



DELIVERY OF THE POLICE & CRIME PLAN: IMPROVING LIVES PANEL REPORT DECEMBER 2022



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FROM THE PCC

Supporting victims is a vital element of the fight against crime. The public need to feel assured that their voice will be heard and action will be taken when they are a victim of crime. That is especially true for our more vulnerable groups, or those trapped in difficult situations.

I'm pleased then to be able to present this report setting out how the public's Police and Crime Plan is being used to support victims of crime. We have seen great dedication from Northumbria Police, my office and other partners in creating a criminal justice system which is centred on the needs of the victim.

Since my last report covering victims' needs, my office has relaunched a region-wide Anti-Social Behaviour complaints process known as the Community Trigger. This is a mechanism for giving residents a voice when they feel their ASB concerns have not been heard. My office works with the police, councils and others to review ASB complaints and see how progress can be made together.

This model, of bringing people together to listen to residents, is key to how we will make progress when it comes to tackling ASB.

We've also seen great success in terms of putting more support on to public transport to help tackle ASB on Metros and buses. That means more youth workers at Metro stations, more police patrols and easier ways to report unsafe locations on the public transport network.

However, despite the successes we have seen in this mission, it has taken place against the competing pressures of rising need and a fall in resources.

Now, those services are coming under even more pressure as the cost of living crisis hits home. This is dangerously apparent in domestic abuse services. Financial hardships trap people in poverty and it traps victims in abusive relationships.

My fear is that without extra resources, Government financial resources, more victims, and more women, will remain trapped in violent households. My office is doing its part to support agencies dealing with domestic abuse, but funding is incredibly limited and there is an urgent need for

Government to step up and respond to the crisis. While we campaign for this I'll continue to work with victims' support groups, and I am committed to prioritising their needs in my Police and Crime Plan.

**Yours,
Kim**

IMPROVING LIVES PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Support for victims

Being a victim of crime can undermine a person's confidence and make them unhappy or frightened. It can affect a person's outlook on life, that is why it is so important that we put victims at the heart of policing. 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 8 areas of focus under this priority:

- a. Supporting people through the justice system
- b. Stalking and harassment
- c. Hate crime
- d. Community cohesion and extremism
- e. Mental health
- f. Complaints
- g. Use of force and stop and search
- h. Environmental policy

Priority 2: Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence

Violence and abuse can blight communities and lead to devastating consequences. It has devastating, traumatic and long-lasting impact on victims, families and wider communities. I will make it my business to encourage people to come forward and report it, and support them through their experience when they do.



IMPROVING LIVES PRIORITY 1: SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

1. SUPPORTING PEOPLE THROUGH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Crime, and the fear of crime, can cause far reaching damage both to individuals and local communities. I want to make sure no one suffers alone, and that there is always support available for victims of crime or parts of our region that have been hit by crime.

Navigating the criminal justice system can be daunting for victims and witnesses so I want to put them at the heart of that system. In the Police and Crime Plan I made several commitments. I outline these below, along with an update on work completed to date.

Commitment 1: I will continue to invest in the services that support people through the criminal justice system

Commissioning victim services

In my role as PCC, I am responsible for commissioning the majority of victim services in our area. I am committed to investing in victim support services to give people a greater chance of coping with the impact of crime and recovering from their experience. My Policy and Commissioning team currently oversee the distribution of over £3 million in grant funding for victim services and continue to be successful in identifying gaps in need and bidding for additional funds where possible. The organisations we commission aim to help victims cope with, and recover from, the impact of crime. The nature of support offered varies to meet all needs. For victims who have reported crime to the police, support is available from pre-report to post-court. Support is also in place for those who do not feel that pursuing a criminal justice outcome is right for them.

Funding is allocated via various funding streams:

SUPPORTING VICTIMS FUND

- My Supporting Victims Fund (SVF) provides core funding to organisations across Northumbria, continuing year on year to strengthen the overall offer of support to victims; improving and widening the specialist services available to meet the needs of our most vulnerable and priority victims. £1,848,229.74 of the Ministry of Justice's yearly funding has been distributed to services in the current financial year. In addition to this, I have contributed a further £386,797.47 of my own Discretionary Funding towards the Supporting Victim fund, to ensure all victims can access support at the point of need.
- 26 organisations receive funding from the SVF. These organisations specialise in supporting the following victims:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sexual violence
 - Young victims of crime
 - Hate crime
 - Victims with mental ill health
 - Victims with other vulnerabilities
- Services offer a range of support from a variety of professionals – from Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs and ISVAs), to counsellors and specialist therapeutic group support workers.

- In addition to direct support, the SVF funds preventative work. In the first half of the current financial year:
 - 277 children in primary and secondary schools have received sessions on healthy relationships through Barnardo's Real Love Rocks programme.
 - Racism awareness sessions have been delivered to 572 young people in schools and youth organisations.
 - 755 children in primary schools have received education sessions on discrimination through the United as One programme delivered by Newcastle United Foundation.

We have recently launched our Supporting Victims Programme (SVP) 2023-26. Following sustained campaigning from our office and others, we are pleased that the Ministry of Justice have now committed to a multi-year funding settlement and we will be able to reflect this commitment in our local commissioning – successful SVP applicants will receive a three-year funding commitment, bringing much needed stability to our local services. Funding priorities and themes have been shaped by our victims needs assessment that was recently carried out and respond to demand and emerging need. These are outlined briefly below:

- Domestic abuse – including specialist support for women, men, Black and minority ethnic victims and isolated/marginalised victims
- Stalking and harassment
- Sexual violence (and sexual exploitation) – including specialist support for women, men, children and Black and minority ethnic victims
- Violence against the person
- Children and young people – support for various crime types, including exploitation
- Hate crime
- Victims with mental health needs
- Victims with other vulnerabilities – including MDS, support for older people, criminal justice system support and support for road crime victims

We are currently in the assessment process and are working with local partners, such as local authority domestic abuse leads and NHS England, to assess the bids to ensure a locally informed approach to our victims commissioning. We hope to have decisions finalised by the end of the calendar year, with services commencing 1 April 2023.



Samantha's Legacy who received £4,600 through the Supporting Victims Fund for their victims retreat

Case Study: A retreat for victims of serious violence

I provide funding through my Supporting Victims Fund to Samantha's Legacy, a charity established by the family of Samantha Madgin. Samantha was just 18 when she was stabbed to death in Wallsend and since the tragedy in 2007, her family have worked tirelessly to educate young people about the dangers of carrying knives and have also offered their support to those who have found themselves in similar circumstances. The charity have now proudly opened the doors to a caravan getaway for families who have been similarly impacted by serious violence. The retreat offers families some normality and a means of escape when they most need it, helping to positively impact their mental health, well-being, and their overall recovery process. Samantha's Legacy work closely with Northumbria's core victim service, Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) to coordinate referrals.

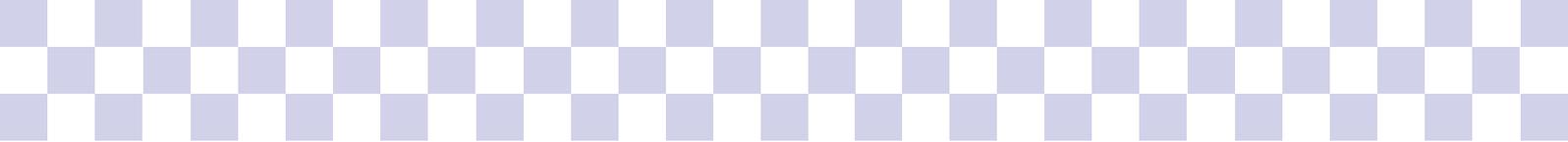
OPERATION PAYBACK

I launched my initial Operation Payback Fund in March 2021, which allowed for money recovered from criminals to be put back where it belongs which is into the heart of local communities. I have since built on the success of this fund, launching Operation Payback Round 4 in December 2022.

This latest round of funding was focussed on groups who are providing diversionary activities for young people during Summer school holidays and the darker nights with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and providing young people with much needed access to activities. 60 groups and organisations across Northumbria who wanted to make a positive difference in their neighbourhood and repair the harm caused by crime were successful in bidding for this funding. These groups are now in the process of delivering on projects which are making a huge impact in their communities. For example:

- **Mindstars** (North Tyneside) – Funding enabled them to include more children in their Summer Camp for four weeks together with providing all children with more enriching and positive activities focused on empowering, supporting and creating a long-lasting impact.
- **New Beginnings North** (Sunderland) - Funding supported neurodivergent young people at risk of anti-social behaviour, and who are significantly suffering with their mental health. This funding enabled and health programmes.
- **Bede's Helping Hands Food Bank** (South Tyneside) - Funding enabled them to hold a summer holiday scheme for children and their families based in and around the Scotch Estate, Jarrow.
- **NE Surf Society** (Northumberland) - Funding enabled them to run a free weekly surf lesson for young people who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to benefit from surfing.
- **Creative Youth Opportunities CIC** (Gateshead) - Funding to deliver arts-based activities to young people in Gateshead who have been victims of crime – to help build their confidence and self-esteem.
- **West Denton JFC** (Newcastle) - Funding to purchase three metal containers to create a welcoming hub that can be used for a social space for young people at the football club.

These excellent examples show what can be achieved by groups who are working at the core of communities and are aware of the issues that impact on local people.



Following the success and obvious need for funding for diversionary activities for young people and repairing the damage caused by crime in communities, I will soon be launching Round 4 of the Operation Payback Fund. This has the same focus as before, with the fund aimed at grass roots organisations and community groups and allows them to bid for micro grants up to £1,000 or larger grants up to £5,000.

In addition to these two funds, I have also commissioned further services and projects which aim to support victims, prevent violence abuse and create safer spaces in Northumbria, utilising the MoJ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Community Fund, IDVA/ISVA and Male Rape Support Funds, as well as the Home Office Safer Streets Fund. More detail on this work can be found below, under priority 2.

Monitoring processes for commissioned victims services

To ensure efficient and effective delivery of victim services in Northumbria, my office has a comprehensive monitoring process. Each service has a dedicated Programme Lead from my office to follow them throughout the funding period, monitoring their progress and providing any additional support required.

Through quarterly monitoring report submissions and grant surgeries, my office can ensure each grant is spent in the way it was intended, track performance against agreed outputs (e.g. the number of victims/survivors that have received support, the number of group programmes carried out etc.), receive information on key cope and recovery outcomes and service feedback, and gain an understanding of pressures and demand. This enables us to swiftly pick up any key arising trends and identify possible gaps in our commissioning of victims services that we can address. I make personal visits to a selection of services to see first-hand the work that they are undertaking and the impact they are making.

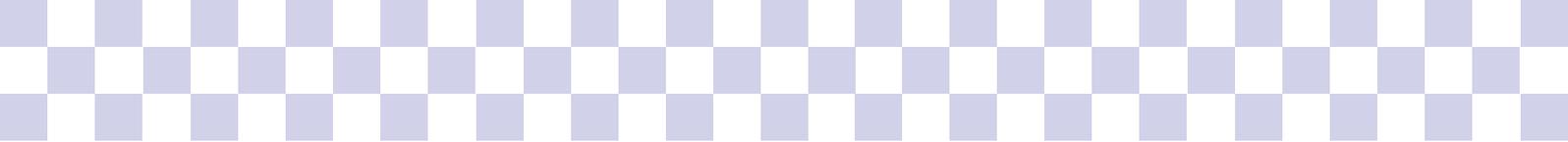
Victims commissioning performance

I am pleased to report that in the first half of the current financial year, my Supporting Victims Fund, DA/SV Community Fund, IDVA/ISVA Fund Rounds 1 & 2 and Male Rape Support Fund have enabled 16,157 victims of various crimes to be supported – an 11% increase on the same period in 2021/22.

Victim and Witness Service Improvement Board

The ongoing improvement of victim support services and achieving better outcomes for victims continues to be one of my key priorities. It is critical that I have an overview of how all victims' services are performing and developing, in partnership with service providers and victim and witness representatives. Therefore, I established a new Victim and Witness Service Improvement Board in 2021 to further assist my understanding of how we 'get it right' for victims of crime across Northumbria.

Membership of this board continues to include representation from my office, Northumbria Police and various thematic specialists and victims and witnesses, all offering specialist input and personal experiences across a variety of crime types. I am delighted with how the Board have already helped improve our general understanding of what victims want and need throughout their journey through the Criminal Justice System (CJS).



We recently completed an annual review of the Board in which we have:

- Considered the current membership, ensuring member representation continues to reflect my funding priorities and demographics of our region.
- Identified common key themes and issues across the CJS that have been raised throughout the last year.
- Created a work programme for the next year to capture the above themes and issues, offering the Board assurances of how our office is seeking to address and resolve them.

Whilst future meetings will continue to focus upon the new Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) and their general service delivery, additional agenda items will seek to obtain feedback from our members regarding the whole process from report to court and beyond.

Northumbria Victims' Champion

I am committed to putting victims first, improving lives and making sure we are doing things right by them. To help achieve this, a Victims' Champion has been appointed, to listen and amplify the voices of victims in our region. By understanding victims experiences, and engaging with our key partners, our Victims' Champion will be able to use this information to positively influence change across the Criminal Justice System and improve victims' journeys through the CJS in our region.

Our Victims' Champion started on 1st August 2022 and has already been engaging with a range of services and individual victims to understand their experiences. It is essential that we hear the experiences of all, including those whose voice is often 'hidden' to ensure victims are getting the best possible service and care.

