recruitment, which has seen recruited a total of 793 police officers join since April 2019.

Work will also continue on a major overhaul of the force IT system, an essential step in ensuring the police are equipped to keep us safe.



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## **Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit**

I now have a dedicated Facebook page on the work of my Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit - you can like it here - [@NorthumbriaVRU](https://www.facebook.com/NorthumbriaVRU)