Anti-Social Behaviour

COMMUNITY TRIGGER

In July 2022, as part of the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategic Board, my office launched the new and improved Community Trigger Process (also known as the ASB Case Review) across our region. The Community Trigger is an important safety net for victims and communities experiencing ASB to request a review of their ASB case and to bring agencies together to find a solution.

ASB covers a lot of different types of behaviour and can affect people in many different ways. ASB is behaviour causing or likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to any member of the public or which may have a detrimental effect on someone's quality of life. If a victim is unsatisfied with the response they have received from the relevant agencies, and they meet the threshold, a Community Trigger can be activated.

The revised process helps to identify vulnerable victims and provides residents with an easily accessible and transparent route to have a review of cases where they are persistently experiencing ASB. This process is now coordinated by my office, working in close partnership with the Community Safety Partnerships across our region, with a shared threshold and a consistent process to activate the Community Trigger.

In Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, the threshold to activate the Community Trigger is:

- At least three qualifying complaints have been made about ASB in the past 6 months and/or;
- The victim(s) of ASB are considered to be 'high risk'

We are seeing fantastic results as part of this new process, and engaging with victims and giving them a voice has been an integral part of the multi-agency partnership work we are doing. In just 14 weeks we have had 48 Community Trigger activations. Of these:

- 75% met the threshold
- 25% were high risk victims
- 39% were on the basis of 3 or more qualifying complaints
- 36% were both elements of the threshold – high risk and qualifying complaints
- 95% victims attended their panel
- In 96% of panels, recommendations have been made for further work on the case

We have themed the findings from the panels into Learning Outcomes which provide opportunities to improve the approach to ASB and Positive Outcomes which is where good and promising practice is identified and/or further action is planned to support the victims and try to resolve the ASB. From the panel we have found the following learning outcomes and positive outcomes:

- The greatest learning outcome is around the victim impact - where the cumulative impact on the victim has not been fully considered.
- The most featured positive outcome is 'Action Identified' where enforcement or engagement action has been identified to help resolve the ASB.
- In a few cases there has also been a re-classification, where the person activating the trigger has been identified as the perpetrator of ASB which gives the agencies involved further support in continuing their case investigations.

REPORTING AND VICTIM EXPERIENCE

As part of the Strategic ASB Board I have created a working group dedicated to our first Board priority: 'Reporting and Victim Experience'. This working group is looking at the victims journey through their ASB case and understanding the types of support available to ASB victims throughout our region. The aim is to create a consistent ASB process and ensure that everybody has the same access to support, no matter where they live. We want our services to be inclusive, supportive and adaptable and as part of this project we are also trying to understand what ASB looks like for young people, how they perceive ASB, the support they have access to and what the barriers are to reporting incidents.

Commitment 2: I will introduce a new system for supporting victims of crime

In reflecting on my commitment to putting victims at the heart of policing, I commissioned Northumbria Police to deliver genuine end-to-end support for all victims, including those pursuing a route through the criminal justice system and those who are not, resulting in an overall improved offer to victims and witnesses across our region. This has resulted in the launch of our new Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) which has joined up and enhance the delivery of the core victim support service across the Northumbria Police Force area.

As part of the roll out of NVWS, Northumbria Police have adopted a three-stage approach:

1. Recruitment and training
2. Victims Code of Practice (VCoP) - work is ongoing within the force to improve IT abilities so that staff are updated of any 'significant events', such as when a person has been arrested, charged etc., in order to better how the force uphold the VCoP.
3. Enhanced self-serve internet opportunity – this will allow victims access to an online portal for reporting new crimes and checking on the status of existing reports.

Whilst the phases are ongoing, I am pleased to hear of some of the progress already made. Alongside the positive changes made in combining both NVWS and Court Liaison to better streamline the report to court support, it is great to see the successful recruitment and training that Northumbria Police have completed within phase one, in relation to cope, recovery and court support.

As emphasised in my previous panel report, I want to see more people taking up offers of support, as research shows that those with support are more likely to continue to engage with the criminal justice process, and cope and recover from the impact of the crime they experienced. I am delighted that NVWS are already reporting a significant increase in the overall number of referrals received. The positive changes to the referral rates may be attributed to the new Victims Needs Assessment that Northumbria Police has introduced, which is simpler to complete and includes new needs such as whether the victim requires a discussion about special measures or court attendance.

It is pleasing to hear of some of the positive early indicators that Northumbria Police are reporting, including but not limited to:

- 100% victim satisfaction rates
- 92% improvement across all STAR models completed
- Increase in the number of Special Measures being discussed
- Increase in the number of vulnerable and intimidated referrals
- Increase in pre-trial visit referrals

I am confident with the decisions made to commission Northumbria Police to deliver our core victim service and look forward to closely monitoring how the service further develops.

Commitment 3: I will support the introduction of a multi-agency victim hub, set up to support our most vulnerable and exploited victims

Northumbria Police have established a multi-agency Victim Hub in Newcastle. The Hub is recognised as a model of national best practice, dealing with all forms of exploitation and providing victims with a holistic service; recognising that all forms of exploitation are linked and cannot be addressed in siloes. Northumbria Police officers sit within the Hub, alongside numerous other agencies, including the Changing Lives Liberty Project – a project I am this year part-funding through my Supporting Victims Fund, which offers support to victims of modern slavery across the Northumbria force area – representatives from all 6 Northumbria local authorities and various health organisations.

The Hub facilitates a number of functions including:

- The design and implementation of bespoke victim contact plans to support victims
- Engagement with partners to enable a multi-agency approach to victims / families to provide support and intervention
- Providing advice and support to the wider workforce regarding the management of victims presenting with complex needs.

Commitment 4: I will make high-quality restorative justice available to all victims of crime in Northumbria by linking together Victims Services, offender-focused organisations and a wide range of agencies.

One of the continued challenges I face is to make high-quality restorative justice available to all victims of crime in Northumbria by linking together victim services, offender-focused organisations, and a wide range of other agencies. Whilst this continues to be a focus area for NVWS, it is good to hear of the increased number of Restorative Justice discussions NVWS are reporting.

Within my Commissioning & Policy team, we have a Programme Lead for Restorative Justice, who is trained in serious and complex restorative interventions. Throughout the last year, our office has been actively engaging with other colleagues from various PCC offices to review and share restorative processes and practice, as well as linking in with the national service 'Why Me?'

I recognise the importance of Restorative Justice and value how this intervention can improve the lives of those who have engaged in the process. My office is in the process of reviewing what Restorative Justice looks like across Northumbria and how our region can improve access and uptake of interventions and I look forward to seeing how this service offer improves across our region. We will work closely with Probation to explore opportunities for increased take up of Restorative Justice.

Commitment 5: I will work with partners to ensure the fair, just and effective progression of cases.

Recovery from Covid-19

A key priority for me, both as PCC and Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), is the recovery from the impact that Covid-19 has had on the progression of cases through the criminal justice system (CJS). Locally, in July 2020, I commissioned a Recovery Group where the police, CPS, courts, and other partners worked together to reduce delays and provide opportunities for victims and witnesses to give evidence remotely. This was a subgroup of LCJB board members. The group was instrumental in supporting partners to address court backlogs.

Recovery, in terms of timeliness, has now been achieved in the Magistrates' Courts across Northumbria. The focus is now on achieving further improvements in performance which continues to require a multi-agency approach. The position in the Crown Court remains a challenge, particularly regarding outstanding trials, although some progress is being made. Our position in Northumbria reflects the national picture. The Recovery Group has now merged with the Performance Subgroup given the progress made and remaining challenges.

Timely and Effective domestic abuse trials

I made a specific commitment in the Police and Crime Plan to continue work to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of domestic abuse (DA) trials within Northumbria Magistrates Courts. This has been achieved and cases can now be listed within 6 weeks of the plea date compared to an average of 18 weeks at the commencement of this work. Key to this is the new victim service, highlighted above, and a significantly increased level of support for victims whose cases are going through the CJS. Victim and Witness attrition (non-attendance at court) is one of the main reasons why a trial does not go ahead.

Commitment 6: I will encourage the police and criminal justice system to develop trauma informed practice so the support options made available to victims best meet their needs.

I have encouraged the take up of trauma informed training across member organisations on the LCJB. Key partners such as the police, CPS and Probation have received such training and discussions have taken place and contacts given to include such an approach in training for sentencers.

Commitment 7: I will monitor Northumbria Police's performance against the Victims Code of Practice and ensure that they comply with the things that Northumbria residents said were most important to them.

The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) sets out a level of service victims should receive from the criminal justice system. As PCC I committed in the Police & Crime Plan to monitor Northumbria Police's performance against VCOP.

Local Criminal Justice Board

Compliance with the VCOP (refreshed early 2021) is one of the LCJB Priorities within the LCJB Business Plan. Whilst the annual national reporting requirement of PCCs by the Ministry of Justice was suspended during COVID, the Northumbria LCJB has continued to apply our locally designed VCOP Compliance Framework which involves partner organisations feeding in various performance data each month which is then considered by the LCJB Victim and Witness Subgroup (the owners of this LCJB priority) and reported to the board on a quarterly basis.

Northumbria Police Performance

As shown in the table below, overall compliance with VCOP has improved in the 12 months to July 2022, compared to the previous 12 months to July 2021.

VCOP – LCJB Priority Areas for Improvements					
Measure	12 months to Jul-21	12 months to Jul-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
1.2 Percentage of victims who received written acknowledgement of a crime	66%	79%	72%	78%	75%
3.3 Percentage of victims informed when the suspect is arrested or voluntary attended	74%	76%	60%	66%	80%
3.4 Percentage of victims informed when the suspect is charged or OOC	75%	76%	72%	74%	64%
3.5 Percentage of victims informed when the suspect is bailed (pre-charge)	84%	70%	66%	62%	70%
3.6 Percentage of victims satisfied with follow up contact.	66%	61%	64%	63%	61%
5.1 Percentage of cases where a VPS was taken.	97%	95%	95%	94%	91%

Performance has varied with some improvements in the 12 months up to July 22, compared to the previous 12 months however there has been a small downturn in performance in 3 of the 6 areas. The ambition is to further improve performance across all the measures.

Recent structural change to the delivery of the core Victims Service (with delivery now being provided by the force) is expected to have a further positive impact on keeping victims informed and updated regarding the progress of their case. Further enhancement to service delivery is expected in Spring 2023.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is currently working on a second iteration of national performance reporting requirements and recently the Northumbria LCJB has contributed to this. A significant challenge here is the outdated information systems used by many of the criminal justice agencies. The intention is that the MoJ will present a revised minimum data set regarding compliance with VCOP which all police force areas, and LCJB partners, will have to report on.

Commitment 8: I will influence, where I can, the bigger picture.

By changing the whole system nationally we can improve the experience of everyone seeking justice. As well as ensuring support for victims locally, I am committed to speaking out on national issues which will positively impact on people in Northumbria and around the country.

Improved advocacy for sexual violence complainants

In the Police and Crime Plan I specifically committed to continue to lobby Government to roll-out an innovative Northumbria pilot scheme which was operational between 2018 and 2020 – the Sexual Violence Complainants’ Advocates (SVCA) scheme. This was the first scheme of its kind in our jurisdiction offering free and independent legal advocacy to complainants of sexual violence and abuse.

As was evidenced in a report by Loughborough University[1], it would cost the Government just £3.9 million annually to get legal help to victims in need, in England and Wales. We have seen how doing this has improved best practice in police and CPS responses, and improved the overall victim experience. Committing funding to this would be a small price to pay to help improve conviction rates and treat victims with the respect they deserve. There is a campaign calling on the Government to roll out legal advocacy nationwide and I will do all I can to support this and to continue speaking out for victims so we can improve lives and prevent further crime, while strengthening local support for victims by working alongside the force and CPS.

I wrote to the Policing and Crime Minister in 2021 to suggest joined up work with the government on pilots of legal advocacy they are currently working on. I am now working with Northumbria Police, NVWS and CPS North East to pilot an 'ISVA Champion' in Northumbria, who will be able to give advice on recovery and disclosure issues to ISVAs as well as work on coordinating the various ISVA provision we have across the area.

The importance of specialist support for victim-survivors

There is ample evidence to show the importance of specialist support services. A recent study by the University of Birmingham into the contribution of the voluntary sector to the mental health care crisis[2] identified that the voluntary sector is crucial in any mental health response, plugging gaps in provision of statutory care, and providing a 'longer-term holistic...compassionate and human'[3] alternative to the poor quality sometimes found in non-voluntary crisis care services.

The report highlights the need for all public sector organisations to give recognition to the expertise within the voluntary sector, as well as the need for sustainable funding in voluntary sector crisis care provision - including user-led organisations and grassroots community organisations who possess local knowledge and engage with their communities. As your PCC I am committed to ensuring Government sees the need for specialist voluntary support services and will continue to fund these organisations in preference to larger, more generic organisations.

I am also committed to lobbying Government for increased funding for specialist victim support services, as the current demand far outstrips what is available, even despite all the additional funding my office has secured over the past few years.

As is clear from the funds outlined in this document, the Government often passes on funding for a few months at a time. This short-term and competitive funding model for specialist provision is not working. Tendering is a competitive process, however the by and for expert sector are part of the social economy of provision and do not compete on equal footing in an open 'market'. The nature of VAWG would also suggest that such competition compels organisations to gamble with the lives of women and girls. The short-term nature of the funding means services are unable to:

- Plan for the future
- Develop, recruit and retain expert staff.
- Ensure sustainable provision
- Develop long-term strategies
- Build capacity

I have raised these issues and others with Government and will continue to do so. Whilst improvements have been made, such as a commitment from government to provide funding on multi-year settlements, this is not happening in every situation and more must be done to ensure adequate funding levels are available to meet need. At present, one of my commissioned services alone (Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland – see above) has 191 clients on their waiting list to access Practical & Emotional Support, and 256 clients on the waiting list for counselling. These clients are waiting on average 144 and 72 days respectively from the point of referral to receiving support. More must be done to ensure that victim-survivors can access support at the point of need.

[1] SVCA evaluation

[2] Newbigging, K. et al. (2020). The contribution of the voluntary sector to mental health crisis care: a mixed-methods study. Health Services and Delivery Research, 8.29.

[3] Ibid, p2.

2. STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Stalking, whether in person or online, is a distressing and potentially life-threatening crime and must be taken very seriously. In the Police and Crime Plan, I committed to continue to work with Northumbria Police to ensure that relevant legislation and powers are effectively adhered to, and measured in my scrutiny process. I know that many victims of stalking want to see concerning behaviours result in immediate action – to protect the victim and effectively deal the perpetrator. With thorough training, officers will be able to intervene and take action at the earliest opportunity.

Northumbria Police Performance

Since the last Improving Lives update report, I noted that there had been an increase in complaints to my office regarding stalking and harassment cases. I asked the Professional Standards Department (PSD) to conduct an analysis of complaints over the previous 6 months (allegations finalised between 1 January 2022 and 31 July 2022). Complaints of this nature are categorised under the category of ‘delivery of duties and service’ allegations. In the 6-month period 377 allegations of this nature were finalised. 5.5% (17 complaints) were regarding a domestic abuse (DA) stalking & harassment issue. The following themes were found through analysis by PSD:

- Complaints were generally concerning a lack of investigation by an OIC (Officer in Charge) – some complainants raised concerns regarding the advice provided or the OIC had not considered the previous history of offending.
- The common theme emerging from the complaints was that many complainants had a complicated history concerning DA which was not always considered when they reported a further incident to the police. They felt the DA incident had been looked at in isolation and no consideration had been made in retrospect of all other DA incidents.
- Frustrations related mainly to complainants being dissatisfied with the outcome of the DA investigation and that nothing would change to prevent DA incidents taking place in the future. They felt the police should have implemented further measures to safeguard them such as supporting non-molestation orders and DVPNs.

We know that domestic abuse offending usually involves a pattern of separate incidents that when looked at holistically can suggest an increase the risk to a victim-survivor, and so these findings are concerning. No incident of stalking and harassment, whether it be in a DA context or not, should be looked at in isolation.

I have discussed these findings with Northumbria Police who have ensured that the officers concerned were spoken to and provided with further training. In addition, the force’s new training platform, Kalidus, launched in March 2022. A Stalking and Harassment Training Package was launched in July 2022 with further VAWG-related training packages in the design phase. These will be available to all officers and will reiterate the need to look at DA Stalking & Harassment cases holistically, not as single isolated incidents. I will continue to monitor the force’s performance in this area through my Scrutiny programme and the complaints I receive.

Stalking Super-complaint

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium, submitted a super-complaint^[4] against the police with regards to the handling of stalking cases, on 25 November 2022. Concerns highlighted by the Trust include:

- A lack of understanding among officers as to what behaviours constitute stalking, as well as treating behaviours as single incidents as opposed to recognising the wider pattern of behaviour.

[4] Defined by the Home Office as ‘A complaint that “a feature, or combination of features, of policing in England and Wales by one or more than one police force is, or appears to be, significantly harming the interests of the public”. The system is designed to examine problems of local, regional or national significance that may not be addressed by existing complaints systems.’

- Officers failing to adequately investigate the crime.
- Officers failing to implement appropriate protections for victims, such as Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs), which are designed to protect victims while evidence is collated for a prosecution.

Several recommendations have been made, including forces making better use of SPOs and rolling out better training.

The super-complaint has been submitted to HMICFRS, the College of Policing, and the IOPC, who will, depending on whether they deem it eligible, investigate the issue before issuing their own report and recommendations to forces. I will follow the progress of this complaint closely and discuss with Northumbria Police any early actions that can be taken to address the issues highlighted, whilst waiting for the outcome of the complaint.

Support and advice for victims of stalking and harassment

I am also committed to ensuring that victims of stalking and harassment are able to access specialist support to help them cope and recover, as well as seek the information and advice required to pursue a criminal justice outcome, where desired. I commission a number of services who provide such support, including Women's Health in South Tyneside (WHiST) and Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland (RCTN), who support victims across Northumbria, and Newcastle Women's Aid, who support those living and working in the Newcastle local authority area.

The victim needs assessment my office conducted last year highlighted the increase in stalking and harassment over recent years and the need for more tailored provision to meet victim needs associated with this. I have updated the funding priorities for my Supporting Victims Programme of funding accordingly and have invited bids from organisations who can support victims of stalking and harassment. I am hopeful that I will be able to commission a specialist Stalking & Harassment support service from March 2023 - 2026.



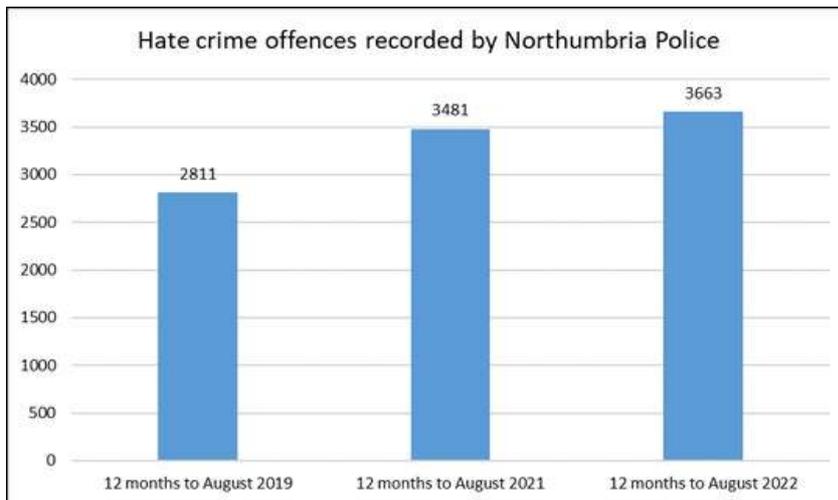
Acorns who received funding from my 2022-23 Supporting Victims Fund

3. HATE CRIME

While I am proud to be Police and Crime Commissioner of such a welcoming region made up of many diverse communities, there are always some people who want to incite hatred and that is completely unacceptable. I want all victims to feel listened to, regardless of background. I recognise the importance of reaching out to those communities who are perhaps uncomfortable contacting the police. The Chief Constable and I are committed to doing all we can to strengthen relationships with all communities and we will continue striving to recruit from a diverse range of backgrounds to better reflect the communities we serve.

Current force position:

- Recorded crime:** Hate crime recorded by Northumbria Police has increased year on year, as shown below (data from Covid-19 period excluded as cannot be compared). 3,663 hate crimes were recorded in the 12 months to August 2022, an increase of 5% on the 12 months to August 2021.



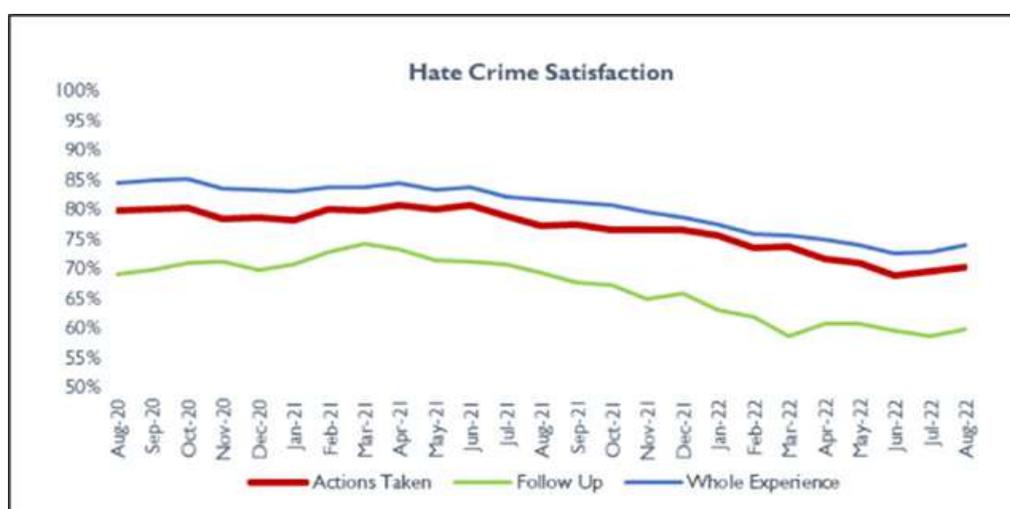
- Types of hate crime:** An increase in race (+55 crimes), homophobic (+69 crimes), transphobic (+13 crimes) and disability (+22 crimes) account for most of the increase for the current 12-month period (+243 crimes in total). Race remains the biggest proportion of hate crime at 58% of the total for the 12 months to August 2022, followed by homophobic at 19%.

Hate Crime Breakdown	12 months to August 21	12 months to August 22	% change
Race	2,055	2,110	+3%
Faith	225	217	-4%
Disability	450	472	+14%
Gender	16	41	+156%
Age	9	12	+33%
Homophobic	629	698	+11%
Transphobic	96	109	+14%

- Type of offending:** In the last 12 months 8% of hate crime was committed online in comparison to 9% in the previous 12 months.

- **Force improvements:** A hate crime action plan is in place. The plan covers initial contact, investigation, training and raising awareness, victim satisfaction and partnership activity. The training delivery plan is continuing, and training is being developed for Control Room, CID and the Response Policing Team. The Force attends practitioner meetings with Durham and Cleveland to share best practice and meets regularly with CPS on joint improvement plans.
- **Victim satisfaction:** The below table shows the percentage of victims of hate crime who were satisfied with the actions taken by the force, the follow-up by the force, and the whole experience of reporting the crime to the force. There is a statistically significant decrease in whole experience satisfaction for victims of hate crime. Satisfaction with this service aspect has been reducing over time, as show in graph 1. There has been a significant reduction in satisfaction with the action taken compared to the previous 12-month rolling period. Dissatisfied victims perceived that a lack of action had been taken by police and that police had missed opportunities for further investigation. Some hate crime victims also felt that police had taken a lengthy time to act while others stated that they had not been kept informed. Although fewer hate crime victims are satisfied with follow-up performance compared to the same period last year, this change is not significant. Victims expressed dissatisfaction with this service aspect as they did not received updates or had not been kept informed regarding the action taken and/or outcome of their report. I will continue to monitor satisfaction levels.

Indicator	12 months to August 21	12 months to August 22
Actions Taken	77%	70%
Follow-up	69%	60%
Whole Experience	81%	74%



Graph 1, showing hate crime victim satisfaction with actions taken, follow-up and the whole experience reporting to Northumbria Police, August 2020 – August 2022.

OPCC Staff Training

To strengthen the delivery of the EDI Business Plan, Show Racism the Red Card delivered equality and diversity training to all OPCC staff to develop their skills and understanding of how to engage effectively with diverse communities and to ensure services are responsive to different needs. This will be followed by all staff receiving training on cultural competency and neurodiversity to ensure they are aware and sensitive to cultural and equality issues.

Support for Victims

I have commissioned Connected Voice Advocacy Service since 2017 to provide support to victims of hate crime, as it was the first service of its kind in the country. Their collaboration with other voluntary sector organisations continues to give some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people a voice, provide invaluable support following a crime and guides them through the complex Criminal Justice System.

Case Study: Support for Victims of Hate Crime

Connected Voice are commissioned through my Supporting Victims Fund to provide an advocacy service for victims of hate crime, particularly those who are most vulnerable due to their race, religion, disability/mental health, sexuality or gender. Connected voice provide direct advocacy casework, emotional support and awareness-raising sessions to victims and potential victims. Below is a case study demonstrating the importance of their work in supporting victims of hate crime to have their views heard and needs met and to achieve significantly improved independence, choice and control, engagement with services, access to services, health, and wellbeing.

Paul was an isolated man with Learning Difficulties and mental health issues who was a victim of hate crime from a local woman, which escalated into violence from her son. Paul had previously been exploited by people who had manipulated their way into his life. He had worked with services around relationships, but they had identified that Paul was at risk of further abuse. When he was referred to us, a court hearing to try the man accused of hate crime was imminent

Paul had faced multiple delays to the court hearing due to a lack of support. Paul instructed an advocate to support him in the court proceedings, make the hearing accessible and give him an opportunity to have his voice heard as equally as anyone else.

A Connected Voice advocate was able to support Paul to:

- Access suitable transport to and from court
- Communicate effectively with Northumbria Police
- Ensure an intermediary was present in the hearings

As a result of the assessment for the intermediary Paul was able to access:

- Services for people with Learning disabilities
- Financial support
- Support with assessments to obtain his PIP payment

The outcome in the court case was successful due to Paul's evidence and the perpetrator was sentenced for their role in the hate crime. As a result of Independent advocacy Paul was able to provide evidence confidently via a video link and access support services and groups so that he was no longer isolated. Paul stated on evaluation forms that he felt safer and more confident.

Hate Crime Champions

The OPCC has worked with Northumbria Police, third sector partners and communities on a range of activities such as the promotion of the Hate Crime Champions scheme, to challenge intolerance and hate, promoting diversity and inclusion – Hate Crime Champions continue to be recruited. An additional 72 Champions have been trained in the last 12 months, taking the total number of Champions across Northumbria to 660. These champions have come from a variety of sectors, including education, health, private and public staff.

Awareness Raising & Prevention

My office provided funding to Streetwise which enabled young people to develop a range of videos aimed at tackling the issue of hate crime by adopting active bystander approaches. Five videos have been produced in total covering 4 strands of hate crime (race, LGBTQ+, disability and Islamophobia). The videos will be used as a resource in school and youth settings and will be promoted widely across social media. The young people involved received awards at a special screening of the videos in Newcastle in November to celebrate their excellent work.

4. COMMUNITY COHESION AND EXTREMISM

It is crucial that people get on well together, respect differences and work towards achieving shared goals. Working with communities is at the heart of what Northumbria Police does. In the Police and Crime Plan, I committed to continue to support all efforts to work with partners to strengthen relations, understand issues and improve cohesion. As well as actively tackling extremism, I am also committed to ensuring our force continues to build on collective efforts to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist activity.

Major Incident Framework

The UK National Threat Level posed to the country is substantial, meaning an attack is likely. Following the tragic terrorist incidents in Manchester and London, my office has structured plans and protocols in place, as outlined in my Major Crime Incident Framework for Northumbria, which ensures the victim services we commission are ready to stand-up and provide cope and recovery support should a major crime incident occur in our area.

Additionally, my office has been working closely with our neighbouring PCC offices, namely Durham, Cleveland and Cumbria, alongside the NHS and Mental Health Hub providers, to further secure a streamlined approach to our response to a major crime incident. As part of this networking, the partnership is exploring ways in which victim pathways between our third sector organisations and the NHS clinical services can be joined up to ensure the swift access and support to much needed therapeutic services for victims and witnesses caught up in such incidents.

Whilst any future incidents would be devastating, I am confident that my office and our region are equipped and prepared to respond and mobilise resources in this time of need.

5. MENTAL HEALTH

Overall picture in Northumbria

After a decade of austerity and cuts to public services, mental health concerns are a regular feature of day-to-day policing, exacerbated in many ways by the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Like other forces, Northumbria is now routinely dealing with the consequences of reduced availability of mental health services. Northumbria Police have been responding to an increase in complex cases in which their frontline officers are acting as the first point of contact to people with mental health needs that are in crisis. Northumbria Police will continue to promote mental health awareness and work with other emergency services to make sure that people facing a mental health crisis get the appropriate support. But this will not in itself solve the problems we face. I will continue to lobby for better resourced mental health services.

Support for victims

Alongside pressure on the force, our victim support services continue to report that mental health is the main support need being presented by victims and referrals to specialist mental health services remain high.

Mental health support continues to feature within our core victim services initial needs assessment that is completed with victims at the point they have reported a crime. I am confident that the recent changes to our core victim service provider moving in house with Northumbria Police will only enable more victims to seek out support surrounding their mental health. Further complimenting this, the streamlined referral mechanism that my office has in place for victims of crime (from report to support) will further ensure that our victims can access specialist mental health support.

That is why I continue to fund services such as Tyneside and Northumberland Mind who provide specialist emotional, practical and counselling support to victims of crime with additional mental health needs. I recognise the invaluable work that this service does for all victims that live across our region, which is why they have been commissioned as part of our Supporting Victims Fund since 2015. I am pleased to feedback that year on year, Tyneside and Northumberland Mind continuously report an overall improvement to victim's health and wellbeing after accessing support.

The consistently high referral numbers and uptake of this specialist service demonstrate the demands for mental health provision across our region, of which my office have also been liaising with all of our commissioned services to understand the frequently identified complex needs (including mental health) and how our services are fulfilling them. I am pleased that my office and commissioned services continue to work together to ensure that such complexities are being addressed and our vulnerable victims are receiving the right help and support at the right time.

Case Study: Support for victims with mental health needs

I commission Tyneside and Northumberland Mind's (T&NM) ReVOC (Resilience for Victims of Crime) service, which provides one to one support for victims and witnesses of crime with mental health need, support through the criminal justice system, as well as a range of other interventions. The below case study demonstrates the support available from the ReVOC service.

Client S was referred into the ReVOC Service in early January 2022. He had been the victim of an aggravated robbery when he was held at knifepoint, his throat slightly cut, in his vehicle whilst working.

T&NM have been supporting him with the various layers of impact this has had on him. His ability to work has been significantly impacted and he now avoids work in certain areas. He has struggled with low mood and anxiety since the crime. His social world has become a lot smaller, and he now has social anxiety. He is also fearful of repercussions from the offender. He lives with family but only his brother knows about what happened as he is reluctant to share with the rest of his household, as he knows other family may worry and also worry about repercussions. This has left him quite isolated in dealing with everything.

T&NM have had regular meetings with Client S to look at managing stress and anxiety, validating worries and concerns and the overall impact of what happened. Client S has also received support while the report progressed through the criminal justice system. Client S was very pleased with the support from T&NM, who will continue to work with him to process his feelings as his case awaits sentencing.

6. COMPLAINTS

Complaints against the force

I continue to take complaints about Northumbria Police very seriously and want to make sure that the service provided to communities is professional, effective and efficient. It is important that complaints are listened to and that complainants receive a timely response from Northumbria Police.

Often complaints can identify areas where service delivery can be improved and I receive regular reports from Northumbria Police that tell me how many complaints have been received. These can identify any trends in complaints, disparity between different communities or geographical areas within Northumbria and most importantly any learning that Northumbria Police have identified from analysis of their complaints process.

The top 3 categories of complaint are currently:

1. Delivery of duties – General level of service, police action following contact, decisions.
2. Police powers, policies and procedures – Use of force, power to arrest, search of premises
3. Individual behaviours – Unprofessional attitude, lack of fairness and impartiality, overbearing or harassing behaviour

The Professional Standards Department and Triage Team have dedicated staff who work hard to resolve complaints. The Triage Team are the first 'point of contact' and work to resolve complaints outside of the formal complaints process – this is in an attempt to resolve matters quickly (sometimes within a few hours). Of course, a complaint does not have to engage with this stage of the process and can go straight to the formal recording and investigation. The work of the Triage team is recognised as being very effective and resolving around 70% of all complaints

Reviewing the handling of complaints

As Panel members will know, 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). A review is not a reinvestigation of a police investigation or of the complaint itself: it is to determine if the complaint has been handled by Northumbria Police in a reasonable and proportionate manner.

When the review process is undertaken, the OPCC will check if the request is valid and if it has been received by the relevant review body (if it is not the OPCC it will be the IOPC). My office will also encourage the person requesting the review to provide as much information as possible to ensure all the concerns they have following the outcome are addressed.

The Director of Confidence, Standards and Statutory Reviews conducts all reviews, adhering to statutory guidance, and will consider whether the outcome of the complaint was reasonable and proportionate. Where we find that the outcome is not reasonable and proportionate, we will uphold the review. We may also make a recommendation(s) to Northumbria Police with a view to remedying the dissatisfaction. It is important that Northumbria Police continues to be a learning organisation, therefore the OPCC sends a quarterly update to the Head of Professional Standards and the OPCC Chief of Staff outlining any issues, concerns and good practice. The OPCC and PSD liaise to ensure any issues are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. We strive to complete reviews in an efficient and timely manner. The latest data from the IOPC for April to June 2022 shows that the average number of working days to complete reviews in Northumbria is 8 compared to 69 days nationally. When the Appropriate Authority is deemed to be the IOPC the average number of working days for them to complete reviews is 91 days.

In the spirit of openness and transparency all review outcomes are uploaded on to the OPCC website. In the last 12 months (November 2021 to October 2022) there have been 123 valid review requests with an upheld rate of 22.5%.

Independent Custody Visitors

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the local community who visit police stations unannounced to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are being held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. Our 15 ICVs are invaluable members of the OPCC family.

Across the Northumbria force area there are three dedicated police custody suites which have a total of 118 cells. In addition to this provision, there are four resilience suites with a total of 60 cells. There are also cells that can be utilised at Sunderland and Newcastle Football clubs.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, 65 face to face visits were undertaken by ICVs to our custody suites with 305 detainees visited. ICVs are proactive in raising concerns, below are just a few examples of how ICVs have made a difference.

- Specific focus on ensuring detainee dignity in relation to the provision of both toilet rolls and the offering of washing facilities to detainees. This extra focus has resulted in the force now introducing a process whereby the availability of showers is communicated to detainees as part of their initial booking in process.
- Northumbria has been a leader in ensuring menstrual products were provided to female detainees and ensuring that they are assigned a female member of staff. This has continued to be monitored.
- ICVs highlighted that reading materials were available following these being removed during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, however it was highlighted that more appropriate materials for juveniles could be made available. This was taken onboard by the force with the addition of “distraction Items” such as foam balls also being introduced for detainees which will reduce stress and anxiety of detainees.
- Specific focus on ensuring that detainees were provided with face-to-face legal advice or support from Appropriate Adults.

It is important that our scheme is representative of our communities across Northumbria therefore a demographic assessment of our visitors was undertaken in 2021 prior to our recruitment drive and we identified that a focussed recruitment drive would be beneficial to the scheme. We achieved this through advertising with our local Universities and volunteering groups. To ensure that our recruitment drive was successful, we undertook a further demographic assessment of our scheme in March 2022 which showed that the demographic makeup of our scheme had improved. We will continue this approach for future recruitment to ensure our scheme is as diverse as the communities we serve.



7. USE OF FORCE STOP AND SEARCH

I know that for the public to have confidence in the police there needs to be trust that the police will treat them with respect, make fair decisions and take time to engage and explain their actions. Some areas of business cause concerns for communities and can impact on confidence and trust in a significant way. We all know that for the police, the power to stop and search people who they suspect of being involved in crime is an important crime-fighting tactic.

In the Police and Crime Plan I committed, as part of my scrutiny programme, 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 will oversee the force's work to reduce this rate.

Current force position:

Stop and Search:

- In Q3 and Q4 of 2021/22 2,322 stop and searches were recorded by Northumbria Police, which was a -3.4% reduction compared to the same period in 2020/21. Of the records checked, 94% had sufficient grounds recorded which is an increase from 90% compared to stop and search records checked in Q3/4 2020/21. 25% of stop searches resulted in an item being found compared with 29% last year.
- In Q3 and Q4 of 2021/22 there was a 47% (-80 to 92) decrease in stop and searches against Asian subjects and a 16% (-7 to 38) reduction in stop and searches against Black subjects. This resulted in an overall disparity ratio for Q3/4 in respect of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) persons of 1.3 (compared to 2.0 in Q3/4 2020/21).

Use of Force:

- In 2021/22, Black people were 3.4 times more likely to have force used on them than White people, in Northumbria, compared to the national average of 5.7 times. This is a slight increase from 20/21 data however this increase in the use of force reflects an increase in diversity within our communities not yet reflective through 2011 census data being used. The current release schedule for 2021 census data from the ONS is Autumn/Winter 2022 for data including ethnicity. This will give the force a greater understanding of their true disproportionality rate.
- In 2021/22, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people were no more likely than white people to have force used on them than were white people. Nationally, BAME people are twice as likely as White people to have force used on them. In Northumbria in 21/22 there were 21,996 reports of use of force recorded in the force. 4.7% of those records relate to BAME individuals (1,036 records).

HMICFRS Inspection

In the most recent HMICFRS inspection report 'Disproportionate use of police powers: A spotlight on stop and search and use of force,' disproportionality is examined in stop and search, and more recently, the use of force. The report found that no police force was able to satisfactorily explain their disproportionate use of these powers and a number of recommendations for police forces were made.

Two recommendations regarding the use of force were made:

1. The force needs to ensure it improves its understanding of how force is being used. It should use this understanding to identify trends, issues and disparities.
2. The force should ensure that it has effective internal and external processes and governance to analyse and scrutinise a comprehensive range of use of force data. It should use the outcomes from this to improve the way that force is used. It was highlighted that the force needed to develop its understanding of Use of Force further with greater focus on analysis, internal and external scrutiny and governance.

In response, Northumbria Police are conducting the following activities in relation to improving stop and search performance:

- **Training:**
 - Work is ongoing to ensure greater compliance regarding the recording of Use of Force with recent changes to Officer Safety training to ensure consistent messaging regarding what is required when recording use of force. Since September 2021, there has been a significant improvement in compliance, which will provide the Force the data for greater analysis within scrutiny
 - A condensed presentation has been developed for front line officers and circulated. This details common errors and good practice for recording sufficient grounds.
 - Work is ongoing with People Development to create a mandatory modular package within the Kalidus Learn platform. This will launch Q2/Q3 of 2022. This will utilise interactive videos, BWV examples, good and bad practice. It will focus on four key areas:
 - Policing Powers
 - Sufficient grounds
 - Rules for carrying out a search – Communication, interaction and GOWISELY
 - Documenting your search
- **Scrutiny:**
 - Internal scrutiny arrangements for stop and search continue and a joint internal panel for stop and search and use of force is now well established. This panel is co-chaired by the Stop and Search and Use of Force leads and focuses on review of performance data and scrutiny of BWV to understand where improvements can be made. During the recent inspection, HMICFRS observed a panel and provided positive feedback to the force on its sets up and governance. As a result of feedback, members from the Home Office met with the Use of Force and Stop and Search leads to take learning from NORPOL scrutiny processes.
 - An external youth scrutiny panel has been set up and trialled with pupils from Trinity School, Newcastle. Three panels have been held to date with Trinity and the plan is to hold further ones in Autumn as well as elsewhere.
 - My office has established an External Police Powers Scrutiny Panel (see below).
- **SPOCs:**
 - The force have increased the stop and search SPOCS in each Area Command to assist in the efficiency of reviews. Northern now have 2 SPOCS, Southern 3 and Central 4. This will provide timely data and ensure the force can identify poor performance trends expeditiously. In addition, the force have developed a bi-monthly standardisation session to ensure their internal scrutiny is consistent.
- **Body Worn Video:** The use of body worn video (BWV) when undertaking stop and search is now mandated within force policy. The use of BWV is improving but greater improvement required. Performance data in relation to BWV is being monitored and fed back via internal scrutiny. As the intranet is developed, there will be further information available around use of BWV, top tips and functionality with links to stop and search and other force policy. Historically, stop and searches carried out by plain clothes officers have not been captured on BWV; covert holsters for the carriage of BWV whilst in plain clothes are being trialled in Central area command.

- **Data:**

- Work is ongoing with Digital Policing in order to improve the mechanism to record Use of Force and the ability to extract data from it. This work has progress over the last quarter, and if implemented will provide officers with a simpler system to record data, therefore impacting on compliance. It will also provide an understanding of where force is being used. This is data the force currently cannot access but will provide us the opportunity to identify (and understand) when specific policing operations are influencing the data.

Police Powers External Scrutiny Panel

Through scrutiny of stop and search, my office has established a community scrutiny panel comprising a diverse mix of people who represent various communities, to provide constructive oversight, discussion and challenge. Experts working in the field of mental health and neurodiversity have recently joined the panel to act as critical friends to the police, providing an EDI lens on how police officers effectively engage with people with poor mental and those who are neurodiverse. The group provides support and feedback to the force to help understand how the use of stop and search and use of force can be improved and how disparity can be mitigated.

Northumbria Police are exploring opportunities for the community representatives to work with the force in helping to deliver training on cultural competency and neurodiversity to enhance police officer awareness and understanding of how these issues.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Northumbria Police is a major employer and provider of services to the community, and its activities and operations will inevitably have an impact on the environment which we have a duty to mitigate. In the Police & Crime Plan I committed to ensure that the force works to reduce its carbon footprint, especially in areas such as building design or supply chain issues.

I am currently working with the force to develop a joint OPCG and Northumbria Police Sustainability Strategy. Whilst we are in the early stages of planning, the ambition is to formulate a strategy which will lead to Northumbria Police being the greenest force in England and Wales and contributing to a healthy and sustainability environment. Realising this ambition will undoubtedly require significant challenge to current working practices, as well as the need for brave decisions to support the change required. Initial areas of focus will be on areas including estates, vehicle fleet and waste disposal and consumption. We aim to publish our finalised Strategy in 2023.





IMPROVING LIVES PRIORITY 2: TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Sexual and domestic violence and abuse can blight communities and lead to devastating consequences. It has devastating, traumatic and long-lasting impact on victims, families and wider communities. Domestic abuse is one of the biggest contributors to violent crime locally and nationally and PCCs have a hugely important lead role in tackling this. Domestic abuse and sexual violence can affect anybody – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability.

In the Police and Crime Plan I made several commitments related to tackling domestic and sexual abuse, and supporting victims of these crimes. I outline these below, along with an update on progress to date.

Commitment 1: I will make it my business to encourage people to come forward and report it, and support them through their experience when they do.

Support for victims

As highlighted above under Priority 1, I commission numerous specialist services to support victims of crime. A large proportion of funding is awarded to support victims of domestic abuse (DA) and sexual violence (SV). In addition to the funds highlighted above, this year I have also been successful in obtaining additional funding from three Ministry of Justice (MoJ) specialist funds which have allowed me to offer more support to DA and SV services:

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE COMMUNITY FUND

- The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DA & SV) Community Fund aims to increase the provision of specialist support services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Northumbria.
- My office successfully bid to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for three years of funding - £686,780.61 per annum, between 2022-2025. Whilst we are very pleased with this additional funding, it is worth noting that our bid to the MoJ, which would have provided all of our services with the additional capacity they need to meet demand, totalled £5,175,732.68. This clearly demonstrates the gap between the funding we receive and the funding that is needed to meet the need and demand of victim-survivors.
- This funding award was passed directly to 20 different specialist support services in Northumbria to increase their capacity to support victims of DA and SV in Northumbria.

IDVA/ISVA FUNDS

- Since 2021 my office has been successful in bidding to two rounds of MoJ national funding for the provision of more Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) & Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) across the 6 local authority areas of Northumbria. IDVAs and ISVAs are crucial supporters for victim-survivors of DA and SV, particularly those going through the CJS, as these roles are able to support at court, as well as providing practical and emotional support. Research has found that victims with an IDVA/ISVA are less likely to drop out of the CJS.
- For each round of funding, my office undertook an in-depth analysis of the current provision and identified gaps for victims; particularly those in underrepresented communities.
- We initially secured £750,000 for two years (2021/22 and 2022/23) from the first round of funding which was passed directly to local services to create an additional 10 IDVA and ISVA posts, and train an additional 8 posts. The funding for these 10 posts has now been committed until March 2025.

- In addition, we secured funding for an additional 4.5 posts (2.5 FTE IDVAs and 2 FTE ISVAs) from the second round of MoJ IDVA/ISVA funding, for three years 2022-2025.
- Alongside general IDVA/ISVA posts, funding has allowed us to commission specialist posts to support those who face additional barriers to accessing the criminal justice and/or accessing specialist support to cope and recover, including:
 - 1 LGBTQ+ ISVA
 - 2 ISVAs serving victims living in rural communities
 - 1 IDVA and ISVA specialising in supporting Black and Minoritised victims
 - 1 IDVA and 1 ISVA to support children and young people
 - 1 IDVA to support victims with learning disabilities
- Whilst funding for these crucial additional posts is guaranteed until the end of the 2024/5 financial year, I will continue to lobby Government on the need for additional funding for victims to support them through the criminal justice system, and to cope and recover from the abuse they have experienced.

MALE RAPE SUPPORT FUND

- The MoJ Male Rape Support Fund aims to increase the provision of high-quality specialist services that provide tailored support for men and boys who have been victims of sexual violence and abuse, including recent and non-historic child sexual abuse. The funding also aims to address the growing demand as a result of the pandemic.
- My office were successful in obtaining funding from this fund in both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years - £34,974 p.a.
- This funding is passed on to two specialist services – Community Counselling Cooperative and Sunderland Counselling Service – to support men and boys all over Northumbria who have experienced sexual violence.
- It is anticipated that a minimum of 50 men and 7 boys (aged 4+) will receive counselling support through this funding.



SURT (Stopping Unsafe Relationships Together) who received £17,800 from my Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Community Fund 2022-25

Creating a safer Northumbria

I have 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 bids we submitted, receiving 100% of all funds requested. The funding runs until September 2023. The three bids are focused on transport, parks and night time economies. In developing all of these bids my office consulted and worked really closely with our VAWG sector to help shape the projects.



Safer Transport partners; Northumbria Police Metro Unit (Sgt Hand) & Nexus (Martin Kearney, CEO)

SAFER NORTHUMBRIA TRANSPORT PROJECT

- Building upon the successful elements of Safer Streets round 3 and after hearing from the public what makes people feel unsafe and working closely with our region's transport providers, Police and local authorities, £750,000 of funding received from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund round 4 (SSFR4) will be spent on tackling ASB on our transport. This funding granted by the Home Office must be spent by September 2023.
- The project Lead will continue to work closely with project partners facilitating information and intelligence sharing, identifying emerging trends and themes, and directing flexible resources accordingly.
- Key partners on this project are Northumbria Police, British Transport Police, Nexus, Stagecoach, Go North East, Jesmond and Whitley Bay Street Pastors, Newcastle Street Pastors, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council, Northumberland County Council, Transport Northeast, EDGE Northeast (youth provision SPOC).

- The transport bid has 3 pillars of work:
 - **1. Report:** We are continuing with the use and promotion of the Safer Transport Northumbria app to act as a one stop shop for reporting anything that makes the public feel unsafe and or uncomfortable. We want to increase community engagement, connect with transport users, and really embed the messaging of the campaign. App users will be able to access support from my specialist core and commissioned victim services.
 - **2. Prevent:** Capable guardians such as Street Pastors and youth workers will provide a flexible resource across the transport network targeted to locations where youth ASB has been identified of particular concern to the wider public. Also, a training package is being developed to provide consistency of response to all partners working on the project, on matters such as introduction to ASB, consistency of approach, information sharing, safeguarding and engagement of the public. The last strand of prevent will include 'Days of Action' where there will be a high visibility presence of multiple agencies (including Northumbria Police) to increase public confidence
 - **3. Respond:** Our "response" intervention is focused around establishing a Multi-Agency Transport Team (MATT) and associated days of action. This group will consist of staff members from local authority community safety teams and transport providers. Based on partners data and intelligence, they will be a presence on transport systems, hubs and interchanges, engage with young people and direct them to any services and suitable interventions, identify and support vulnerable people to ensure their safety and they will liaise with statutory services as needed to ensure safety of passengers. With this data and insights, they will link with the Violence Reduction unit to support and inform their focussed deterrents project. This bid will also help in addressing trends and patterns of offending behaviours that are identified throughout the delivery of this bid.

SAFETY OF WOMEN AT NIGHT PROJECT

This year I have secured a further £748,306 from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund to continue providing support and resources towards helping improve the public's feelings of safety, specifically women and girls and marginalised groups across our region in public spaces. The Women's Safety in Public Places (WSiPP) Project seeks to extend and continue the development and delivery of interventions that place a significant focus on behaviour change and a shift in attitude towards the safety of women and girls away from victim blaming and to address the root causes of VAWG in public places. This funding runs until 30 September 2023 and builds on the success of three previous Safer Streets bids that were focused on transport, parks and night time economies.

Working in line with a public health approach together with Local Authority and specialist VAWG and community sector partners, this project will build on the successes of previous projects and will encompass interventions across 3 pillars of work to address VAWG in public places.



Operation Cloak officers on shift in the NTE



Safe Haven in Newcastle



Newcastle Street Pastors

PILLAR 1: Prevent:

- **Operation Cloak:** Trained police officers have been deployed in key areas within the NTE and other public places, observing and intervening to prevent offences and act against perpetrators with the range of recommended Home Office sanctions. This includes ASB tools, Sexual Risk Orders and Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, Community Protection Notices when identifying men who may pose a threat to women as briefed by Northumbria Police legal advisors.
- Up to the period ending 31 October 2022 Operation Cloak has delivered:
 - 127 interventions
 - 46 officers active across 29 deployments
 - 74 women supported (additionally 14 vulnerable people supported)
 - 10 re-visits
 - 10 arrests
- **Capable Guardians:** Delivered by Street Pastors, volunteers continue to offer a coordinated presence within Newcastle as well as Jesmond, Whitley Bay, Sunderland and South Shields. They intend to extend their support to ensure a presence is delivered around the underpasses and park in the areas they cover to provide women who feel least safe at night with a reassuring presence available to ensure they have a route/ way home.
- **WSiPP Wardens:** Community Safety teams across our Local Authority areas have been briefed in relation to women's safety and undertaken specialist Vulnerability Training then deployed with radios to communicate with Northumbria Police in their areas. They provide a reassuring uniformed presence with a focus on identifying supporting and safeguarding intoxicated/ vulnerable women to prevent VAWG crime types and behaviours.
- **Safe Haven:** Delivered by North East Ambulance Service in Newcastle city centre and by the Sunderland Street Pastors in Sunderland city centre, this is currently operating on Friday and Saturday nights. Safe Haven is already funded through my office, with additional provision funded through Safer Streets funding, ensuring flexible deployment on one further night of the week to respond to activity in Newcastle City Centre and surrounding public places and this provision collaborates closely with Operation Cloak, Capable Guardians and WSiPP Wardens in our North East night-time economies.

PILLAR 2: Behaviour Change:

- **Brief Intervention behaviour change programme:** Building upon the work delivered through previous Safer Streets projects, we seek to increase women's safety through primary prevention strategies in a range of public places by directly working with men and boys to address the underlying causes and problems that lead to VAWG, particularly addressing rape, sexual assault, stalking, voyeurism, exposure, unwanted touching and street harassment. The programme will be co-designed with key partners across the public and voluntary sector based on insights from women and girls in our area.

PILLAR 3: Awareness Raising:

In keeping with the national picture we are developing a suite of awareness raising tools that aim to tackle professional and community awareness of the safety issues experienced by women, girls and marginalised people in public places. This includes:

- **Public Campaign Development:** to be led by Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland (RCTN), centring women's views and lived experience in the development process and aiming to address the behaviour of men and boys.
- **Disclosure Training:** to be delivered by Changing Lives to professionals working across the six Local Authority areas and arranged in collaboration with Newcastle City Council's Community Safety Team for VAWG.

- **Active Bystander Training:** will aim to equip people with the skills and knowledge to notice the problem; recognise to problem is creating an unsafe situation for women and girls; feel responsible to take action; and possess the right skills, tools and confidence to take action. It will address the barriers that might have prevented them from taking action before.
- **Research into Children’s Experiences:** My Violence Reduction Unit will be leading on the co-production of research that explores children’s experiences of the Night Time Economy.

I look forward to continuing the work with specialist organisations, Local Authorities and others to help fulfil my vision of improving lives and making spaces safer reducing harm and preventing VAWG for women girls and marginalised people across the North East.



Northumbria Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

My office is responsible for commissioning adult Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services in Northumbria. The SARC is a building, currently located in Newcastle, which can be attended by victim-survivors of sexual violence to receive a forensic medical examination to secure any possible evidence which could be utilised in a criminal case, should the victim-survivor wish to pursue such an outcome at a later date. Staff at the SARC can also provide other medical, practical and emotional services. SARC Crisis Workers and Nurses are on-call 24/7 to provide these services to victim-survivors, either via a referral from the police, or a direct self-referral.

In order to provide direction and governance to this work, and improvements to the Northumbria SARC service, we have established the SARC Transformation Programme which is overseen by an NOPCC SARC Project Board. Currently the programme has three open work streams:

1. New Northumbria SARC premises

- In spring 2021 it was agreed to acquire new premises for the Northumbria SARC, bringing together the two pre-existing sites in Sunderland and Newcastle to provide victims with one modern and fit for purpose building.
- A new building has been procured, architect plans have been approved and building work is ongoing. We expect to open the new site to clients in 2023.

2. Regional SARC Procurement

- The Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland SARCs were previously run by different providers. However, partnership discussions revealed that we would benefit from a Regional SARC service, run by a single provider. Having a single provider increases the resilience of SARC services in the region and allows the three force/OPCC areas to pool budgets and expertise for the benefit of victim-survivors.

- Following completion of a tender exercise, Mountain Healthcare Limited were this year appointed as the new regional SARC provider from 1st April 2022. Specialists from Northumbria Police, NOPCC and NHS England were all involved in the evaluation process. MHL are the lead SARC provider across the country and as an organisation have a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise in this field. NHS England continue to commission the RVI Newcastle to deliver the paediatric SARC service.

3. ISO 15189 Accreditation

- The Forensic Science Regulator requires all SARCs to be working towards accreditation of ISO 15189 standards, which set out requirements for quality and competence in medical settings. This work is crucial to allow any evidence collected in SARCs to be utilised in a criminal case.
- The standards must be implemented in all facilities between October 2020 and 2023.
- We are currently working in partnership with Mountain Healthcare Limited, Northumbria Police, and other key partners to ensure that our SARC complies with these standards.

Commitment 2: Children must not be the forgotten victims of abuse. The right support is crucial and I am committed to ensuring that this is in place from an early stage to help avoid trauma in later life.

As touched upon above, I ensure that support for children and young victims is in place across Northumbria. I commission specialist support for these victims from my Supporting Victims Fund, DA & SV Community Fund, IDVA/ISVA funds and Male Rape Support Fund, as set out above. In addition, my office was also successful in obtaining funding specifically for children affected by DA, from the CADA Fund:

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE (CADA) FUND

- In March 2021, a mapping exercise undertaken by my office found significant gaps in the services available for children and young people (CYP) impacted by DA and considerable variation in their local availability.
- A successful bid to the Home Office CADA (Children Affected by Domestic Abuse) Fund was therefore used to ensure that the following core services were available across Northumbria:
 - Play therapy – which builds on normal communicative and learning processes to help younger children explore what is troubling them without relying on verbal language skills
 - Counselling – which, in the context of domestic abuse, can be undertaken effectively with individual children and young people (C&YP) or with the child and non-offending parent
 - Therapeutic groupwork – undertaken with C&YP alone and/or alongside the non-offending parent and offering benefits linked to the group process, as well as content.
- Secured for the period July 2021 - September 2022, this funding ensured that more than 1,100 children and young people received therapeutic support to help them cope and recover from the abuse they have experienced.
- Service availability, whilst vital, is nonetheless only part of the story. Defined as ‘a person’s willingness to change their behaviour and/or engage in an intervention’ (Howarth, 2017) a child’s readiness to engage with therapeutic support is also vital and likely to be shaped by the readiness of the non-offending parent to facilitate their engagement as well as a complex interplay of individual, relational and contextual factors that can affect the readiness of both.

- A follow up bid was therefore made to the second round of the Home Office CADA Fund in 2022 and was successful in securing a further 2.5 years of funding to:
 - (a) Map the parent's journey to/through local services for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse
 - (b) Deliver best-in-class therapeutic interventions for children and young people
 - (c) Employ parent engagement workers to support parental readiness and to maximise their engagement
 - (d) Develop therapeutic interventions involving both the non-offending parent and their child
 - (e) Increase collaboration between providers to support the above and create a best practice model for others to consider.
- Commencing in October 2022 and ending in March 2025, this work will involve the active collaboration of six expert providers from across Northumbria and is forecast to result in the delivery of new and innovative interventions for approximately 1,400 children and parents.
- Supported by an experienced project lead employed by the PCC and by an evaluation team employed by the Home Office, the providers will also contribute to annual 'Meet the Provider' events as a means of promoting wider learning and fostering the interest and commitment of wider service commissioners.

Commitment 3: I will oversee Northumbria Police's role in bringing those responsible for DA and SV to justice.

I have introduced focussed and regular challenge sessions with the Chief Constable and his team where we explore together what has been achieved and what more needs to be done to best support victims and improve criminal justice outcomes.

Domestic Abuse Scrutiny

Improving the response to domestic abuse (DA) and increasing positive Criminal Justice outcomes are priorities for Northumbria Police. The force approach to tackling DA offences includes an emphasis on internal collaboration with Performance Development, Communications, Area Commands and Safeguarding and working in partnership with key external partner agencies to prevent domestic abuse, improve Northumbria's response and investigation, make use of protective orders, and improve Criminal Justice Outcomes

Current force position:

- **DA Recorded Crime** - There were an average of 69 DA crimes recorded each day during the 12 months to July 2022, a decrease on the previous 12 months, down from 70.
- **DA Arrest rate** - Current arrest rates stand at 29% to July 2022, a 1% point decrease on the previous 12 months. This is in line with the national trend, with the figure standing at 27% nationally (to March 2022).
- **DA Voluntary Attender (VA) rate** - The VA rate for DA stands at 4% to July 2022, a 1% point increase on the previous 12 months, giving an overall DA perpetrator positive action rate of 33% to July 2022, matching the overall figure in the previous 12 months period.
- **Body Worn Video (BWV)** - As of July 2022, force-wide use of BWV for DA is 75%, a 2% point increase on the previous 12 months, up from 73%.
- **DA charge rate** - As of July 2022, the charge rate for DA was 8.8%; this has reduced 1.1% points when compared to the previous 12 months, which was 9.9%. The charge rate is 0.9% points above the national average of 7.9%.
- **DA conviction rate** - The DA conviction rate stands at 71.2% which is a decrease of 1.1% points compared to the previous 12 months (72.3%), moving further away from the national average of 76.8%.

- **DA report-to-conviction rate** stands at 6.3%, which is 0.9% points lower than the same period last year which was 7.2%. We are 0.2% points above the national average of 6.1%.
- **DA victim satisfaction rate** stands at 87% overall, which is 2% points lower than the previous 12 months period although remains higher than for any area of business other than rape.

The force have identified a number of performance challenges, including deployment/response times, flagging of DA reports by call handlers on first contact and file quality standards. Getting it right in these areas is key for positive criminal justice outcomes and victim attrition. The force have a plan in place to address issues and I continue to oversee this through my scrutiny process. Actions include:

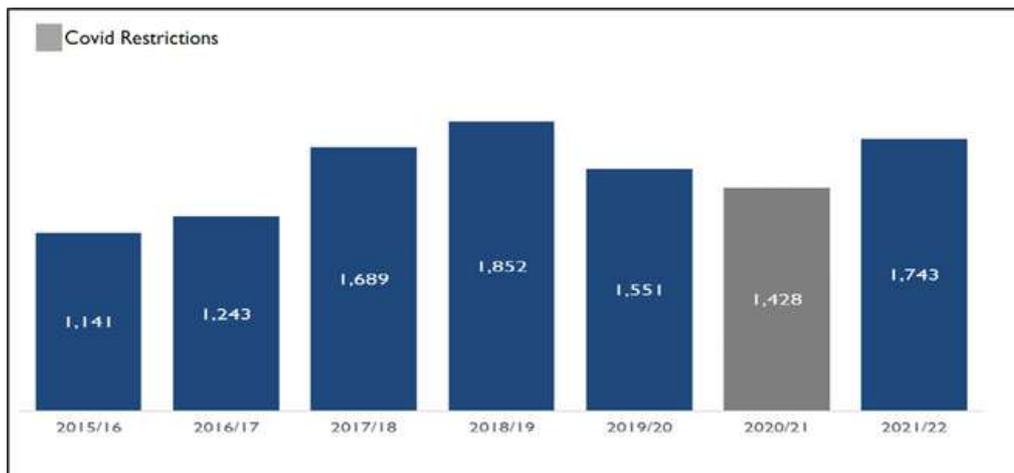
- **Improving response times:** Following the transfer of Domestic Abuse scheduling to Area Command Response Policing Teams in September last year, DA response times have been consistently maintained within the 48-hour service level agreement. Drawing on a wider pool of resources has ensured that sufficient resilience has existed to prevent the peaking and troughing of response times which occurred when the function was managed by a small, centralised team, as well as preventing the need for overtime staff in order to backfill shortfalls. A review of the new model has also been conducted, led by Communications SMT, which has seen a reduction of appointment times from 3 hours to 2 hours, increasing schedule availability, whilst ensuring any improved provision continues to prioritise the needs of and service to victims.
- **Specialist DA support advisors:** The new operating model for the OPCC-funded Domestic Abuse Specialist Support Advisor pilot went live in late-April 2022. The revised model is designed to increase the level of take-up of specialist support and ensure victims receive support at the time of crisis from qualified IDVA domestic abuse specialists, alongside police officers within a control room setting. Two local specialist third sector services - Wearside Women In Need and Harbour - are participating in the revised pilot and provide IDVA resources to work alongside police officers in the Risk Management Desk, based out of both Northern and Southern Control Rooms. Coverage is Friday and Saturday evenings during peak demand hours. Early feedback from stakeholders is very positive. A formal evaluation will be conducted later this year as agreed by the Violence Reduction Unit.
- **Training:** A DA Training Needs Analysis has been completed via the force's People Development team. In line with identified training needs, the force has consulted with the national charity Safelives regarding provision of the DA Matters training programme. The programme is designed to produce a long-term force impact by changing and challenging attitudes, culture and behaviour of officers when responding to DA. Cost implications are currently being scoped.
- **Perpetrator intervention:** Operation Aegis is in the process of being rolled out in full across all three area commands. The operation is a proactive, problem-solving approach to tackling DA, engaging both perpetrators and victims via bespoke, intensive and targeted interventions. Led by Neighbourhood Policing Teams, the aims of the operation are to protect the most vulnerable, ensuring safeguarding and reducing incidents of DA through reassurance, problem-solving with partners and education. Furthermore, the operation focuses on perpetrator intervention including referrals for counselling for drugs, alcohol and healthy relationships.

Sexual violence scrutiny

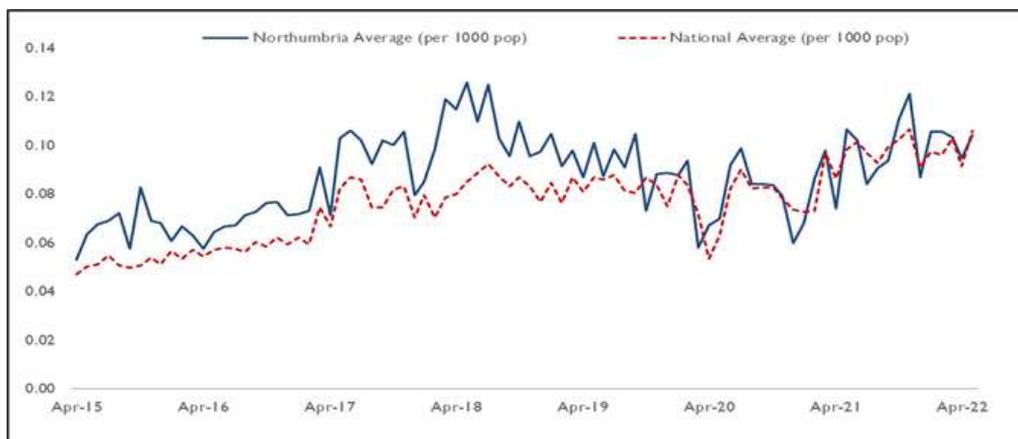
Improving the response to Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and the criminal justice outcomes is a priority for Northumbria Police which is currently receiving national attention and drive. The force approach to tackling RASSO offences includes working in partnership with a range of agencies to prevent sexual abuse, ensure the earliest identification, best possible support for victims and to ensure perpetrators are held to account for their actions, improving criminal justice outcomes.

Current force position:

- **Demand (rape):** There has been a 24% increase in reported rape crimes (+365) in the 12 months from 19 September 2021 (total of 1868 crimes) compared to the preceding 12 months (1503). Graph 2 shows the volume of recorded rape crimes for the full financial years since 2015/16. There has been a 53% increase in substantiated rape offences between 2015/16 and 2021/22. Graph 3 shows that this is in line with the national picture.
- **Demand (other serious sexual offences):** There has been a 27% increase in other serious sexual offences (+542) in the 12 months from 19 September 2021 (2580) compared to the preceding 12 months (2038).

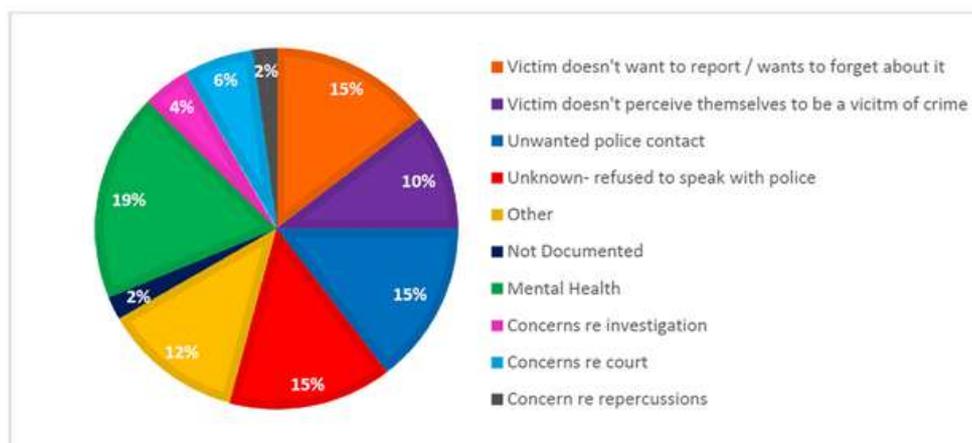


Graph 2: The number of rapes recorded by Northumbria Police annually, 2015/16 – 2021/22



Graph 3: The average number of rapes (per 1000 population) recorded by Northumbria Police, and nationally, between April 2015 and April 2022.

- **Charge rate:** The current charge rate for rape is 5.2%, which continues to show a downward trend since January 2022, but remains above the national average of 4.7%. Northumbria Police is currently ranked 12th nationally. The current charge rate for other sexual offences is 6.5%, which is a decrease compared to the preceding 12 months (11.0%) and below the national average of 7.7%. Northumbria Police is currently ranked 33rd nationally.
- **Victim attrition:** The outcomes of 'victim declines to identify a suspect' (114) or the suspect is identified but the 'victim does not support police action' (116) accounted for 57% of all outcomes in 2021/22 compared to 28% in 2015/16.
 - The force conducted analysis on a random sample of 50 rape investigations recently, to evaluate the circumstances surrounding victims withdrawing support. Of the 50 cases reviewed, 42% were reported by the victim and 58% by a third party (education/NHS/parent/friend etc). 60% of victims made it clear at the outset that they did not support an investigation/ prosecution and 40% withdrew their support after the initial contact. In the third-party report cases where victims were unsupportive from the start it is clear that many victims had not wanted the police to be informed by the third party. Overall the reasons behind the 114 and 116 outcomes are shown below.



- **Investigation length:** The median length of investigation for all rape cases has reduced from 159 days in 2015/16 to 71 days in 2021/22. However, for cases which result in a charge, the median length has increased from 205 days in 2015/16 to 359 days in 2021/22. The latest national data suggests adult rape investigations which result in a charge or summons take an average of 403 days to finalise.
- **Victim satisfaction:** Victim satisfaction for rape remains high across all measures, with no statistically significant reductions as shown below.

Rape Victim Satisfaction	12 months to July 2021	Sample Size	12 months to July 2022	Sample Size	Stat sig.
Initial contact	96% ±5%	69	97% ±4%	67	↔
Response time	97% ±3%	113	93% ±5%	115	↔
Action taken	86% ±6%	114	83% ±7%	117	↔
Follow up	81% ±8%	98	76% ±8%	100	↔
Treatment	96% ±4%	122	96% ±4%	122	↔
Whole experience	93% ±5%	120	90% ±5%	121	↔



A number of measures have been introduced to improve RASSO performance and whilst some improvements have been made there is still work required to improve the conviction rate for rape offences and overall timeliness of investigations. Actions include:

- **Operation Bluestone Soteria:** this is a national project which seeks to improve outcomes in sexual offence cases. Central to the work is the acknowledgment of recent and historic failings in sexual offence cases and the historic focus on victims and their credibility – brought to light in part through our SVCA pilot (see above). There are 6 pillars of work under Operation Bluestone Soteria, many of which focus on ensuring action against perpetrators:
 - 1. Suspect-focused investigation
 - 2. Repeat offenders/suspects
 - 3. Procedural justice approach to victim engagement
 - 4. Officer learning and wellbeing
 - 5. Effective use of data
 - 6. Digital forensicsOperation Bluestone Soteria has been piloted in a handful of forces and will now be piloted in 14 more – Northumbria being one of them. My office will work closely with the team of Operation Bluestone Soteria academics, the force, CPS North East, and other key stakeholders to ensure the success of the project in Northumbria in creating a new, flexible operating model for dealing with sexual offence cases and ultimately to bring about a transformational change.
- **Demand challenge:** there is ongoing recruitment to the interim structure of police officer investigators, with support from Police Staff Investigators and newly appointed Investigation Support Officers.
- **Performance challenges:** a new Performance Management Framework has been developed for the Rape Investigation Teams which focuses on a qualitative assessment of outcomes with an additional sample of 114 and 116 outcomes, VCoP compliance, victim attrition, charge rate and file quality. Continuous Professional Development events for rape investigators and SOLOs have been held, with inputs from the CPS and training videos have been provided to investigators covering reasonable parameters for the extraction of evidence from digital devices and reasonable lines of enquiry and subsequent disclosure with regards third party material.
- **Repeat Victims:** The repeat victim process has now been revised and all victims of more than one crime will be provided with a harm reduction plan. The plan will include wider multi-agency provision in more complex cases.
- **Victim Support:** a comprehensive information booklet has been developed to provide victims with further information regarding the investigative phases and terminology. ISVAs are conducting regular drop-in sessions for the RASSO teams to build relationships and improve communication. A monthly meeting takes place between ISVA leads and police and a mailbox has been established between police and ISVA to ensure timely updates are provided. A working group is progressing the introduction of Digital Processing Notice (DPN) which will ensure information abstracted from a victim's device is only obtained with their informed consent and explains why the information is necessary and what happens to the information and outlines clear parameters of what would be deemed evidential.
- **Suspect Management:** Research has indicated that a victim's credibility is often the first aspect of an investigation rather than a focus on the suspect and yet analysis has shown that 40% of suspects have a previous sexual offending history. The force is currently working with Northumbria University academic leads to improve the interviewing of suspects. We are also working with Corporate Development Department (CDD) to establish a process to identify repeat offenders and consider what multi-agency provision is available to tackle offenders, complemented by a focus by investigators to consider the previous offending history of suspects and the consideration of relevant orders despite any reluctance on behalf of the victim to support a prosecution.

Northumbria VAWG Scrutiny Panel

Previously, my office ran a Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel and a Sexual Violence Scrutiny Panel. These panels were led by OPCC staff and attended by professionals and members of the public with a special interest. DA and SV cases were reviewed and any issues/concerns were fed back to Northumbria Police who actioned them to improve the system in dealing with DA and SV offences.

Unfortunately, these panels have been unable to proceed since the Covid-19 pandemic, as they require attendees to meet in person and to review a large amount of confidential paperwork. Since the last panels, many national reports, inspections and reviews have been published, aimed at tightening scrutiny of VAWG investigations. My office is in the process of exploring with Northumbria Police the most effective way to continue this work.

Commitment 4: I will continue to develop my Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions scheme, so more than ever, workplaces can recognise abuse and offer support to their staff, building on the important role that friends, families and communities can play in connecting loved ones to the right help and support as early as possible.

Workplace domestic abuse (DA) champions

- Economic and social costs of domestic abuse are significant with Home Office estimates that at least £14 billion per year is lost to businesses due to decreased productivity, time off work, lost wages and sick pay resulting from this form of abuse.
- VRU staff have recently refreshed the OPCC domestic abuse workplace champions training and the champions network[5] support offer.
- This work helps ensure anyone affected by DA can find confidential support at work and be helped to safety. The OPCC also provides a model DA workplace policy template for employers to use/adapt.
- The VRU provides 2 stages of competency-based training. It helps develop an understanding of DA and coercive control; and how DA can impact an employee, their colleagues, and the organisation for which they work. It makes clear the role a DA Champion can play within their workplace so they know how to signpost a colleague who is experiencing domestic abuse to the specialist services available in their local area. The stage 2 training considers barriers to leaving an abusive relationship; and the 'recognise, respond and refer framework' for supporting victims of domestic abuse in the workplace. Pre and post training surveys have been developed to better capture the impact of the training, and what the champions are doing to implement the 'champion role' in practice.
- To date we have trained over 1500 people. Over 900 of these people from around 370 different organisations across Northumbria have gone on to successfully take up the role of to be workplace champions, primarily in the private sector.

[5] There are over 900 people from around 370 different organisations across Northumbria who are workplace champions (over 1500 trained) primarily in the private sector.



Workplace DA Champions trained by my Violence Reduction Unit

Further education and awareness-raising

Findaway Project:

- Local and national domestic homicide reviews (DHRs) often find that friends, family and the wider community knew about the abuse but did not know how to help, or who to tell. Findaway has been developed by Wearside Women in Need (WWiN) with Comic Relief funding, and is aimed at any friends, families and communities who are worried that someone else's relationship may be abusive.
- I am match funding the project for 3 years to help increase its advocacy capacity to respond across the whole of Northumbria. This will also ensure the original VRU-funded Ask Me Ambassadors project can continue to be supported via a new Findaway network.
- Findaway aims to put power and agency back into communities, and build resilience through increased opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence around domestic abuse and supporting others. The service offer will include:
 - **Phoneline** (plus email support) for adults worried about someone else. This went live in September 2022 and is staffed by the Findaway development workers
 - **Training** to increase understanding about DA, trauma responses, victim decision making, dangerousness, safety, and options, and to equip them to be better able to support the person they are worried about. This will be aimed both at communities and also at families, friends and 'supportive persons' i.e., the people who can / want to / and do offer support to the person experiencing DA[6].
 - **Peer support group for families, friends, and supportive persons** to help reduce their isolation, acknowledge and "normalise" their experience, promote peer learning and help equip them to be better able to support the person they are worried about.
 - **Findaway Network (name TBC):** will be targeted towards the Ask Me Ambassadors (currently 236 of them) and anyone else interested in becoming activists in their communities and people who want to increase their knowledge of services and DA issues within their communities.
 - **Information and resources on to project website.** Resources/toolkits will be developed for people to download from the 'Findaway' service website. Examples of topics include how they can help; how to talk about domestic abuse; self-care; and what to do in an emergency.
- This early intervention approach will help adult and child survivors to have a more informed and supportive informal network around them. It will help create domestic abuse-informed communities who can challenge the cultural acceptance of abuse.

[6] This can also include work colleagues, flatmates, and that informal network around the victim.

Commitment 5: Work with partners to focus on perpetrators of abuse, providing behaviour change and stabilisation work to the highest harm/high risk domestic abuse perpetrators. By its very nature, this will result in improved safety and feelings of safety for survivors and their children.

The Northumbria Hub & Spoke Model

- The Northumbria Hub and Spoke (H&S) model builds on learning from the Drive Pilot to improve outcomes for high risk, high harm, and serial perpetrators of DA.
- VRU and partner agency progress to date includes:
 - **Model development:** Based on learning from the Drive pilot, the VRU has developed a more decentralised delivery model to enable the local authority-based perpetrator services (who primarily respond to standard-medium risk perpetrators) to also respond to the high risk, high harm, and serial cohort. Five of the six LAs have perpetrator workers embedded into the same service as those workers supporting adult/child victims. The H&S model will enable those perpetrator services to take referrals from, and feed into, the local MATAC meetings. The VRU has secured Home Office funding for 2022-23 to develop this hybrid-model of Drive which is better suited to the new and developing local landscape and structures across Northumbria.
 - **Stakeholder engagement:** A VRU project proposal was shared with the LAs identifying the joint funding needed to deliver the model once HO funding ends. We have developed and signed off a partnership agreement with one local authority and are in discussions with the other five, to ensure the longevity of this work.
 - **Governance structures:** The H&S Operations Group provides oversight and assists with the model development, oversees the delivery plan and risk register, agrees a core set of standards, and maintains a monitoring framework. Membership of the group includes all major stakeholder groups. This Board will be updated on progress.
- Next steps:
 - **Staff recruitment and training:** The VRU has secured 24 places (for staff involved in delivering/supporting the H&S model) on the 12-day 'Certificate in Domestic Abuse OCNLR Level 3' qualification offered by Drive/Respect. This is a nationally recognised qualification. This will improve staff's knowledge and skills and give them good practice tools to work with this complex cohort. The VRU will also fund some pilot training later in 2022-23 to build the wider workforces' skills, knowledge, and tools to engage perpetrators at a much earlier stage, nudging them into services.
 - **Service delivery:** will commence at different times according to when staff are recruited and trained. MATAC partners are briefed on criteria referral/pathways.

Young People Causing Harm: Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA)

- Parents are often reluctant to discuss abuse perpetrated by their children due to fear of being blamed or misunderstood by professionals, alongside the risk of their child being criminalised. The underlying causes for CPVA are often misunderstood. The project has found an overlap in exploitation causing CPVA as a trauma response or in response to extra familial pull factors.
- I provided funding to Northumberland County Council's Adolescent Service to set up the 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.
- Northumberland County Council have now mainstreamed the VRU-funded Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) intervention. It is in addition to the RYPP. Achievements have included: preventing escalations to children's social care; supporting social care closures; preventing some young people becoming looked after; reducing violent incidents; reducing missing episodes; reducing youth offending; improving communications between parent and child; and increased awareness in healthy relationships, grooming and consent (in exploitation cases).

- There is also now an agreed Northumbria-wide CPVA multi-agency policy and procedure; referral pathways; and screening tool. Northumbria Police also have policies, procedures, and training.

Commitment 6: Enhance the role of the VRU's Education Team who have a key role to work with schools and communities around healthy relationships, and other issues such as knife crime awareness.

The VRU education team runs an Alternative Provision programme, which educates children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social Emotional and Mental health needs (SEMH), and children and young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, and who now attend Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). These students represent a vulnerable population of children. Evidence shows that children who are, for whatever reason, excluded from school are at greater risk of exposure to crime and violence or becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence, accelerating involvement into criminal and/or sexual exploitation.

It is often difficult to introduce challenging topics, such a violence reduction themed learning on domestic abuse/ violence, VAWG, coercion and exploitation or knife crime, in traditional classroom-based learning – much of which is founded in trusting and supportive relationships. Therefore, the VRU deliver Project Based Learning (PBL) - a pedagogical approach which makes learning about these themes more trauma-informed across eight to ten sessions and, with the knowledge of their school and teachers, is sensitive to each child's known lived experience. The students then present their learning in a showcase for a non-school, non-familial audience.

Following a pilot at River Tyne Academy, Gateshead, we were successful in a bid for funding to extend this project to another eight AP/PRU settings and to conduct an academic evaluation of the project.

Whilst Government funding has now ended, the VRU Education Team have now adopted PBL in AP/PRU settings as core business and continue to self-fund delivery. We are now looking to extend this education work into primary schools in three harm hotspots.

Commitment 7: Continue to build on the work of the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy

My Northumbria VAWG Strategy is being refreshed and I hope to launch it in early 2023. I have consulted the public on their views around VAWG and how to improve the current picture under the four themes above. I have further consulted VAWG sector professionals in the area. The Strategy will bring together in one place my vision and ambition for improving the response to all forms of VAWG, including DA and SV, as well as detail actions to tackle, prevent and change attitudes around VAWG. The Strategy will be informed by public consultation which is currently being planned. It is likely that the VAWG Strategy will have 4 key priorities:

1. Prevention
2. Supporting victim-survivors
3. Pursuing perpetrators
4. Creating stronger system



APPENDIX 1: PERFORMANCE DATA

CORE PERFORMANCE DATA

FIGHTING CRIME

RECORDED CRIME

Performance Headlines

Total crime has increased by 9% for the 12 months to September 2022, with an increase in most crime categories compared to 12 months to September 2021. When compared to the 12 months to September 2019; crime levels are higher for violent crime, sexual offences, cyber-crime and hate crime. All other categories are lower.

Total Recorded Crime (Panel KPI)

Total Recorded Crime



TOTAL RECORDED CRIME BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

	12 months to Sept 2019	12 months to Sept 2021	12 months to Sept 2022	% change 21 vs 22	% change 19 vs 22
Total	152,939	128,450	140,162	+ 9%	- 8%
Sunderland	32,241	26,667	28,938	-9%	-10%
South Tyneside	15,859	13,225	14,068	+ 6%	-11%
Gateshead	20,140	17,883	19,156	+ 7%	- 5%
North Tyneside	20,371	17,329	17,171	- 1%	-16%
Newcastle	39,783	31,556	36,872	+ 17%	- 7%
Northumberland	24,545	21,790	23,957	+ 10%	- 2%

ASB INCIDENTS

Performance Headlines

There has been a 35% (-22,174) reduction in ASB related incidents in the 12 months to September 2022 compared to the previous 12-month period.

Indicator	12 months to Sept 19	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22	% change
Anti-social behaviour incidents	47,377	63,804	41,630	-35%

ASB SATISFACTION

Performance Headlines

73% of ASB victims feel satisfied with their overall experience of service; this is a significant decrease compared to the previous 12-month rolling period. Some victims expressed that the service fell short of their expectations and that the police could have done more, for example, that an officer could have been deployed.

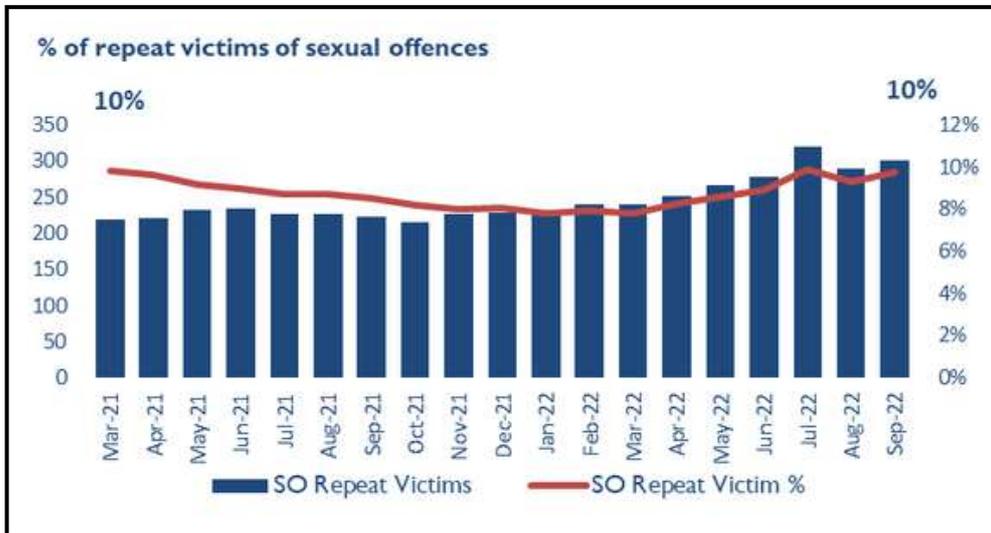
Indicator	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22
Whole Experience	78%	73%

REPEAT VICTIMS - DOMESTIC ABUSE

% of repeat victims of domestic abuse



REPEAT VICTIMS - SEXUAL OFFENCES

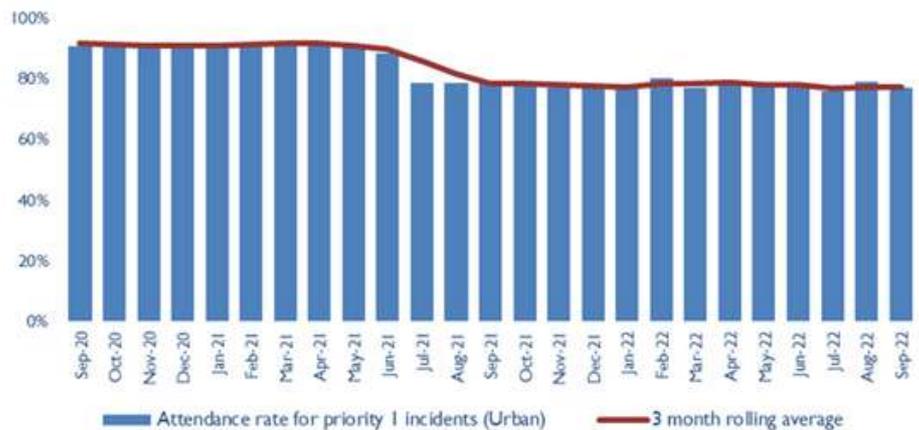


POLICE RESPONSE TIMES - GRADE 1 URBAN

Performance Headlines

Grade 1 incident demand remains high. In the last quarter, there has been 11% more grade 1 incidents compared to the same period in 2021 and 27% more compared to the same period in 2020. It is acknowledged that during the COVID-19 pandemic incident demand volumes changed; however, when comparing to the same period in 2019 there is a 54% increase. Current demand is higher than in the previous six years.

% Attended within standard - Grade 1 (Urban)



POLICE RESPONSE TIMES - GRADE 1 RURAL

Performance Headlines

The percentage of grade 1 (rural) incidents attended within 20 minutes was 59%, a reduction of 12%pts compared to 2021. This attendance rate has been consistent since September 2021.

% Attended within standard - Grade 1 (Rural)



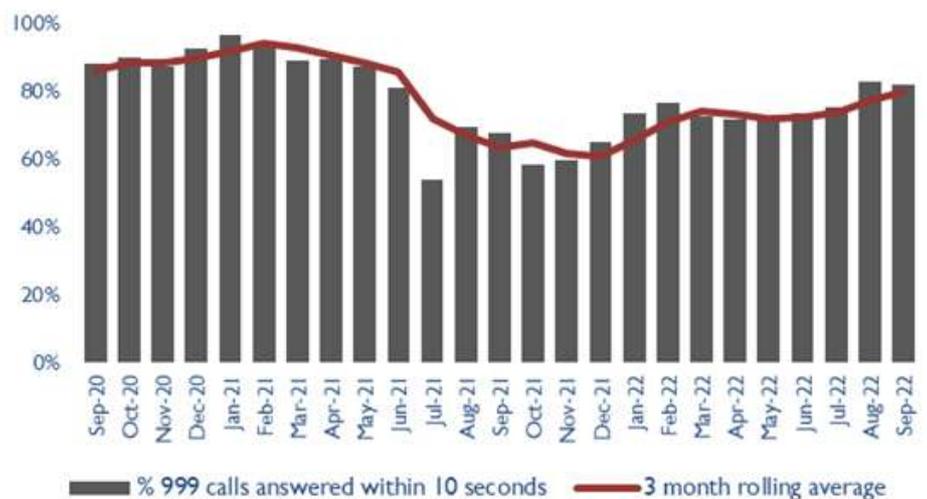
ANSWER TIMES - 999 EMERGENCY CALLS

Performance Headlines

For the 12 months to September 2022, the number of 999 calls increased by 20% compared to the previous 12 months, from 244,000 to 305,000. The number of 999 calls remain at an elevated level in the last quarter; with 101 non-emergency calls lower than previous levels. Both 999 calls and 101 non-emergency calls slightly increased over the last few months (slightly lower in August), in-line with the expected seasonal pattern.

The percentage of 999 calls answered within call handling standards has improved over the past 3 months, with 80% of calls answered within 10 seconds.

999 Calls answered within standard



ANSWER TIMES - 101 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

Performance Headlines

The percentage of 101 calls answered within 1 minute for the 12 months to September 2022 is 34%; this compares to 61% for the 12 months to September 2021. The average answer time for 101 non-emergency calls is 6 minutes and 32 seconds. There has been an improvement in the percentage of 101 calls answered within 1 minute in the last quarter. This improvement is similar to levels of performance achieved earlier in 2022; this improving trajectory is expected to continue.

As previously reported, due to increases in 999 demand, call handling profiles have been prioritised for emergency 999 calls. Management of the profile (numbers) of call handlers to meet increased 999 calls against 101 is continually monitored and overseen through the Daily Management meeting.

101 NE Calls answered within standard



PREVENTING CRIME

FIRST TIME ENTRANTS INTO CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system	12 months to March 2020	12 months to March 2021	12 months to March 2022
Total	2,550	1,814	2,101
Adults	2,175	1,695	1,944
Juveniles	374	119	158

SERIOUS VIOLENCE OFFENCES

Indicator % change	12 months to Sept 19	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22	% change
Serious violence offences	18,395	18,385	22,921	+25%
Knife enabled serious violence	882	837	1,014	+21%
Homicides	N/A	8	18	+125%
Hospital admissions (under 25s for assault with a sharp object)	N/A	34 (to Jun 21)	36 (to Jun 22)	+6%

IMPROVING LIVES

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Indicator	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22
Percentage of people who think the police do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood	81%	72%
<p>Some residents associated the absence of ongoing issues in their local area with efficient policing. Survey participants often perceived that an increase in funding and police visibility would help to further improve the service.</p>		

OVERALL VICTIM SATISFACTION

Performance Headlines

- 74% of victims are satisfied with their overall experience of the police for the 12 months to September 2022. This compares to 81% for the previous 12 month period. Victims feeling that a lack of robust action was taken and that police could have been more proactive in response to their report was a frequent source of dissatisfaction. Some victims stated that they had not been kept informed regarding the action taken.

SATISFACTION - HATE CRIME

Performance Headlines

- Dissatisfied victims perceived that police could have been more proactive in their response and taken their report more seriously. Some hate crime victims stated that they had not been kept informed regarding the action taken.

Indicator	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22
Whole experience	81%	73%

SATISFACTION - DOMESTIC ABUSE

Performance Headlines

- Domestic abuse victims continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the service, with 88% of victims feeling satisfied with their overall experience.

Indicator	12 months to Sept 21	12 months to Sept 22
Whole experience	89%	88%

DELIVERY OF THE POLICE & CRIME PLAN

IMPROVING LIVES PANEL REPORT

DECEMBER 2022



KIM MCGUINNESS
NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER