

DELIVERY OF THE POLICE & CRIME PLAN:

IMPROVING LIVES PANEL REPORT

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FROM THE PCC

Improving Lives for victims of crime and those vulnerable to crime is key to making this region safer.

My office starts from the principle of preventing crime as the best route to reducing crime, and supports the police to fight crime across the North East. But we also need to ensure that when someone is a victim of crime, their voice is heard.

That's why I was proud to work recently with Rape Crisis Tyne and Wear on a new awareness campaign called #ItAllAddsUp. In a series of videos designed to be shared on social media we highlight the everyday sexual harassment women face, and how men can help change this.

Ella, Caitlyn, Jude and Maryam aren't their real names but their stories are the real, everyday experiences of women who live all over our region. Each woman has been made to feel intimidated, annoyed, frustrated and even, at times, triggered by the comments, gestures and physical contact made by some men in public places.

Through projects such as this we are handing a voice to victims of crime and preventing crime at the same time.

It's important to recognise though that improving lives is a mission that needs the entire North East working together. And while at present the aim is there, the truth is public services across the North East are lacking the funds to intervene on a large enough scale.

We see this most noticeably from a policing view point when it comes to helping people in the midst of a mental health crisis.

Mental health-related incidents in the Northumbria Police Force area have increased by 152% since 2017 and it is clear now that we are urgently in need of investment in mental health services. I recently met with staff at Everyturn Mental Health, which works on behalf of the NHS and local authorities, provides crisis services to offer practical and emotional support to anyone in mental health crisis. Everyturn's frontline crisis services has seen an increase of 109% in referrals since 2022.

Northumbria Police officers are increasingly being called upon to fill the gaps to mental health provision caused by austerity, with an increase in 999 calls and the demands of officer times.

This can't go on. Our police work hard to ensure they are always there for those in need but people in a mental health crisis need to be looked after by healthcare specialists. That's why we need to free up pressure on our police by investing in mental health services. We can't carry on taking the 24/7 availability of our police for granted.

If we are going to improve lives we need to reverse austerity. Northumbria Police has had £148 million cut out of its budget since 2010. We're seeing the consequences of this on a daily basis, and I'll continue to lobby for a fair settlement.

**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

**VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN &
GIRLS
STRATEGY
2023-2025**

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 victims' 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 nearly £4 million in grant funding per financial year 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.

I am pleased that in response to campaigning from myself, other PCCs and the victims' services, the Government has begun to provide longer-term funding settlements, whereas previously short-term funding (up to a year) was available. As a result of this, I have been able to provide longer commitments in my victims services commissioning, offering increased stability and better opportunities for growth to local services.

Funding is allocated via various funding streams:

SUPPORTING VICTIMS FUND

My Supporting Victims Programme (SVP) provides core funding to organisations across Northumbria to strengthen the overall offer of support to victims and widening the specialist services available to meet the needs of our most vulnerable and priority victims. Previously referred to as the Supporting Victims Fund, this fund has been run by my office since 2015.

The funding priorities and themes of the SVP are shaped by assessment of victim need and in response to demand. Two new funding priorities have recently been introduced in response to increased needs and demand – these are stalking and harassment; and violence against the person. A full list of the SVP's current funding priorities is outlined below:

- Domestic abuse – including specialist support for women, men, ethnic minority victims and isolated/marginalised victims
- Stalking and harassment
- Sexual violence (and sexual exploitation) – including specialist support for women, men, children and ethnic minority 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 modern slavery, support for older people, criminal justice system support and support for road crime victims.

Through my SVP 2023-26, I have provided three-year funding commitments to 29 organisations delivering specialist services. £1,757,701 of the Ministry of Justice’s funding has been distributed to services this financial year, and in addition to this, I have contributed a further £381,880 of my own Discretionary funding towards the SVP to ensure all victims can access support at the point of need. To ensure a locally informed approach to commissioning, key partners were involved in the bid assessment process such as local authority domestic abuse leads and NHS England.

Funded services offer a range of cope and recovery 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. I also fund my core victim referral and assessment service, Northumbria Victims and Witness Service (NVWS), through this funding. More detail on NVWS is provided under Commitment 2.

I have ensured that preventative work is a part of my victims commissioning through supporting projects that raise awareness, educate, and intervene early before victimisation has taken place. Projects I am funding include specialist support for older people at risk of victimisation, and education sessions in schools on racism and other forms of discrimination.

In addition to the SVP, I have commissioned further services and projects which aim to support victims, prevent violence and abuse, and create safer spaces in Northumbria, utilising the following funding streams:

- MoJ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Community Fund
- MoJ IDVA/ISVA Fund Round 1 & 2
- MoJ Male Rape Support Fund
- NHS England Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS) Fund
- Home Office Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund
- Home Office Safer Streets Fund

More detail on the work carried out with the funding streams listed above can be found below, under priority 2.



SURT (left) and Women’s Health in South Tyneside (right) are two fantastic organisations supported through my Supporting Victims Fund and providing vital local services.

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 2022-23 financial year, my Supporting Victims Fund, DA/SV Community Fund, IDVA/ISVA Fund Rounds 1 & 2 and Male Rape Support Fund have enabled 32,726 victims of various crimes to be supported.

Victim and Witness Service Improvement Board

My Victim and Witness Service Improvement Board has been operational since 2021 and is going from strength to strength. Membership of the Board consists of a blend of victims who have lived experience combined with several local thematic specialists ranging from Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime to Children and Young People. I have recently extended an invitation to the board to include a specialist service that leads on all forms of exploitation. The Board are keen to continue and 'get it right' for victims and witnesses of crime and have provided my office with some invaluable insights and feedback on all aspects of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

It remains one of my key priorities that the Board continue and review how all victims' services are performing and developing, and so I am keen to share that upon my annual review of the Board, we have focused our attention across some of the following key areas:

- Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) – continuing to review and monitoring their progress.
- Reporting a crime – exploring the process and barriers faced by victims and third parties wanting to report a crime.
- Cope and recovery support – identifying victim needs and ensuring the right support provision is in place, such as peer support.
- Court support – reviewing existing support provisions for victims and witnesses attending court including the use of pre-trial visits to improve attrition rates.
- Victims Right to Review – considering victims options and highlighting the issues some of our members have experienced with this process.

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 CJS. In addition to this, they have been instrumental in offering their feedback on various other matters that indirectly impact on victims, such as reviewing the updated NVWS website to ensure this is victim friendly. Currently the Board are reviewing how easy it is to make a complaint on criminal justice agencies websites and the feedback will be captured and shared directly with senior leaders via the Local Criminal Justice Board.

Whilst future meetings will continue to focus upon NVWS and their general service delivery, additional agenda items will continue to seek feedback regarding the whole process from report to court and beyond.

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 5 in June 2023.

Operation Payback Round 4 had a focus on reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and repairing the harm caused by ASB, and aimed to do this through funding game-changing ideas that give local kids opportunities that would keep them out of trouble both during school holidays and throughout the year. Community centres, sports clubs, youth groups and park projects are among the grass-root causes that benefitted from the funding, returning the cash stripped from criminals to the heart of communities across Northumbria.

An example of some of the projects that were successful in receiving Operation Round 4 funding include:

- **Pallion Action Group** (Sunderland) - Delivery of the 'Care To Achieve Project' to raise the aspirations, skills, knowledge and experience for young people caught up in ASB and/or the criminal justice system.
- **Leam Lane Amateur Boxing Club** (Gateshead) - The running of further "Fit to Fed" sessions during the school summer holidays, with the aim to provide free sessions to the youths of the area followed by a hot meal.
- **Hexham Youth Initiative** (Northumberland) - Funding will be used towards the work of qualified and experienced detached youth workers on the Sele in Hexham. This is a large area of open space in the centre of town which includes play areas, recreation spaces, a bandstand, bowling green and a skate park.
- **Fenham Association of Residents** (Newcastle) - To create a project around safety for young people. They will focus on knife crime by creating a project aimed at talking to young people about community safety and creating a short film, to raise awareness.
- **Power Through Sport CIC** (North Tyneside) - Diversionary activities at the Friday Night Youth Club, which was initially funded by North Tyneside's Community Safety Team as part of their Project VITA campaign.
- **Sea Change South Shields CIC** (South Tyneside) - To host educational workshops to reduce ASB as part of weekly neurodiverse social club. This will prevent ASB, and additionally, educate members if they ever find themselves in a difficult situation.



L-R: Hadston House (Northumberland), Stepney Bank Stables (Newcastle) and Perth Green Community Association (South Tyneside) all benefited from funding in Operation Payback Round 4.

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.

Operation Payback Round 5 has the 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. As in previous rounds, insights and intelligence from neighbourhood policing leads and Community Safety Partnerships will be crucial to help shape our funding decisions.



L-R: Baltic Art Gallery (Gateshead), Leam Lane Boxing Club (Gateshead) and Out There Adventures (Sunderland) all benefited from funding in Operation Payback Round 4.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB Case Review

The ASB Case Review (formerly known as 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 for the victim(s). The revised process was relaunched in July 2022 and the OPCC now oversees and coordinates all activations in the region and works closely with Community Safety Partnerships throughout the process.

We are continuing to see fantastic results, from July 2022 – July 2023 the data is as follows:

- We processed 134 applications to activate the ASB Case Review
- 94 cases met the threshold to activate the ASB Case Review
- 27% were high risk victims
- 43% were on the basis of 3 or more qualifying complaints
- 30% were both elements of the threshold – high risk and qualifying complaints
- From the ASB case reviews held, recommendations have been made in 96% of cases
- 87% victims have attended the ASB Case Review panels or provided written impact statements, this shows us that victims of ASB want to have their voices heard and want to be part of the solution.
- We have received 9 1st stage appeal requests to local CSP Boards and 2 2nd stage (final stage) appeal to Strategic ASB Board
- In 22% cases the victim believes the behaviour to be hate related with race being the highest reported protected characteristic
- The greatest ASB Type is 'Personal' with a subtype of 'Harassment, intimidating or threatening behaviour'
- The greatest Learning Outcome in our region is 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.

In March 2023, our regions ASB Case Review process received national recognition when it was shortlisted for a Resolve ASB best Project Award. A quote from a victim who has been through process:

“After years of having to endure ASB with very little action, the community trigger allowed me to be heard and taken seriously.

I finally have received action and I know for a fact that this is only due to the community trigger. Through bringing together all the people that could do something about what was happening, the young people who were terrorising me and my family were brought to justice and we no longer have to experience ASB on a daily basis.

We actually haven’t had an incident in months! There was excellent communication throughout the process, I was offered a sympathetic shoulder and I felt really supported.

The trigger made such a big impact in a short amount of time and massively helped me and my family.”



Chief Inspector Alan Pitchford & Tracy McCann, Policy & Commissioning Manager, collecting the finalist award for 'Best Project' by Resolve.

We have now commissioned Resolve ASB, an external agency, to undertake a full independent review of the ASB Case Review Procedure.

ASB Victims Funding and Reporting and Victim Experience

I continue to contribute £30,000 per year to support ASB victim support services across the region and through the work of the Strategic ASB Board will continue to work towards understanding how access to support differs across our region and how this can be improved.

The reporting and victim experience project work is ongoing and in April 2023 I welcomed key Registered Social Landlords (RSL) in our region on to our newly formed RSL ASB Forum. RSLs play a huge role in keeping communities safe and therefore are key partners in helping us tackle ASB and this forum will allow the RSLs to directly feed into and influence the work of the Northumbria Strategic ASB Board and its priorities. Work is now underway to benchmark the victims journey when ASB is reported to their landlord, and moving forward, the Forum will be an opportunity to share some of the innovative and successful projects and practices across the region with other RSLs and the Strategic Board.

This year I also provided £19,000 to support a newly designed ASB service project in Gateshead. This research for this project found that mental ill-health was prevalent in 100% ASB cases audited, and the project aims to incorporate access to mental health advice into daily case management for earlier identification and access to help, support and signposting.

ASB Trailblazer Work

Northumbria has been selected as a trailblazer for two ASB pilots, which will both run until March 2025. Through these pilots we have secured over £2 million to tackle ASB until March 2024, further funding has been guaranteed for 2024-25, but the final settlement has not been confirmed at this time. The ASB Trailblazer Project Lead has been recruited and started in post on 7th August 2023.

The first is the **Immediate Justice** pilot which will see ASB Perpetrators repair or make good the damage caused by an offence or undertake up to 20 hours of unpaid work:

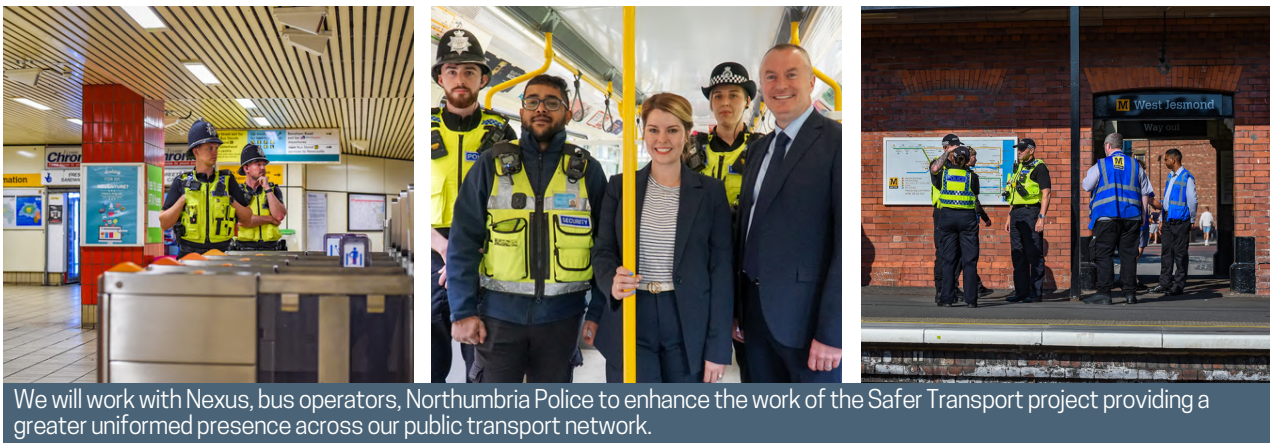
- The activities will be, where possible and appropriate, will be highly visible to the public and will take place in public spaces – such as parks, community spaces such as high streets, rear lanes or green spaces, transport hubs, and private property (including housing association land) with the owner’s consent. Probation will deliver these reparative activities. A menu of reparative activity options will be confirmed following consultation with the public, but will include:
 - Refuse/waste removal to include litter picking
 - Graffiti removal
 - Area beautification through gardening activities
 - Repairs to property (both public or private with the owners’ consent and can include private resident's or business properties).
- There will be a work programme for reparative activity established in six pilot areas that experience high levels of ASB, and one geographically defined area in each Local Authority area.
- The pilot will fit into the existing police Out of Court Disposal framework and will be applicable to any volume crime type such as public order and criminal damage, as well as offences under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which include breaches of Community Protection Notices, Criminal Behaviour Orders, Premises Closure Orders and Dispersal Notices.
- ASB victims will be consulted on the type of activity they would like to see perpetrators undertake.
- Running alongside the reparative activity, 25% of the service will include an education element to address behaviour change and provide some level of sustainability. Also built into the project will be voluntary Restorative Justice where at the end of the reparative activities, if appropriate, the possibility of Restorative Justice will be explored with the perpetrator, if agreed then the Northumbria Victim and Witness Service will liaise with the victim and seek their views. If both parties are agreeable Northumbria Victim and Witness Service as the Restorative Justice practitioners will arrange and lead this.



The Immediate Justice pilot will be delivered alongside Probation who will oversee the reparative activities - the public will be consulted prior to the project beginning, on what these activities may include.

The second is the **Hotspot Response** pilot, which will deliver a stronger, focused approach to deterring and tackling ASB across our transport networks as well as in three communities suffering high levels of ASB:

- Funding will be used to put in place an enhanced presence of police and other relevant agencies in key ASB areas. Both strands of our project (transport and community based) will increase the level of enforcement action taken therefore we are also seeking to expedite enforcement activity through a shared legal resource.
- The overall aim of this project is to deter ASB and intervene early to prevent escalation, identifying offenders and take robust enforcement action where necessary.
- We will work with Nexus, bus operators, and Northumbria Police to enhance the work of the Safer Transport project providing a greater uniformed presence across our public transport network.
- Community based hotspots: In three specific geographic locations where we understand there are high levels of ASB we will deploy co-ordinated multi-agency response teams; these will include police and local authority resource as well as potentially resource from Registered Social Landlords (RSL) (if operating in the chosen hotspot).
- The areas have been identified based on data, insights and intelligence. Northumbria Police have liaised with the Local Authorities to ensure they fit with their local intelligence and insights. The three area commands have identified the following community-based hotspots:
 - Biddick Hall and Whiteleas, South Tyneside, Southern area command
 - West Denton, Newcastle, Central area command
 - Cramlington, Northumberland, Northern area command



In the last two weeks of July, the project has seen 8 additional weekend transport patrols between 4.00pm and 10.00pm. This resulted in an additional 37 extra police resource in hotspot transport locations. It has seen 2 arrests, 4 informal warnings issued, valuable intelligence gathered, 2 missing persons found and returned and engagement with over 50 members of the public including young people.

The West Denton (Newcastle) patrols started on 4th August 2023. This has resulted in 8 additional Local Authority Community Safety Support Officers alongside 8 additional Police resource. There has been significant engagement with the community – residents and local businesses as well as young people. Lots of local intelligence was gathered and the officers were able to give crime prevention advice and promoted local community activities. The members of the public spoken to were very happy with the additional uniformed presence.

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

In the Police and Crime Plan I committed to further enhance the delivery of victim support services across Northumbria, by streamlining the whole process, making things simpler and doing everything I can to ensure that all victims receive the help they need.

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:

- Recruitment within NVWS continues to play a key part to ensure the department can be brought up to full establishment. This will continue to ensure that the best support can be provided to all victims and witnesses that NVWS have contact with. Once recruited, the new staff that start NVWS's new training programme which encompasses all areas of the support they will be providing from cope and recovery to court, along with the VCoP right 6, 'To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution', updates.
- All NVWS staff are now trained to be able to provide to support to victims at any point in their journey.

2) Victims Code of Practice (VCoP):

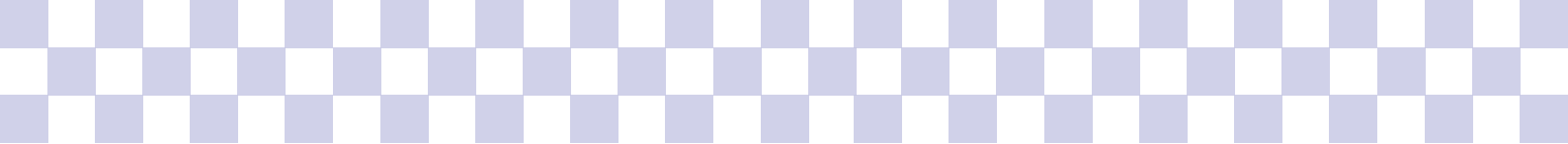
- New capabilities went live in June 2023. NVWS are now able to provide updates to victims along their crime investigation journey, whether that is significant events such as an arrest or charge of an offender, or just frequency updates to check in with them. Awareness of this has been raised amongst officers and various departments within Northumbria Police.

3) Enhanced self-serve internet opportunity:

- This allows victims access to an online portal for reporting new crimes and checking on the status of existing reports. No other Forces have this functionality, although they have expressed interest in Northumbria's progress.
- 'Follow my Crime' has been created in relation to incidents before the point it is recorded as a Crime). Meetings are planned to discuss and assess this to see if it can be extended and/or built upon to cover this option.

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 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.



NVWS's victim outcomes remain consistently high – 97% of victims report improved health and wellbeing and 96% feel better able to cope with aspects of everyday life. The overall percentage of referrals that go on to receive support has increased, which is another key success for 2022-23.

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

My office is working with Northumbria Police's Victims Hub to set up an Anti-Slavery Network. The Victims' 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.

An Anti-Slavery Network is a multi-agency partnership that brings together statutory and non-statutory partners from across Northumbria to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. It will see to enhance the response to modern slavery and human trafficking in Northumbria, by responding to and supporting victims and creating a zero-tolerance environment for the conditions in which modern slavery and human trafficking thrive.

We are convening an event to raise awareness of the issue and to invite partners onto the network. Membership will be open to all agencies in the statutory, non-statutory, public, private, community and voluntary sector who have a responsibility and/or have made a commitment to support people who have experienced exploitation or to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking in Northumbria.

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.

Offering high-quality Restorative Justice (RJ) to all victims across our region is a challenge that I continued to face; not only in terms of linking together local victim services and offender-focused organisations, but in ensuring that we have the right qualified and experienced RJ practitioners in place to deliver the interventions. However, I am equally aware and reassured that other regions are faced with similar challenges.

I am confident that we have a good focus on RJ across Northumbria to improve the overall awareness of RJ and uptake of interventions. In my Improving Lives Team, we have a Programme Lead for RJ (trained in serious and complex RJ) who has actively engaged with various other PCC offices, 'Why Me?' (RJ charity) and the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) to review and share knowledge and best practice. I recognise the importance of RJ and value how this intervention can improve the lives of those who have engaged in the process, which is why my office is in the process of developing a framework that will review what Restorative Justice looks like across Northumbria.

I am also confident that our RJ service provider for the region, NVWS, is suitably equipped in being able to support victims through to interventions. NVWS have a case management system in place (that was specifically designed alongside the Restorative Justice Council) to manage RJ cases, as well as having qualified and highly experienced staff to deliver the interventions. I am delighted to share that NVWS are reporting an increase in the number of RJ discussions being held with victims, alongside an increase in the number of overall interventions being held.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that I have received funding from the National Probation Service (NPS) to deliver RJ, of which this will be used by NVWS to fund two RJ focused posts. My office, Probation and NVWS are currently working together to get these posts operational, and I look forward to seeing the progress made and the increased RJ activity that will be delivered across Northumbria.

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

One of Northumbria's Local Criminal Justice Board's priorities focuses on prevention and rehabilitation of offenders, support for victims and witnesses and performance within the criminal justice system with the aim of ensuring the most efficient and effective service provision.

Work continues to deliver a successful Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach between key partners, police and probation. IOM is a partnership approach to managing offenders whose crimes cause damage and harm locally. Cohort members are identified by probation and the police and are defined as persistent offenders.

IOM partners work together to ensure that prioritised offenders have access to timely and appropriate interventions that meet their identified needs, that contribute to their rehabilitation and reduce the risk of reoffending. The membership of the current cohort in Northumbria is over 150 across all three area commands. Performance management considers offences prior to adoption in the cohort, during the first six months and at the end of the IOM intervention.

The data below shows the average offending rates for a cohort from the programme. As offenders are adopted into the cohort at a time when their offending is increasing this is reflected in the figures and the data shows a significant decrease for this cohort of 71 people.

Average offence per person before IOM	Average offences per person during IOM	Average offences per person after IOM
5.08	6.37	0.76

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, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Probation have received such training and discussions have taken place and contacts given to include such an approach in training for sentencers.

Through my ISVA Champion, my office is working closely with criminal justice agencies to help them understand the impact of the court process for victims. We are working alongside services who are providing support to victims of rape and sexual assault and will be developing some training around how criminal justice agencies such as the CPS can have more effective communication with victims. Using the specialist expertise of ISVA services, we will be advocating for the rights of victims to help ensure that their individual needs are being listened to and taken into consideration throughout the criminal justice process and when they attend court, something that can be extremely challenging and traumatic. More information on the ISVA Champion role can be found under Commitment 8.

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:

The table below compares Northumbria Police’s VCOP compliance for the 12 months to April 2022 and the 12 months to April 2023:

Indicator	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023
% of needs assessments that are completed within 48 hours	80%	81%
% of victims who state they received a victim contract (notification that a crime was recorded)	71%	71%
% of victims (who require updates) informed when the suspect is arrested (or voluntary attended) and it is recorded on the victim log	81%	74%
% of victims (who require updates) informed when the suspect is charged (or OOCD) and it is recorded on the victim log	82%	73%
% of victims (who require updates) informed when the suspect is bailed and it is recorded on the victim log (pre-charge bail)	74%	63%
Victims informed within 5 days after a crime is assessed for no investigation	81%	82%

VCOP performance has varied with some statistics improving, some remaining at the same level and some falling when comparing the previous 12 months to April 2023 to the previous year. The ambition is to further improve performance across all the measures.

It has been identified that certain aspects of victim satisfaction have been decreasing over the past two years, including a reduction in satisfaction in the whole experience for victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

In response to this, a working group was established which carried out an in-depth analysis of the journey of an ASB incident/volume crime together with an assessment of verbatim comments provided by victims during survey responses, to gain a greater understanding of the factors impacting satisfaction levels. The findings of the analysis have shaped an improvement plan for victim satisfaction. The plan has five strategic objectives with a nominated lead for each. The objectives are as follows:

1. Understanding our impact – good quality data, engagement and feedback
2. Clear communication and expectations
3. Delivering a quality service to victims of crime and ASB
4. Compliance with standards and a focus on performance
5. Problem-solving approach – Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS).

Objective 5 will achieve improved support to victims and compliance with VCOP through creation of the new NVWS service. As mentioned above, in June 2023, NVWS went live with a key project benefit being improved compliance with VCOP. This practically results in NVWS taking responsibility to keep victims updated with their crime, removing this responsibility for certain crime types from officers in charge.

Performance improvements for VCOP are too early to assess, although some measures are showing some improvements when looking at discreet months. For example, the percentage of crimes that have an entry on the victim log to indicate written crime details have been issued has increased from 66% in May 2023 to 76% in June 2023. The percentage of victims updated where a suspect is charged has also increased, from 70% in May 2023 to 78% in June 2023. Further improvements need to be made in these and wider VCOP measures.

Victims and Prisoners Bill

The move towards a Victims and Prisoners Bill continues with the objective being for LCJB partners to ensure that victims are treated in a respectful, sensitive, tailored, and professional manner. Finalised guidance and reporting requirements have not yet been received from Government. Confirmation has been received that the code will be enshrined in law and is due to pass through Parliament soon.

In preparation, and to ensure continued efforts to improve, the LCJB Victim and Witness subgroup has reviewed the format and availability of data as well as considering performance enablers/blockers to effective delivery of the 12 victim rights/entitlements:

1. To understand and be understood
2. Have crime recorded without justifiable delay
3. To be provided with information when recording a crime
4. Referral to support service with services/support tailored to needs
5. To be provided with information re compensation
6. Information about investigation and Prosecution
7. To make a VPS
8. Information about trial, process, and role as witness
9. Information re outcome of case and any appeal
10. To be paid expenses and property returned
11. To be given information about the offender following conviction (Victim Contact Scheme)
12. To make a complaint if rights are not met.

In addition, a Victims Voice approach, led by my office, has been introduced to the work of the LCJB. A range of sources including my office's Victims Champion provide 'user stories' which helps the partners to better understand the issue facing victims and their experiences within the Criminal Justice System and work to address these.

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, 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.

Our ISVA Champion has been in post since April 2023. Work so far has included:

- Meeting with services who are providing support to victims of sexual violence across Northumbria, including ISVA services, counselling and therapeutic services and services supporting children and young people who have experienced sexual violence. The purpose of these meetings has been to get to know more about each of the services and start to identify some of the key themes, challenges and barriers for the people they are supporting, especially those trying to navigate the criminal justice process.
- Liaising with criminal justice partners including the police, Crown Prosecution Service and the courts to share some of the providers feedback about what victims of sexual violence are experiencing so that we can effectively advocate for their rights and ensure their needs are being considered at the forefront of their journey through the criminal justice process.
- Coordinating sexual violence support provision across Northumbria by establishing the Northumbria Sexual Violence Providers Network. This will involve regular meetings, bringing practitioners together to share information about their services, build and strengthen referral pathways for victim-survivors accessing these services and creating a safe space for practitioners to share knowledge, skills and experiences with each other. The network will also allow us to share information about any new policies, initiatives and key information that practitioners can use in their work supporting victim-survivors of sexual violence.

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^[1] 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'^[2] 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. In my local commissioning of victims' services, I have ensured the application and assessment process is accessible for smaller 'by and for' organisations and that the importance of these specialist organisations is recognised.

I am pleased that the Government has begun to offer longer-term funding commitments that can last up to three years, providing much needed stability to our local services. However, there is no guarantee this will continue after this term and this improvement has only been made in some instances. I am therefore committed to continuing to lobby the Government longer-term settlements. 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. Long waiting lists and capacity issues are still at the forefront of the challenges local services face. More must be done to ensure that victim-survivors can access support at the point of need.

[1] 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.

[2] 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.

Current force position:

Whilst stalking and harassment can happen to anyone, this crime has a high prevalence in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). In the 12 months to February 2023, stalking and harassment as a VAWG crime has:

- Remained at similar levels – 39% of VAWG crimes recorded were stalking and harassment, with a total of 8,205 offences.
- The highest percentage of both victim and offender-based evidential difficulties regarding outcomes of all the VAWG crimes.
- Remained at similar levels for charges or summons (4%).
- Saw an increase in the number of crimes closed where the victim does not support further police action and there is a named suspect (a rise from 42% to 49%) and remains the highest percentage for VAWG crimes.

Action taken

It is clear that work is needed to improve the police response to stalking. Below are some examples of recent actions taken:

- **Northumbria Stalking Intervention Programme:**
 - My office is currently part of a working group that is exploring the proposal of introducing a Northumbria Stalking Intervention Programme (NSIP) for the region. Established by Northumbria Police, partners also include the National Probation Service and CNTW (Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear) who are all working in partnership to launch the NSIP model. The NSIP aims to reduce the risk to, and impact of stalking on victims by developing a multi-agency intervention model. The project seeks to draw expertise and intelligence across the multi-agency spectrum to inform the risk management process associated with managing stalking cases, and offer interventions with perpetrators, which are clinical where appropriate. Whilst still in the early development stages, the partners are currently considering and exploring various components required to deliver NSIP, including:
 - Training package - Creation of a combined training package using the police, probation and Paladin's (stalking service) existing training.
 - Location – Identifying suitable locations to base the NSIP.
 - Staffing – Reviewing timescales to suitably recruit qualified staff to deliver and oversee the NSIP.
- **Protective Orders:**
 - In September 2022, the new Protective Orders page on the force intranet went live and was supported with widespread communications to publicise it in-force. The page includes dedicated guidance on Stalking Protection Orders, which summarises the legislation, what they are, when and how to apply, and guidance on completion of the application form.

• Sessions in Schools:

- In January 2023, Northumbria Police promoted a Physical Social and Health Education (PSHE) Training input to promote awareness of unhealthy relationship behaviours and stalking (including Cyber-Stalking). The input was developed in collaboration between Durham Police and The Alice Ruggles Trust and quality-assured by the PSHE Association and is aimed at Key Stage 4 pupils aged 14-16 years.

Stalking Super-Complaint

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium, submitted a super-complaint^[3] 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.
- 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.

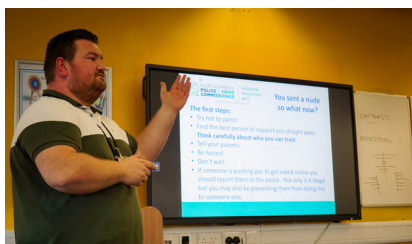
The super-complaint has been submitted to HMICFRS, the College of Policing, and the IOPC, who will, depending on whether they deem it eligible, investigate the issue before issuing their own report and recommendations to forces. I will follow the progress of this complaint closely and discuss with Northumbria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

Support for victims of stalking and harassment

In response to growing demand, through my Supporting Victims Programme I have commissioned a new specialist service dedicated to stalking and harassment victims in Northumbria. Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service began delivering practical, emotional and advocacy support to high-risk victims of stalking and harassment in April 2023 through the provision of an Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC).

Paladin will also be providing training for victim services across Northumbria. The training is being approached in phases of priority and will include:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) coordinators
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence services commissioned by my office
- Northumbria Victims and Witness Service.



My Northumbria VRU Education Team deliver a range of educational inputs and engaging sessions, including sharing information about healthy relationships and staying safe online.

^[3] 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.’

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:

In line with the national picture, unfortunately we have seen hate crime rise in recent years. As a result, our fight against hate continues and we are determined to bring about positive change. I scrutinise Northumbria Police’s performance data on satisfaction levels of victims of hate crime and the work undertaken by the police to support victims.

- **Recorded crime:** Hate crime recorded by Northumbria Police has increased year on year, as shown below. 3,724 hate crimes were recorded in the 12 months to April 2023, a slight increase from 3,720 hate crime recorded in the 12 months to April 2022.
- **Types of hate crime:** Hate crime remains consistent when comparing both periods. The largest increases have been in homophobic hate crimes (+52 crimes) and transphobic (+41 crimes) hate crimes. However there has been a decrease in disability (-89 crimes) and faith hate (-31 crimes). Race remains the largest proportion of hate crime at 58% of the total for the 12 months to April 2023, followed by homophobic (20%).

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Hate Crime Breakdown	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023	% Change
Race	2,153	2,166	+1%
Faith	233	202	-13%
Disability	506	417	-18%
Gender	36	44	+22%
Age	8	18	+125%
Homophobic	677	729	+8%
Transphobic	107	148	+38%

- **Type of offending:** In the last 12 months, 9.7% of hate crime was committed online in comparison to 7.1% in the previous 12 months.
- **Victim satisfaction:** Victim satisfaction levels have remained at similar levels when compared to the previous year.

Indicator	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023
Actions Taken	71%	69%
Follow-up	61%	64%
Whole Experience	75%	74%

A monthly Hate Crime delivery group is now in place to deliver elements of the hate crime plan, with a focus on investigations, victim contact and satisfaction improvements. The delivery group is attended by lead Officers from Area Command, Communications and Custody. A training delivery plan is under way, with hate crime training already being delivered to control room staff and Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

OPCC Staff Training

To strengthen the delivery of the EDI Business Plan, Jewish Cultural Awareness Training and Show Racism the Red Card Training was delivered to all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of how to engage effectively with diverse communities and to ensure services are responsive to different needs. In June 2023, staff have received training on neurodiversity to ensure OPCC policies and practices are accessible and inclusive so that we can support colleagues who are neurodivergent and ensure equity in our service provision.

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. I have also commissioned Pride Action North (formerly Northumberland Pride) to cope and recovery support to LGBT+ victims of hate crime across Northumbria.

Case Study: Support for Victims of Hate Crime

Connected Voice are commissioned through my Supporting Victims Programme 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.

A, who is of African origin, complained of racial abuse from her neighbour’s family and friends, who had recently moved into the neighbourhood, subsequently her relationship with her neighbour broke. Following this incident, her neighbours insisted on dividing the shared garden at the front of A’s property; vandalising her property in the process and using it for drinking parties. One afternoon A reported that around eight people had spent several hours drinking in the garden, and dismantled A’s washing line. A said that she “could stand it no more” and went outside to complain about their behaviour. A alleged that they turned on her and she was forced to defend herself. As a result the police were called to the incident.

Following the incident, A no longer felt comfortable in the area and wanted to move. She felt under constant surveillance and whenever she passed her neighbour's family they would talk about her and make racist comments. The police were concerned about rising community tensions and fully supported A's wish to move.

A applied to her local authority to move. The police provided her with a supporting letter recommending that she be given priority banding to expedite the move. The local authority initially accepted A on to the housing waiting list but with a lower priority than recommended by the police. They then disqualified her because she had been involved in a fight with her neighbours.

The advocacy support provided by Connected Voice include:

- Helping A to appeal this decision seeking advice from Shelter, the housing charity, and Liberty, the human rights organisation.
- Liaised closely with the police officers who had been involved in the original incident and were aware that A had reported racist incidents. The police were very supportive.
- Highlighted the failings of the local authority to give due consideration to the concerns raised by the police and to ignore the issue of race as an aggravating factor contrary to their own policy on such matters.

Outcomes:

- After escalating the matter through the various stages of the appeal process the decision was finally overturned and A was accepted onto the waiting list and awarded the priority banding that the police had requested. A is greatly relieved that she can now bid for properties and will be able to move from her current situation. Living in a hostile environment has had a detrimental impact on her mental health and she is looking forward to moving somewhere she feels safe.

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Hate Crime Champions

The OPCC works with Northumbria Police, third sector partners and communities to promote the Hate Crime Champions Scheme, to challenge intolerance and hate, and promote diversity and inclusion. Over 600 champions have been recruited since the introduction of the scheme in 2019, with 72 recruited over the past 12 months. My office is working with Northumbria Police and Sunderland University to enhance the Hate Crime Champions training package by introducing up to date education films produced by media students at the university.



Northumbria Police delivering Hate Crime Champions training to Sunderland People First.

Awareness Raising & Prevention

My office has continued to provide funding to Newcastle United Foundation and Show Racism the Red card to provide sessions to children and young people in schools that cover racism and other forms of discrimination. In the 2022-23, the following work was carried out:

- A total of 1,502 children in primary schools across Northumbria received educational sessions from Newcastle United Foundation on discrimination. Informal assessments completed at the end of the programme showed that all children that participated now understand protected characteristics, how to report a hate crime and are able to consider ways to tackle bullying.
- A total of 1,623 children and young people in schools across Northumbria received anti-racism workshops delivered by Show Racism the Red Card. Feedback received from the session includes:
 - *'Thank you for delivering this session. I think it is really important for pupils to learn about this topic, although as teachers, it can sometimes be quite daunting to talk about. Having the workshop not only educates the pupils, it also gives teachers a better understanding of how to talk about these issues.'*
 - *'Thank you for a wonderful session. Feedback from all staff involved in supporting students was fantastic and very impressed with the delivery of the content to meet the needs of our students. It has generated a lot of discussion and we have today observed students wearing their wristbands with pride and talking to others about what they are.'*
 - *'Myself and my teaching assistant thought that the session was well rounded and delivered appropriately and the person who delivered the session was professional with us but talked at the right level to engage the children.'*

4. COMMUNITY COHESION AND EXTREMISM

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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.

Community cohesion projects

My office funded Digital Voice, who deliver digital inclusion projects, to work with young people in Chopwell to produce a series of videos to dispel the myths that all young people are troublesome and get involved in ASB, with the aim to help improve community cohesion.

Northern Cultural Project received Operation Payback funding to deliver music workshops to young people from diverse backgrounds, enabling them to understand each other's cultures, breaking down barriers and helping them to have a sense of belonging and to feel valued.

Northumbria Police works with partners through Hate Crime Tension Monitoring groups, where local issues are identified and partners work together, intervene to prevent and reduce further incidents and prevent and tackle extremism. My office is also a member of these groups to make sure that we are up to date with any emerging trends and issues.

Major Incident Framework

The UK National Threat Level posed to the country remains 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 (MCIF) 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 (or out of) our area.

My office has continued working closely with our neighbouring PCC offices, namely Durham, Cleveland and Cumbria, alongside the NHS and Mental Health Hub providers, to secure a streamlined approach to our response to a major crime incident. This networking and exploration of improving pathways between the charity sector and NHS clinical services, coupled with building and developing pathways between the neighbouring PCC's has helped further shape our MCIF. More recently my office has linked in with PCC's further afield who have delivered an input around what lessons have been learned following a major incident, all of which is being reflected in my MCIF.

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 Programme 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 crucial role the ReVOC service can play.

Client B was referred to the service following an aggravated burglary where intruders broke into the home brandishing machetes and demanding money and gold. The client, who is a single parent with two young sons, 13 years and 2 years, was threatened with a knife while another offender held threatened her two sons with a machete. The offenders made off with a small amount of cash and some jewellery, leaving the family traumatised. As a result of the incident the client began to suffer flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, hyper-alertness and anxiety, it affected her sleep and her daily life. Her eldest son was also traumatised by the incident, he did not want to leave the house becoming reclusive and withdrawn at school.

Understanding that greater support was required for the family, the ReVOC worker referred the client into their counselling service, with the knowledge that she was waiting for trauma therapy through the IAPT services. This was to maintain a level of clinical intervention while the client was on the EMDR waiting list.

The client's son was receiving limited support through school, but the client felt greater intervention was needed because she noted a deterioration in his mental health. We made referrals and this case was picked up by CAMHS who recognised the severe trauma her son had suffered.

After two counselling sessions the counsellor contacted the ReVOC worker to explain that the client had attempted an overdose and was taken into hospital. The counsellor worked with the client to produce a safety plan in case she felt this way again. It was agreed with the client that the worker would contact IAPT on her behalf to discuss a support plan and make them aware of my concerns for her mental health. After contacting Psychological Services they agreed to carry out a suitability assessment with the client as they also needed to consider whether their service was appropriate to meet the client's needs due to the increased risk. The outcome of the assessment showed a strong suicide risk and her case was transferred to the Community Treatment Team. It was agreed that the ReVOC project would continue to engage with the client by text while she waited for this support.

This was a substantial piece of work involving a number of agencies and support process, but also highlighted the waiting time within those services.

The client and her family have been significantly impacted by the incident but are now engaged in appropriate services who are qualified to deal with the level of trauma they are experiencing. Understanding the impact of crime on clients, as well as having the ability to recognise when issues need to be escalated enabled us to respond rapidly to the case. We remain hopeful the intervention will help this family recover over time.

6. COMPLAINTS

Complaints against the force

Complaints are an integral part of ensuring that Northumbria Police continue to be a learning force and ensure that they learn from the concerns raised by local residents – this is why I take complaints about Northumbria Police very seriously and will continue to do so, to ensure that the service provided to local communities, whether in our rural or urban areas is professional, effective and efficient.

Through regular scrutiny of Northumbria Police performance, I monitor the outcomes of the Professional Standards Department and Triage Team. The Triage team continue to be the ‘first point of contact’ for all complaints and try to deal with matters informally to ensure contact is made with the complainant quickly and a resolution provided – nearly 75% of complaints to Northumbria Police are dealt in this way. Through scrutiny meetings with the Chief Constable, I ensure that organisational learning remains at the heart of complaints.

In line with other forces, the top 3 categories of complaint to Northumbria Police are currently:

- Delivery of duties – general level of service, police action following contact, and decisions.
- Police powers, policies and procedures – use of force, power to arrest, and search of premises.
- Individual behaviours – unprofessional attitude, lack of fairness and impartiality, overbearing or harassing behaviour.

Reviewing the handling of complaints

Since 2022, the OPCC is responsible for low level reviews (the IOPC remains responsible for reviews of a more serious nature). For new panel members, 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 the last financial year (22-23) saw my office deal with over 100 reviews, taking around 18 days to conclude a review. Reviews which fall to the IOPC to complete took on average 137 days to complete. We will continue to work hard to deliver considered responses in a timely manner. Like the work of the triage team, I am keen to ensure that Northumbria Police learn from the review outcomes – to date review outcome learning recommendations from my office have included:

- PSD to remind Investigating Officers to contact complainant as part of the complaint process.
- That allegations are recorded correctly and the Investigating Officer double checks before commencing complaint investigation.

- The checklist that PSD have given to Investigating Officers is clearly paying dividends.
- Encourage the continued use of body worn videos.

Correspondence

My office continues to receive many emails, which although not complaints are issues that residents have raised about Northumbria Police. My team work closely with the Chief Constable's office to ensure such matters are responded to in a timely manner and where appropriate, police will progress matters. Issues raised with my office in the main continue to relate to community confidence and anti-social behaviour – this tends to be relevant to the area a person lives in or an incident that is specific to the sender. The OPCC produces a quarterly report for the regular scrutiny meetings with the Chief Constable, this allows all areas to be discussed and for the Chief Constable to progress matters at a senior level within the force.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

Here in Northumbria, we have 15 Independent Custody Visitors, whose support and dedication make a real difference to those detained in custody and also provides me with valuable assurances that those detained in our custody suites are well looked after and treated well. In the last financial year, our ICV met with over 300 detainees, covering three dedicated custody suites and four resilience suites as well as cells that can be used at the two North East football grounds at Sunderland AFC and Newcastle United.

ICVs ask a range of questions (which were amended following the last HMICFRS of Northumbria custody) covering issues ranging from the checking in process to ensuring CCTV is working. Our ICVs make visits to those in custody at varying times of the day and evening including weekends and public holidays. This ensures that they see a wide range of detainees that are brought into custody at vary times of the day and night. ICV panel co-ordinators ensure that visits are made at varying times of the day with these visits being worked around volunteer's commitments. Training of our visitors is of the upmost important to ensure that they are fully up to date with changing legislation, and they have the tools to do their work. ICVs have continued to receive virtual training through the Independent Custody Visitor Association. During the last year, Northumbria ICV Scheme has worked closely with the Independent Custody Visiting Association to provide training to our ICVs in relation to anti racism, discrimination and unconscious bias.

Our ICVs have influenced the following:

- Adopted the independent Custody Visiting Association Anti Racism policy which has now been included within our ICV welcome Pack.
- Took part in the Independent Custody Visiting Association national monitoring of the use of anti-rip clothing within custody. Positively, Northumbria do not use this clothing in our custody suites.
- ICVs reported that some of the distraction items provided to detainees were in need of replacement which the force quickly actioned.
- Ensured repairs to cells or equipment were actioned promptly by the force where concerns were raised by ICVs.
- Working on our schemes ICVA Quality Assurance Gold Award with the outcome of the award expected in October 2023.
- Provided briefings to our ICVs regarding Operation Safeguard and putting measures in place for our ICVs to monitor these specific detainees whilst undertaking visits.

I continue to be indebted to our Independent Custody Visitors who continue to make a real difference.

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.

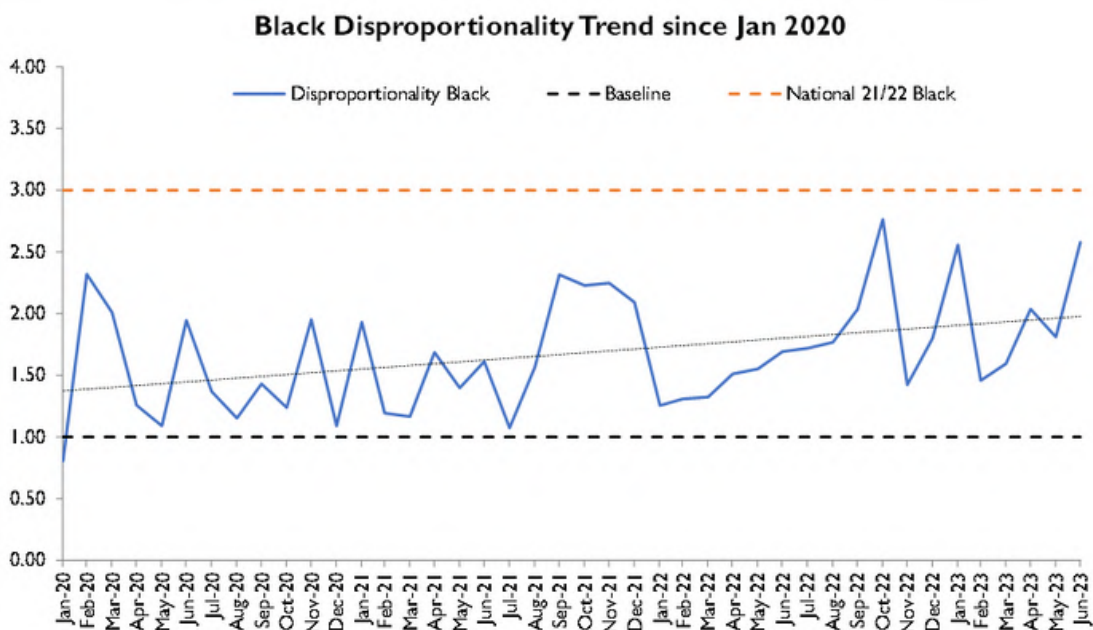
Current force position:

Stop and Search performance from 1st Oct 2022 to 31st Mar 2023 highlights:

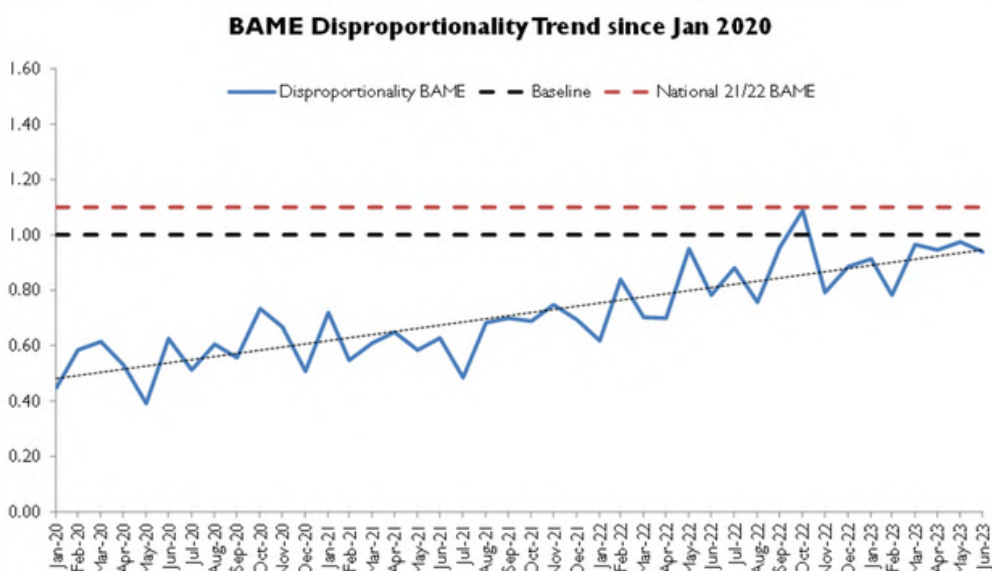
- In Q3/Q4 of 2022-23, 3,159 stop and searches were recorded, which is an increase of 33.8% compared to the same period in 2021-22. This would indicate improved confidence in officers to use stop and search powers.
- The recording of sufficient grounds to support stop and search, is an area requiring improvement. Current performance in Q3/Q4 of 2022-23 checked via internal audit, revealed that 72.7% of stop and searches had sufficient grounds recorded. The expectation is that 95% of records should have sufficient grounds recorded.

Use of Force performance data up to June 2023 highlights:

- Nationally, people perceived as black experienced 'use of force' at 3.0 times the rate higher than people perceived as white. Northumbria Police demonstrates that in the last 12 months this was 2.0 times more likely. This is an increase from the previous 12 months in June 22 (1.7). The long-term trend is showing a gradual increase. Over the last three months disproportionality has remained stable with a spike in June. This is most likely due to higher number of UoF recorded on black persons in June - 79, compared to an average of 51 per month for previous 12 months. Work has commenced to understand the reason for the increase.



- National disparity rate for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is 1.1 for the 12 months ending June 2023. Northumbria Police data demonstrates a disparity rate of 0.9 in the 12 months to June 2023 (0.7 in the 12 months to June 2022). The long-term trend continues to show a gradual increase.



All searches are individually scrutinised by experienced Area Command Single Point of Contacts to ensure legitimacy and fairness. This helps to identify any issues which need to be addressed with the searching officer and their supervision. Northumbria Police also holds a force-wide internal scrutiny panel that sits every 8 weeks; they review trends and disparities and review samples of Body Worn Video footage to identify any further learning. The APCC have included the work on stop and search in their Race Disparity Toolkit, citing it as an example of best practice.

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.

Following the recommendations from the HMICFRS, a comprehensive set of actions were introduced to address the issues regarding better understanding of how force is used and having effective internal and external scrutiny processes. To ensure the interventions are having the desired impact, the actions are monitored internally by Northumbria Police through their Confidence and Standard’s Board, which makes sure the force is delivering the highest professional standards of service. I provide further scrutiny at the joint Business and Scrutiny

meetings which are held with the police's senior team and the Police Powers Advisory Panel which my office established, helps to provide external oversight on the HMICFRS recommendations.

Northumbria Police have carried out the following recent activities in relation to improving stop and search performance:

- **Body Worn Video:**

- The use of body worn video (BWV) when undertaking stop and search is improving but greater improvement is still required. BWV footage is now stored for 60 days as opposed to 28 days to enable us to effectively review and scrutinise stop and searches. Performance data in relation to BWV is being monitored and fed back via internal scrutiny. Learning identified that officers deployed in plain clothes did not routinely carry BWV. This is being addressed with covert holsters and clips being trialled in Central Area command with a view to rolling these out further.

- **Training:**

- A mandatory modular package on the Kallidus Learn platform has been developed and went live in April 2023, with officers completing training during protected learning days. BWV examples of good and bad practice have been identified and incorporated into the package for learning points to be shared. The learning package focuses on policing powers, sufficient grounds, rules for carrying out a search and documenting of a search. The training will also enhance officers understanding of the powers and increase their confidence in using the tactic. It also educates the staff on the impact that stop and search can have on our communities, especially those from under-represented groups, as well as highlighting the impact that inappropriate or unjustified stop and searches can have on public confidence and police legitimacy.

- **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. This provides a force level forum to strategically understand the thematic performance areas that require improvements. This is then addressed via direct feedback, training, or organisational learning governance.
- External youth scrutiny panels on stop and search take place across the Area Commands. They were initially trialed with pupils from Trinity School Pupil Referral Unit, Newcastle. There was feedback around the fairness of stop and searches viewed, the use of language and the quality of the interaction that has informed organisational learning and has been included as part of the training package being developed for all frontline officers. It was concluded that the panel had improved relationships and engagement and in turn trust and confidence in the use of policing powers. It was the success of this pilot that resulted in all three Area Commands now holding stop and search youth scrutiny panels using the same format. Educational settings where the panels are in place include Astley High School and Ashington College within Northern Area Command, Trinity School and NUFC Foundation within Central Area Command and Academy 360 and Whitburn Comprehensive in Southern Area Command.
- My office has established an External Police Powers Scrutiny Panel (see below).

- **SPOCs:**

- The force has increased the number of stop and search Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) across Area Commands to ten, to assist in undertaking reviews. SPOCs have received internal training in line with HMICFRS assessment process for reasonable grounds and participate in a bi-monthly benchmarking exercise to ensure they continue to assess reasonable grounds consistently. The SPOCs assess stop and search records with a particular focus on grounds for the search, use of BWV, supervisory oversight and whether drug searches were for possession or supply offences to ensure the tactic is being used in line with force priorities. Work is now ongoing to standardise the Area

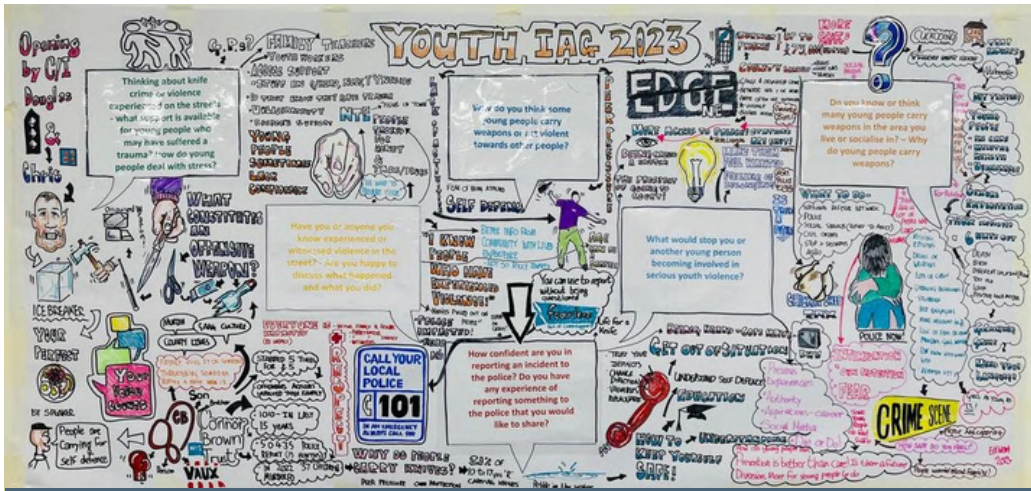
Command SPOC feedback process to ensure it is timely, meaningful, and provided to officers via their supervisor to drive improvements.

Police Powers External Scrutiny Panel

My office established a Stop and Search panel in August 2021. The panel comprises of a diverse mix of people who represent various communities, to provide constructive oversight, discussion and challenges, and plays an important role in scrutinising the police use of powers. An example of how the panel have done this is when members highlighted the need for effective recording and robust data on stop and search and use of force to get greater understanding in terms of policing powers, work which is being progressed by the police.

The panel has also highlighted the good practice regarding the speed with which the force reviews Use of Force, addresses areas of improvement, takes proactive action to share that learning through officer safety training, but still shares footage to allow further independent scrutiny.

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's awareness and understanding of these issues.



Notes, feedback and thoughts from a recent Youth Independent Advisory Group with Gateshead College students.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Protecting the vulnerable and community safety is at the very heart of what we do, we feel passionate about making sure the role we play not only safeguards the public but also enhances the environment and our local communities. An overarching Sustainability Strategy (joint with Northumbria Police) is in development to show both how our policing service can deliver social and environmental benefits and how we challenge ourselves to undertake our work as sustainably as we can. The strategy sits in a wider organisational, national, and global context, and sets out how we support UN Sustainable Development Goals, most specifically Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption, Climate Action, Peace Justice, and Strong Institutions. The strategy works in conjunction with our People, Finance and Business strategies, which shows how we contribute to sustainability as a large employer in the region, by attracting, supporting, and developing our people to deliver outstanding and efficient services to the communities we serve.

The new Northumbria Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) that my office is developing will be one of the first carbon neutral sites for the force. We aim to be held up as a centre for excellence for this development and I will update you about our progress as the building comes into being.

A person wearing an orange t-shirt and a black tool belt with the brand name 'CONTERRA' is holding a black and white clapperboard. They are in a workshop or garage setting with various tools and equipment visible in the background. The image has a dark blue overlay.

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, I have been successful in obtaining additional funding from three Ministry of Justice (MoJ) specialist funds, NHS England's Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS) Fund, and the Home Office's Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund which have allowed me to offer more support to DA and SV victims' services. I have also been successful in obtaining funding from the Home Office DA Perpetrator Fund where improving safety and wellbeing for victims is at the heart of the work we are doing. I provide more information on these funding streams and projects below, as well as under Commitment 2 and 5.

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 Fund Round 1 & 2

- 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 ethnic minority victims
 - 1 IDVA and 1 ISVA to support children and young people
 - 1 IDVA to support victims with learning disabilities
- Just recently we secured more funding from the MoJ ISVA/IDVA Fund on top of the two rounds which will add 2FTE ISVAs and 1.5FTE IDVA to Northumbria's provision. We will receive a total of £228,017 across two years (2023 to 25) for these additional posts.
- 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 was successful in obtaining funding from this fund in both the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years – £34,974 p.a. In 2023-24, I have received £11,658 continuation funding until the end of July 2023.
- 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.

NHS England Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS) Fund

- My office bid for and were successful in receiving £177,288 from NHS England's Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS) Fund to go towards developing a new specialist support service for child sexual abuse (CSA) victims. Children North East will deliver this service, offering therapeutic support to children and young people aged 0+ across Northumbria who have been a victim of CSA to help them to cope and recover. This service is in response to identified demand for CSA victim support service for children aged 11 and under.
- In addition to the funding for the new CSA service, we have also received £30,000 from NHS England to commission an independent evaluation of our sexual violence support service pathways in Northumbria. This work is still in the procurement stage.

Domestic Abuse Control Room Project

In the 2022-23 financial year, I funded the costs of specialist domestic abuse staff (from local domestic abuse services) through my own Discretionary Fund budget to work alongside police officers on the North and South control room risk management desks on some weekday evenings. I am continuing to fund this project in 2023-24.

Statistics from 2022-23 demonstrate initial successes and the need for the project:

- A total of 262 victims were engaged (66% engagement rate) and 9 family members/friends. The main reason for not being able to engage was due to the victim not answering the call.
- Call lengths vary for each case but often exceed an hour, especially where a risk assessment is undertaken and where the victim consents to a referral to specialist support.
- Where the workers had the opportunity to carry out detailed risk assessments:
 - 28% were assessed as high risk, and referrals made to the MARAC process
 - 46% were assessed as medium risk
 - 26% were assessed as standard risk
- For 29% of victims who were engaged, it was the first time they had called the police to report the abuse. For 45%, it was the first time they had spoken to a specialist worker from a domestic abuse service.
- 36% consented to a referral into their local support services. Needs varied from legal remedies, sanctuary, multi-agency discussions/information sharing, emotional support, counselling etc.
- The pilot received positive feedback from the police, with one testimonial stating it was an “excellent addition to the RMD.. now that they are self-sufficient the pilot is working really well.” and “having the IDVAs working in the control rooms has proved a great initiative. The IDVAs are pretty much autonomous now and just get on with their callbacks. Obviously there are a few occasions they need a hand with working the system etc but this is literally minutes out of the working day. Having them in the control room is a benefit because we can pass them live incidents we come across. So only positive feedback at present”.



The project will continue evolve moving into 2023-24. There are ongoing efforts to better understand the longer-term impacts of this early intervention.

Creating a safer Northumbria

I have secured over £1.7 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. My office was successful in all three bids submitted. The projects focus on transport, nighttime economies and rural Northumberland. In developing all of my bids to the Safer Streets Fund, my office consulted and worked really closely with key partners and our VAWG sector to help shape the projects.



Safer Transport



Safety of Women at Night



Preventing Crime in Rural Northumberland

Women's Safety in Public Places (WSiPP)

I secured £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 extends and continues 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 (NTEs).

Working in line with a public health approach together with Local Authority and specialist VAWG and community sector partners, this project builds on the successes of previous projects and will encompass interventions across 3 pillars of work to address VAWG in public places. Below is an outline of each area of work and key progress highlights of 2022-23.

Pillar 1: Prevent

• Operation Cloak/Redeemer

- Plain clothed police officers tasked to identify vulnerable persons or predatory offenders in NTEs across Northumbria. Operation Redeemer is another arm of Operation Cloak, specifically to tackle an increased identification of sexual assault by men posing as taxi drivers in the Newcastle NTE. So far, 854 officers have been deployed and have made 950 interventions which included 76 arrests, 50 vehicles seized, and 557 women and vulnerable people supported to safety.

• Capable Guardians

- Street Pastor volunteers to continue to offer a co-ordinated reassuring presence within Newcastle City Centre, Jesmond, Whitley Bay, Sunderland City Centre and South Shields. 418 volunteers have made 226 interventions over 135 patrols, supporting 5,958 people (3,653 women).

• WSiPP Wardens

- A reassuring uniformed presence with a focus on identifying supporting and safeguarding intoxicated/vulnerable women to prevent VAWG crime types and behaviours. 658 patrols have taken place across Northumbria high-risk areas, deploying staff teams who have delivered 589 interventions. A total of 3,857 women have been supported by Wardens.

• Safe Haven

- Support in Newcastle and Sunderland's NTEs for people who are intoxicated or vulnerable, in need of medical attention or support with finding a safe way home. WSiPP funding extends delivery of the existing Newcastle City Centre Safe Haven by one night a week and collaborates closely with Operation Cloak, Capable Guardians and WSiPP Wardens. 165 women have received support from Safe Haven. The following positive feedback was received for Sunderland Safe Haven: "Words cannot come close to describing how truly grateful I am for your help...without you I dread to think what would have happened to my best friend. Thank you so much for taking us inside, for sorting the hospital and taxi, but most of all for the compassion you showed when I was scared and felt completely alone. The work you do is incredible...I will never forget what you did for us on one of the scariest nights of our lives..."

• Safer Underpasses

- Four underpasses to undergo changes such as improved lighting to help improve feelings of safety and promote safer routes home. Work has been completed in on the selected underpass in Gateshead and Northumberland and works are currently underway on the Newcastle and North Tyneside underpasses.

Pillar 2: Behaviour Change

- **Brief Intervention Programme**

- To work with men and boys in our regions' three universities to address the underlying causes and problems that lead to VAWG. Beyond Equality have been commissioned to deliver specialist services and workshops with male students addressing behaviour and attitudinal change designed by and for student communities. Delivery will take place in September.

Pillar 3: Awareness Raising

- **Disclosure Training**

- Sex work and sexual exploitation disclosure training has been delivered by Changing Lives to 377 delegates across the six local authority areas and arranged in collaboration with Newcastle City Council's Community Safety Team for VAWG. The course has received excellent feedback overall.

- **Active Bystander Training**

- To equip people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise an unsafe situation for women and girls, feel responsible to take action, and to take action. 32 delegates have completed the bespoke Train the Trainer course and 85 people were given Northumbria OPCC Active Bystander Training. 3 members of staff from my office were trained to deliver the course and are developing a programme for delivery to target our regions business and leisure sectors.

- **#ItAllAddsUp Campaign**

- Led by Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland and centring women's views and lived experience in the development process with an aim to address the behaviour of men and boys. Core message development has been completed which included consultation with 384 women via public survey and 42 women via focus groups. The campaign was publicly launched on 14th July 2023 and consists of 4 short videos that address themes women said were most representative of their experiences of sexual harassment during market research in 2022/23. Themes address sexual harassment of women in parks, on nights out, on public transport and in supermarkets with a range of ages, ethnicities and body shapes.

- **Children and Young People's research into alternate NTE spaces**

- Seeks to develop professional understanding and insight into young people's experiences of VAWG. Connected Voice have been appointed as the research lead working with outreach youth provision agencies Children North East and Together for Children in addition to Inspire Youth and Bright Futures. A final report is expected in the Autumn.

- **Days of Social Action**

- Park activities that create a welcoming environment for women, girls and children during the Easter and summer holidays. Urban Green Newcastle have been commissioned to carry out this activity, with a campaign event planned by Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland.



#ItAllAddsUp filming



Active Bystander training



Op Cloak/Redeemer briefing

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 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:

- **New Northumbria SARC premises:**

- In spring 2021, it was agreed that new premises would be acquired 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 was procured and building works have been ongoing for a number of months. The plans for the new premises were developed in conjunction with Northumbria Police, NOPCC, and our commissioned sexual violence services, design meetings were held to ensure that the new SARC design was trauma informed and will be suitable for all victims – survivors who may attend for a forensic examination, taking into account neurodiversity and other inclusive considerations such as gender identity and culture.
- Building work is due to be completed at the beginning of August 2023, with the premises being officially operational for forensic examinations at the towards the end of August 2023.

- **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 appointed as the new regional SARC provider from 1st April 2022. Mountain Healthcare Limited have now been the regional SARC providers for the last 12 months, they have played an integral role in the development of the new SARC premises within Northumbria as they continue to be 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.

- **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 new SARC premises complies with these standards, by building them into the building specifications.

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 of crime is in place across Northumbria. My office was 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 core services of play therapy, counselling and therapeutic group work were available across Northumbria. Funding was secured for the period of July 2021 to September 2022, and ensured that more than 1,100 children and young people (C&YP) received therapeutic support to help them cope and recover from the abuse they have experienced.

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 for:

- **The continued delivery of therapeutic services for C&YP** – as well as work which addresses the various factors that can increase a child’s engagement with these services.
- **The development/delivery of parent and child interventions within these funded services** – including waiting list support work, embedding parental involvement within the interventions offered to C&YP and developing direct work with children and the non-offending parent as a means of addressing the impact of DA on their relationship.
- **The development/delivery of separate parental engagement interventions** – through the employment of dedicated staff who can deliver 1:1 support, develop peer support groups, undertake onward referrals, and review current organisational processes to better support parental engagement with children’s therapeutic services.

Commencing in October 2022, returns for the first 6 months of service delivery confirm that the CADA providers are already exceeding the targets set for them across all 3 programmes of work:

	Target Oct 22 - Mar 23	Delivery Q3	Delivery Q4	Total delivered	% of target
1:1 / Groupwork	145	94	76	170	117%
Parents & child work	40	25	62	87	202%
Parental engagement work	70	46	63	109	155%
Totals	225	165	201	366	143%

Other delivery highlights include:

- One to one and therapeutic groupwork children and young people service departures for the period indicated a good level of retention, with 93% of C&YP exiting a CADA funded service after they had completed the programme of support. Providers also continued to address the individual, relational and contextual needs of C&YP using their service by, for example:
 - Lengthening their service induction processes for both children and parents
 - Redesigning their initial assessments to better capture the interests and needs of the child
 - Working with local schools to facilitate initial contact with families
 - Working with IDVA colleagues to ensure the parental support needs of adult victims are better understood
 - Developing their social media profile to inform and engage parents
 - Increasing their day to day communication with the non-offending parent to overcome the fears and stigma that can act as barriers to engagement.
- Parent and child work has progressed well with the CADA funding being used to support a range of developments as services experiment with different ways to respond to unmet need. For example:
 - One provider that works closely with a refuge serving women from our BAME communities has developed a mother and baby group which supports adult victims to understand and respond to the impact of DA on their children:
 - Another provider is using a mixture of 1:1 therapeutic work for C&YP combined with a follow-on groupwork programme for the parent and child to address the impact of domestic abuse on their relationship/attachment.
 - And another is developing an approach which offers separate as well as simultaneous therapeutic work for the child and non-offending parent.
- Parental Engagement Work was a little hampered during the first two quarters by recruitment difficulties and delayed DBS checks. Providers have, nonetheless, begun to develop their service offer informed by the work of an external consultant who has mapped the parent's journey through children's therapeutic services and identified key stages where parental engagement work can have an impact. Delivery data and feedback from individual providers also indicates that, once established, the demand for this work will be high.



Acorns, who are funded through the CADA fund, deliver trauma informed therapeutic work for children and young people, including: one to one counselling and play therapy; collaborative work focused on the factors affecting children's engagement; parental engagement work and joint interventions for children and the non-offending parent.

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 her 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 71 DA crimes recorded each day during the 12 months to February 2023: a 2.5% increase on the previous 12 months, up from 69.
- **DA Arrest rate** - Current arrest rates stand at 30% to February 2023, which are 2% higher than the previous 12 months. This is in line with the national trend, with the figure standing at 30% nationally (data available to March 2022).
- **DA Voluntary Attender (VA) rate** - The VA rate for DA stands at 3% to February 2023, which represents no change on the previous 12 months. The VA rate is also in line with the national trend, with the figure standing at 3% nationally (to March 2022).
- **Body Worn Video (BWV)** - In the 12 months to February 2023, force-wide use of BWV for DA is 76% which is a 1% increase on the previous 12 months, up from 75%.
- **DA charge rate** - The charge rate for DA is 8.4%; this has reduced by 0.3% when compared to the previous 12 months, which was 8.7%. The national charge rate in the 12 months to March 2022 was 6.7%.
- **DA conviction rate** - The DA conviction rate stands at 74.0% which is an increase of 3.4% points compared to the previous 12 months (70.6%), moving closer to the national rate of 76.7%.
- **DA report-to-conviction rate** - The DA report-to-conviction rate stands at 6.2%, with no change on the same period last year. The force is 1.1% points above the national rate of 5.1%.
- **DA victim satisfaction rate** - The DA victim satisfaction rate stands at 87% overall, which is 2% lower than the previous 12-month period although remains higher than for any other area of business apart from rape.

The force has 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 has a plan in place to address issues and I continue to oversee this through my scrutiny process.

Action includes:

- **Deployment and response times:** The force is looking to trial the use of 'GoodSAM' technology, which is a rapid response video calling facility. The trial can include DA and provide a means of initial video call contact with victims reporting DA. It is hoped this could enhance and provide a quicker DA response in the future, ensuring that greater situational awareness is achieved by the officer dealing with the call as well as providing greater victim satisfaction by way of face-to-face interaction.

- **File quality standards:** The overall pass rate for DA files continues to see improvement. The force has implemented an accreditation process whereby Sergeants who consistently submit high quality files are awarded a File Presentation Accredited Certificate (FPAC), which qualifies them to submit their own files to the CPS without first submitting to the FQAT. Since the process began, the force has 73 FPAC-accredited officers and Sergeants who have submitted 468 files (including DA) to the CPS with a 72% first-time submission rate. The FQAT continues to assess the initial file submitted for a CPS pre-charge decision (PCD) where a Sergeant is not accredited. The numbers are very low, so the pass rate does fluctuate. The FQAT pass rate for DA-related files in the six months to January 2023 is 52%, which is an increase on the previous six-month period (41%). This should now be considered an internal measure only as it is currently used to identify where additional coaching and mentoring is required to reach accreditation.
- **Assessing victim risk:** The Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) tool has more focused and direct questions related to the frequency of and specific type of abusive behaviour, encouraging victims to disclose, giving officers and first responders a clearer picture of the nature and intensity of the abuse. DARA has been proven to better identify coercive and controlling behaviour and since the initial pilot in 2018, the tool has now been implemented in several forces. Northumbria Police attend monthly National DARA implementation meetings chaired by the College of Policing. Implementation for Northumbria is being planned in conjunction with DA Matters Training. Those forces who have already implemented DARA have reported a significant increase in demand; comprehensive documentation has been received from Essex Police to assist in Northumbria's planning.
- **Training:** The DA Matters Change Programme was written by SafeLives along with the College of Policing and is designed to have long-term impact by changing and challenging attitudes, culture, and behaviour of the police when responding to domestic abuse. Northumbria Police continue to have a holding place in the DA Matters Training calendar.
- **Perpetrator intervention:** Operation Aegis is now embedded 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.
- **Offender management:** Northumbria Police have Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) to identify and tackle the most harmful and serial domestic abuse perpetrators. An analytical programme is used to highlight those who cause the most harm; then once identified a multi-agency process is in place to pro-actively target the most harmful individuals with the intended outcome of reducing re-offending and safeguarding victims and children. Northumbria Police's Management of Offenders was recently assessed as Good by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) PEEL inspection and the MATAC process was highlighted as good practice by the inspectorate. The force operational lead has received contact from several other forces to consider implementation of the process. The 12-month figure for April 2023 is 76 percent (97/127). That is, 97 of the 127 domestic abuse perpetrators discharged from MATAC between 1 November 2021 and 31 October 2022 saw a decrease in their RFGV score six months after being discharged from MATAC, compared with their RFGV score when they were introduced to the MATAC process.

- **Improved engagement:** A key element of the force’s VAWG Framework identifies a need to engage, listen and encourage challenge from women and girls, which includes ethnic minority women, who may have been less successfully engaged with in the past. The National VAWG sector and the NPCC VAWG Lead have established regular meetings to listen to the views of the sector and to share policing’s response, all forces are encouraged to replicate this level of engagement and invite questions and challenge. Led by the Harm Reduction Centralised Team, focus groups have taken place with victims across the force which have given a real insight into the victim journey and lived experience of Police contact. Themes from group sessions have been categorised into themes of Communication, Updates, Investigation and Process and will inform organisational learning.

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:

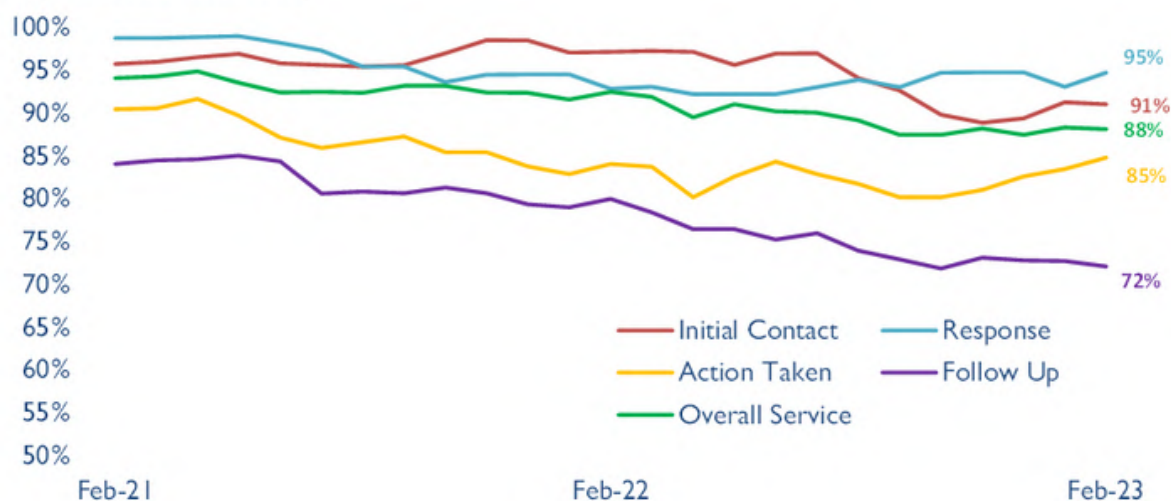
- **Demand:** There has been a 5.8% increase in reported rape crimes and a slight decrease (0.7%) in the number of serious sexual offences. Rape crimes per 1,000 is currently at 1.2, which is in-line with the national average, and serious sexual offences are at 1.7 per 1,000, currently slightly higher than the national average of 1.5 per 1,000.
- **Charge and conviction rates:** The current charge rate for rape is 5%, which continues to show a downward trend since February 2021. The conviction rate following a charge for rape is currently 67% - this rate has increased over the past couple of years (the rate was 60% in February 2021) and it remains over the national average of 65%. Charge rates for other sexual offences are at 7%, which is a half of what it was in February 2021, however conviction rates following a charge have remained over 80%. Only 4% of cases (to December 2022) resulting in non-conviction were due to victim and witness issues, which is a massive decrease when compared to the previous year. The table below highlights the reasons for non-conviction:

	12 months to Dec 21		12 months to Dec 22	
	%	Volume	%	Volume
Acquittal	74%	39	90%	45
Evidential	7%	4	4%	2
Public interest	2%	1	2%	1
Victim / Witness	17%	9	4%	2

- **Victim attrition:** The outcomes of ‘victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify a suspect’ (114) or the suspect is identified but the ‘victim does not support police action’ (116) accounted for 48% of all RASSO outcomes in the 12 months up to February 2023. Outcomes 114 and 116 for rape offences only accounted for 62% of all rape reports in the 12 months leading up to January 2023. These outcomes have risen each year since 2016 when they represented 24% of all outcomes. This is in keeping with national trends over this same period.

- **Investigation length:** The average length of investigations is currently 99 days. As of February 2023, 269 crimes have been open more than 12 months, and 282 open between 6-12 months. CPS data was formerly available outlining the duration of investigations from report to charge, however CPS ceased providing this data after January 2022. At that time, case length to charge was an average of 14.65 months. RaSSO crimes often involve complex investigation, and investigations open for this length of time may include those with complex digital evidence enquiries, extensive third-party material enquiries or may be those progressing to file build and CPS charge advice.
- **File quality:** Consultations per case have remained consistently low (ranging 2.14 to 1.69 consultations per case). This is an indicator of good performance for file quality and discussions with CPS attribute this low rate of consultations per case to Northumbria Police having a RaSSO gatekeeper.
- **No Further Action (NFA) decisions:** NFA decisions continue to be subject of scrutiny with CPS. 25 NFA case files were reviewed in 2022 and 24 of these were considered appropriate Police decisions. Following this the RaSSO Gatekeeper and a Level D CPS RaSSO lawyer met to discuss a further sample of four Police NFA decisions resulting in two investigations being referred back to the OIC for further investigation as potential charge cases. Continued NFA scrutiny is being discussed with CPS to agree ongoing arrangements.
- **Victim satisfaction:** Victim satisfaction for rape remains high – the graph below shows that dips in satisfaction in 2022 are starting to recover in 2023. The only area with significant decline is satisfaction with follow-up.

Rape Victim Satisfaction



A number of measures have been introduced to improve RASSO performance. and whilst some improvements have been made, there is still a lot of work required to drive improvement. Actions taken 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:
 - Suspect-focussed investigation
 - Repeat offenders/suspects
 - Procedural justice approach to victim engagement
 - Officer learning and wellbeing
 - Effective use of data
 - Digital forensics

- Operation Bluestone Soteria has been piloted in a handful of forces, including Northumbria, and it is anticipated this model will be adopted by all 43 forces in 2023. The first year of Operation Soteria Bluestone (Phase 1 from September 2021) saw the successful completion of deep dives across the Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Constabulary, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police. Northumbria is participating in Phase 2 of Operation Soteria Bluestone as an expansion force. From September 2022 to December 2022 Northumbria carried out a detailed self-assessment with the support of MOPAC, a peer reviewer from Gloucestershire Police and the Soteria team of academics. Since January 2023, Northumbria have been working on an implementation plan to address our findings and the recommendations from the academic findings. A National Operation Model will be produced by Operation Soteria Bluestone in June 2023 and presented to the Home Office. It is anticipated this will include guidance and tools for the investigation of adult RaSSO offences.
- **Demand challenge:** There have been recent recruitment events for detectives to improve capacity – 8 officers have recently been recruited, although many of them will need to complete the required training to become detectives. Officers will be fully supported to attain this level of qualification with support to learn through allocation of time, Force support with learning resources and learning inputs, and department support through assessors to mentor aspiring detectives.
- **Victim satisfaction:** As mentioned above, victim satisfaction for ‘follow-up’ has been gradually declining. A ‘Follow Up’ improvement plan has been drafted in relation to this. Key areas include effective victim engagement and VCOP compliance; consistent messaging regarding VCOP and performance management; work with the NVWS to consider improvements to victim services; focus on CPD for investigators; review of cases of dissatisfaction to consider remedial action and taking learning from these cases.
- **Offender management:** Northumbria Police’s Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) model was also highlighted as Good with HMICFRS reporting that Northumbria Police manages Registered Sex Offenders well, utilising the neighbourhood teams to manage low and medium risk offenders. The report also highlighted that the force manages suspects and wanted people well, with technology also being used to assist the management of offenders with Polygraph and Spektor being regularly deployed. Support is to be provided to neighbourhood teams so this can be used more widely, and Polygraph is due to be added to the list of Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) options for the ongoing management of offenders.

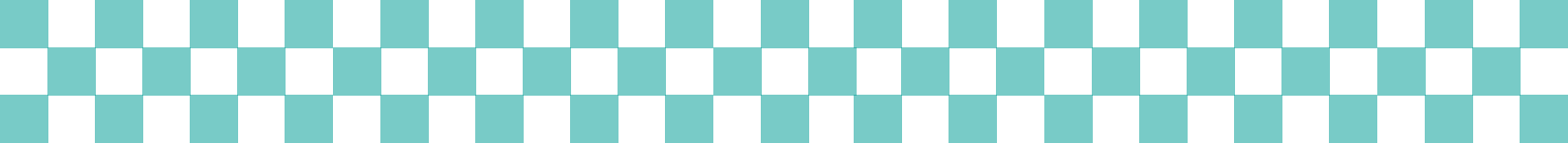
Commitment 4: I will continue to develop my Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions scheme, so more than ever, workplaces can recognise abuse and offer support to their staff, building on the important role that friends, families and communities can play in connecting loved ones to the right help and support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

My office has recently refreshed the OPCC domestic abuse workplace champions training and the champions network^[4] 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.

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



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 1600 people. Over 900 of these people from around 400 different organisations across Northumbria have gone on to successfully take up the role of workplace champions, primarily in the private sector.

My office is currently working closely with the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) to explore ways we can promote our offer to business right across the region. The NECC have themselves signed up to join our network and we are hopeful more businesses will see the benefit.

Community education and awareness-raising

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. 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.

I am match-funding the project for 3 years to help increase its community awareness raising and 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.

The first six months of the project were focussed on the research, development and design of the service and approach, and the creation of resources. This included:

- Creation and expansion of the project Steering Group
- Service design including defining the remit and boundaries, internal and external pathways and staffing roles
- Development and implementation of service infrastructure, including email, telephone, database for monitoring and evaluation
- Development of the project branding and production of resources
- Development of the website <https://www.wefindaway.org.uk/> and online content
- Recruitment of experienced advocates to support the development and delivery of the project
- Launch of the Findaway anonymous phonenumber for concerned families, friends and other third parties.

The second six months of this project have focussed on community engagement and increasing traffic to the phonenumber, as well as developing training for communities, and promoting this approach at a local and national level. This included:

- Numerous partnership meetings and continued relationship building with other organisations
- Numerous public engagement activities, in particular as part of the 16 Days of Activism
- Development and initial delivery of the Findaway community workshops (called 'Be the Difference Workshops')

- Continued staffing of the phonenumber which has received positive feedback
- Collaboration with AAFDA and an Experts by Experience Reference Group' and promoting the service at a number of events, including presenting at the AAFDA national conference
- Delivering workshops at Women's Aid national conference and at the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Festival of Practice.

The service continues to be shaped and delivered by taking feedback from an 'Experts by Experience Reference Group' with families who have lost loved ones through fatal domestic abuse. For example, Findaway has restructured its community awareness raising workshops to create a one-stop session which will cover essential information on what is domestic abuse and what are the signs, impacts of abuse and victim responses, and how to respond helpfully, all in one session. This can then be followed on by more in-depth sessions. Their awareness raising work continues both online and via community engagement.

Of those supported by the Findaway phonenumber, 83% said they now feel more confident in supporting the person they are worried about.



Julie Smith, our Domestic Abuse Specialist, spoke at the Domestic Abuse Commissioners national conference in March around what Northumbria VRU is doing to make sure domestic abuse is part of our response to the serious violence duty.

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.

Improving our strategic responses to perpetrators

My VRU continue to lead on improving the strategic responses to domestic abuse perpetrators. Following their comprehensive review in 2022, my VRU has worked closely with two Respect/SafeLives Associates to produce:

- A Northumbria Perpetrator Outcomes Framework. This includes a clear vision and theory of change and will assist the local Domestic Abuse Partnership and commissioners in developing a clearer understanding of what success looks like and how to measure this. This is backed up by the current evidence base for perpetrator interventions.
- A Mapping document setting out the current secondary and tertiary interventions across all 6 areas in Northumbria, the pathways into these and the current gaps in pathways and cohorts. This has provided a snap-shot of the current and newly anticipated interventions and will inform needs assessments and future commissioning.

Home Office Perpetrator Funding 2023-2025

My office has secured over £1million of funding from the Home Office to help widen out the existing secondary and tertiary perpetrator interventions. This will be used to:

- Commission Project CARA in Northumbria, which is an early awareness raising diversionary intervention targeting standard-risk perpetrators who receive a Diversionary Caution plus feedback from victims. Diversionary cautions are due to come into force by the end of 2023-24. It is designed as a very early response and will build in referral pathways to behaviour change and victim support.
- Work with Newcastle City Council and Respect to deliver the Make a Change (MAC) intervention, as part of a wider perpetrator service offer in Newcastle. MAC is an early response alongside longer-term behaviour change work (delivered over 26 sessions). The first 10 sessions are the early response focussing on naming and acknowledging DA (as an intervention goal as opposed to a prerequisite for DAPP participation). It includes whole systems responses with survivor support, workforce development and community outreach to drive early self-referrals.
- Continue to develop the Northumbria Hub & Spoke Pilot (see below).

All of these interventions are fully aligned with the new Home Office perpetrator standards and cover early intervention, behaviour change and intensive case management. They also contribute to the PCC's 'action against perpetrators' priority in the PCC's Tackling VAWG Strategy 2023-25 and align with the aims in the National 'Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan's' pursuing perpetrators pillar. The latter includes investing in perpetrator interventions to reduce the risk posed by the perpetrator and understanding how to prevent these individuals reoffending in future. These interventions directly contribute to the long term outcomes in the new Northumbria Outcomes Framework for Perpetrator Interventions around:

- Domestic abuse in all forms is viewed as unacceptable and preventable.
- Perpetrators are visible, held to account and have the opportunity to change.
- New instances of domestic abuse are reduced.
- Escalation of harm is prevented; and
- Adult and child victims can access support and feel protected.

Northumbria Hub & Spoke Model

This work involves the delivery of one-to-one intensive case management for high risk, high harm and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse and includes a wider systems response based on multi-agency coordination and integrated support for victim-survivors.

Building on the recent development of DA perpetrator services in many of our local authority areas, an initial year of HO funding (between Apr 2022-Mar 2023) enabled the development of:

- Hub & Spoke services in 5 of our 6 local authority areas.
- The recruitment and formal training of 18+ High-Risk Practitioners to deliver the 1:1 intensive case management interventions that lie at the heart of this model.
- The formal training of the victim support staff needed to work alongside the above practitioners and ensure that all adult and child victims are effectively safeguarded.

The funding secured for 2023-2025 will enable the continuation of this work across the existing LA areas and its commencement in the 6th and final area. It will also enable the development of this work based on local learning. For example, individual work with the first 25 service users identified a range of needs, the most prevalent of which were recorded as mental health (18 service users) and substance misuse (19). A portion of this new funding will therefore be used to secure the input of a skilled mental health practitioner to work alongside the service delivery team and enable them to respond more effectively to the sometimes-complex needs of the people they are working with.

The funding will also support the development of the new Northumbria Stalking Clinic Pilot, which targets high risk stalkers and helps to address obsessive and fixated behaviours. Specialist support will be available for all high-risk stalking victims.

Workforce Development to increase early engagement with perpetrators

At the end of 2022-23, my VRU funded a pilot of two training courses that aim to give multi-agency staff more skills, confidence and tools to engage anyone they suspect is harming a partner/ex-partner. The key aim of this is to help staff make perpetrators more visible much earlier on; hold them accountable; try and constructively and safely respond to denial and minimisation; and nudge them into perpetrator services. This should help increase the number of earlier referrals into behaviour change interventions before behaviour becomes too entrenched.

Staff attending the training from across Northumbria came from a mix of sectors including Housing; Children's Social Care; Substance Misuse; DA services; Health; and DA trainers. Both courses were evaluated. The DARE course (developed and delivered by Hampton Trust) showed the most significant improvements in skills and confidence and value for money. The following results relate to the % of those trained who said the DARE training had increased their confidence/skills in:

- Identifying a perpetrator of domestic abuse amongst your clients/service users (91%)
- Finding out what happened by talking to them about their behaviours (100%)
- Developing a working relationship that is neither collusive nor accusatory (95%)
- Working with denial and minimisation (91%)
- Motivating a perpetrator of domestic abuse to accept the need to change (100%)

My office has now secured Home Office perpetrator funding to roll-out this workforce development funding, on the back of the results of the pilot. My VRU aims to work with Hampton Trust to plan how this training can be delivered to the right multi-agency staff across Northumbria over the next 2 years and build in some longer-term sustainability using a DARE Champions approach. This would fill a gap in the current Northumbria Domestic Abuse Practitioner Standards (DAPS training) which currently has 3 levels. This perpetrator training has the potential to act as a Level 4 course.

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, with work in Northumberland highlighting how wider criminal and/or sexual exploitation can lead to CPVA as a trauma response or in response to extra familial pull factors.

Multi-agency work to address this issue to date has included:

- An agreed Northumbria-wide CPVA multi-agency policy and procedure^[5], which my office helped update.
- Agreed local referral pathways.
- The provision of RYPP training for local professionals (enabling them to work with young people engaging in CPVA) and a formal screening tool.

Northumbria Police have also been proactive in developing their policies, procedures, and training.

The excellent work undertaken by Northumberland County Council's Adolescent Service, which set up their CPVA and Exploitation Team using funding from my office, has also resulted in the development of a CPVA referral pathway and a Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) intervention, which

^[5] North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual. Available at: [Child to Parent Violence and Abuse \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

has been mainstreamed by Northumberland County Council. This comprehensive approach formed the basis of a funding application submitted by my office to the new Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund earlier this year. The bid was not successful but details of the Northumberland model have been discussed with key personnel in each local authority area to enable this work to be further progressed according to local strategic priorities.

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.

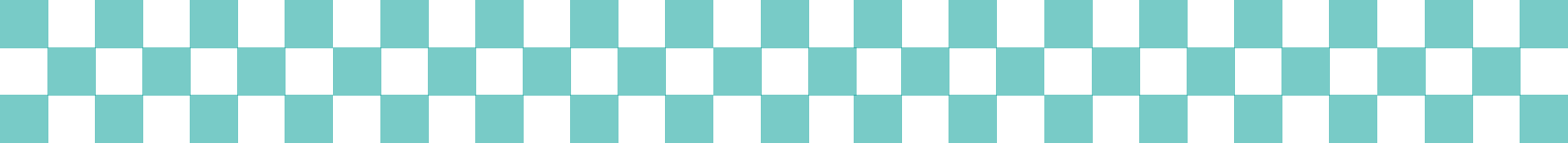
Following a successful funding bid, my VRU's Education Team were able to extend their Project Based Learning (PBL) pilot into eight alternative provision/Pupil Referral Unit settings across Northumbria and secure external support and evaluation from Newcastle University.

Project Based Learning (PBL) is 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. 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. PBL is a pedagogical approach which makes learning about violence reduction topics 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 the evaluation, PBL was a standard offer by the VRU however only focusing on knife crime, gangs/postcode rivalry, exploitation and county lines. The VRU education team now has two Student Support Champions who work in eight secondary schools across Newcastle offering 1:1 support and mentoring to young people at risk of or involved in serious violence.



Just some of the Project Based Learning work delivered by my Violence Reduction Unit.
Top: Left - Beacon Centre & Right - Hillcrest
Bottom: Left - The Link School & Right - Sacred Heart



An evaluation of the Student Support Champions is ongoing. A survey has been circulated to school staff and pupils and there are a number of focus groups taking place. The work of the champions is being hailed a real success by school staff, the students and also our external partners in the local authority and police. Early analysis of data by schools has shown an increase in school attendance and a decrease in suspensions for those young people who have been supported by the champions.

The Education Team also offers knife crime awareness sessions to practitioners who work with young people and want to increase their knowledge on the subject.

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

My Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy was launched on the 1st June 2023 and will be delivered over the next two years. It sets out a series of priorities and actions my office is committing to, including tackling the root causes that lead to VAWG, and investing in a raft of prevention and intervention work as part of determined efforts to make the North East safer for all. Consultation with the public and those professionals working in the VAWG sector in Northumbria has played a vital part in the creation of the VAWG priorities and subsequent strategy.

The commitments and calls to action of the strategy are focussed on four key areas:

1. Prioritising prevention – through education, active bystander training, early intervention and campaigning.
2. Supporting victim-survivors – by commissioning support services, raising awareness of support available to victim- survivors and addressing the additional barriers to receiving support and reporting.
3. Action against perpetrators – by ensuring Northumbria Police take early and appropriate action against perpetrators and I continue to support the use of perpetrator programmes.
4. Creating stronger systems to address VAWG – by listening to victim-survivors, I will launch a new VAWG oversight panel with independent members who can support me to scrutinise police performance in VAWG identifying trends which can be fed back into processes to make improvements and reduce victim-survivor attrition.

We will continue to work closely with partners to deliver on this strategy, through commissioning victims' services and prevention and early intervention work through our Violence Reduction Unit.

My office is represented at all six local Domestic Abuse Boards/Partnerships via the VRU's Domestic Abuse Specialist which is further strengthening partnership working and improving whole systems approaches. Together we will make sure that preventing and tackling VAWG and improving lives of women and girls in our region is a priority for everyone. The Serious Violence Duty will also place this work on a statutory footing.

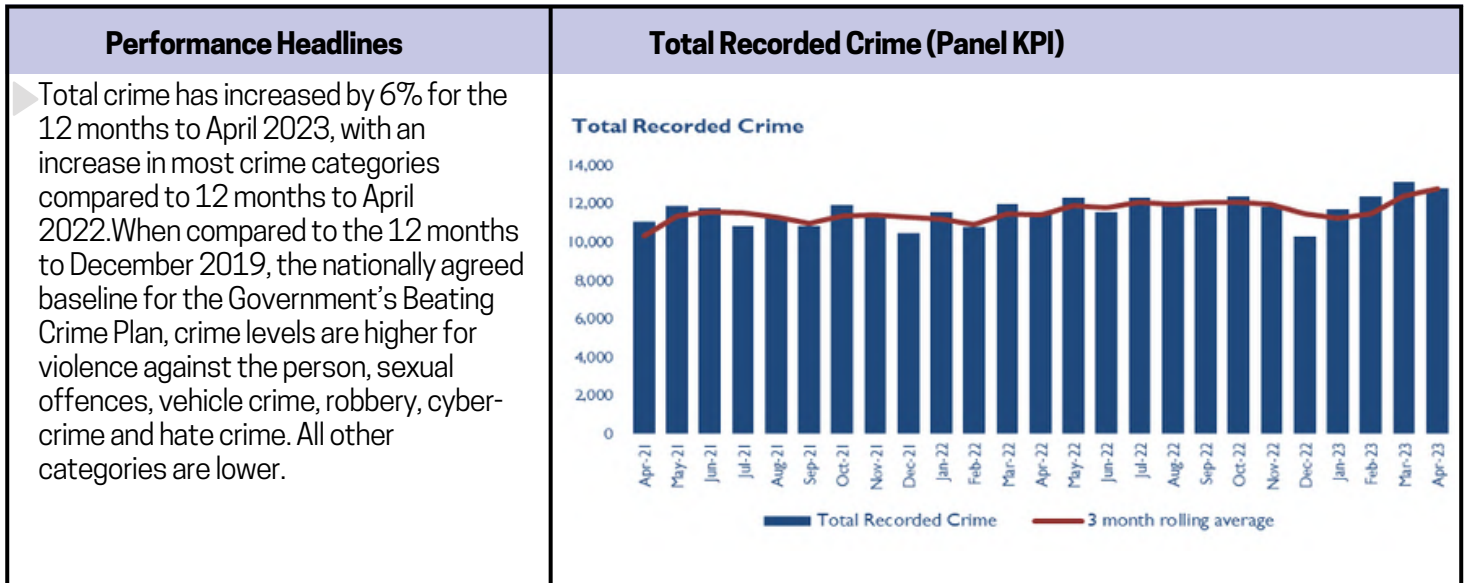


APPENDIX 1: PERFORMANCE DATA

CORE PERFORMANCE DATA

FIGHTING CRIME

RECORDED CRIME



TOTAL RECORDED CRIME BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

	*12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023	% change 22 vs 23	% change 19 vs 23
Total	149,753	136,136	144,303	6%	-4%
Sunderland	31,405	27,859	29,420	6%	-6%
South Tyneside	15,624	13,757	15,306	11%	-2%
Gateshead	20,256	18,515	19,556	6%	-3%
North Tyneside	19,821	17,438	18,152	4%	-8%
Newcastle	38,183	35,704	37,279	4%	-2%
Northumberland	24,464	22,863	24,590	8%	1%

* nationally agreed baseline for the Government's Beating Crime Plan

ASB INCIDENTS

Performance Headlines

There has been a 7% (-3,090) reduction in ASB related incidents in the 12 months to April 2023 compared to the previous 12-month period. Home Office funding for two ASB pilots has been secured relating to Immediate Justice and visible hotspot resourcing which will see increased resource deployments into high demand areas across each Local Authority. Multi-agency hubs such as the SAIL project are embedding youth outreach workers into the teams to enable effective engagement, enforcement and intervention support to key offenders.

Indicator	*12 months to December 2019	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023	% change
Anti-social behaviour incidents	46,763	44,485	41,395	-7%

ASB SATISFACTION

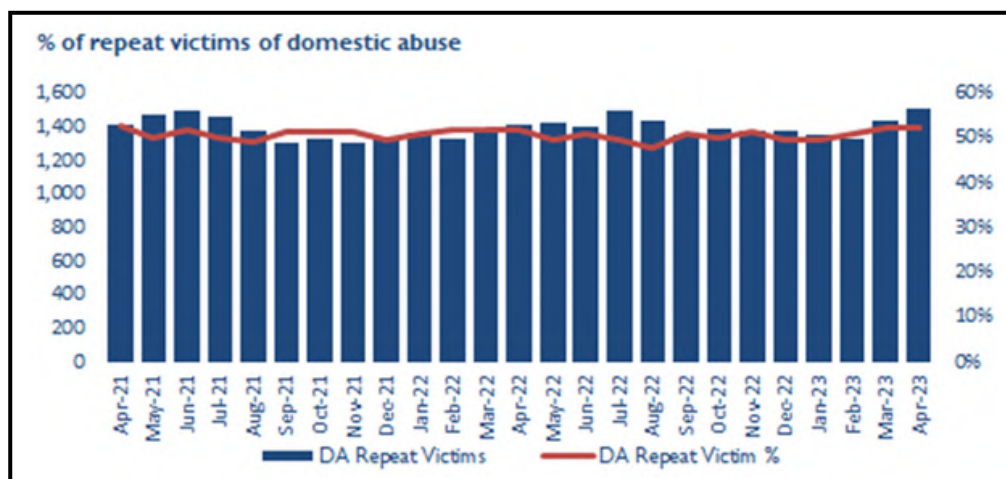
Performance Headlines

Significantly less ASB victims were satisfied with the action taken compared to the same period last year. Most dissatisfied victims perceived that a lack of action had been taken in relation to their report and/or that the action taken fell short of their expectations. Some victims said they did not know what action had been taken or the outcome as they had not received any feedback.

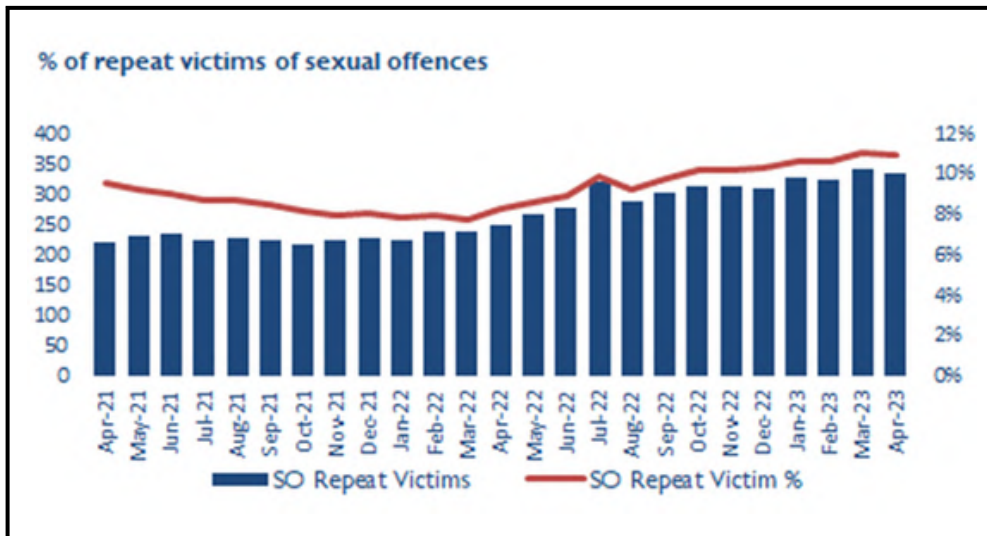
Indicator	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023
Whole Experience	76%	68%

57

REPEAT VICTIMS - DOMESTIC ABUSE



REPEAT VICTIMS - SEXUAL OFFENCES

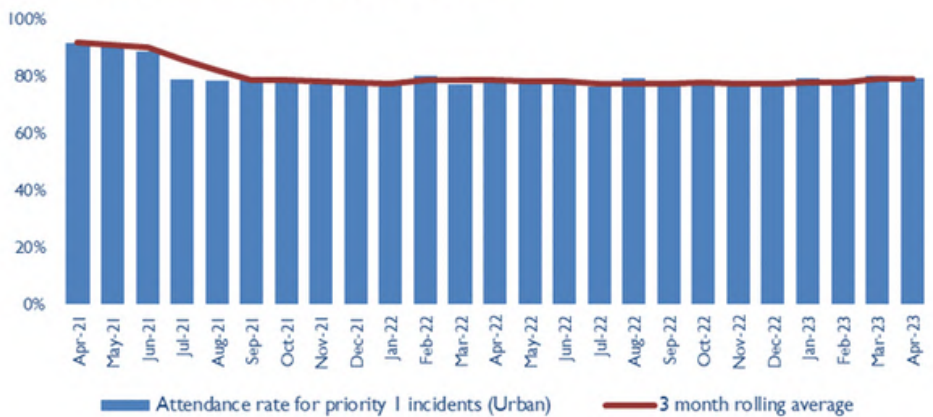


POLICE RESPONSE TIMES - GRADE 1 URBAN

Performance Headlines

Grade 1 incident demand remains high. For the period May 2022 to April 2023, there has been 9% more grade 1 incidents than the previous 12-month period.

% Attended within standard - Grade 1 (Urban)

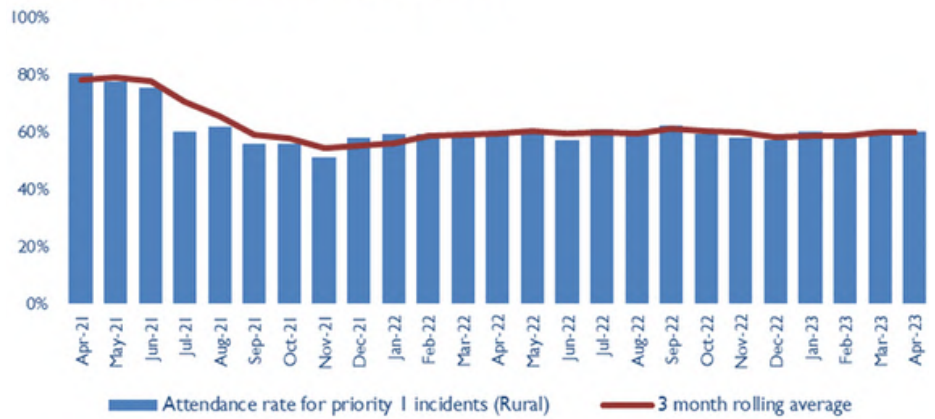


POLICE RESPONSE TIMES - GRADE 1 RURAL

Performance Headlines

The percentage of grade 1 (rural) incidents attended within 20 minutes was 60%, a reduction of 2%pts compared to the 12 months to April 2022.

% Attended within standard - Grade 1 (Rural)



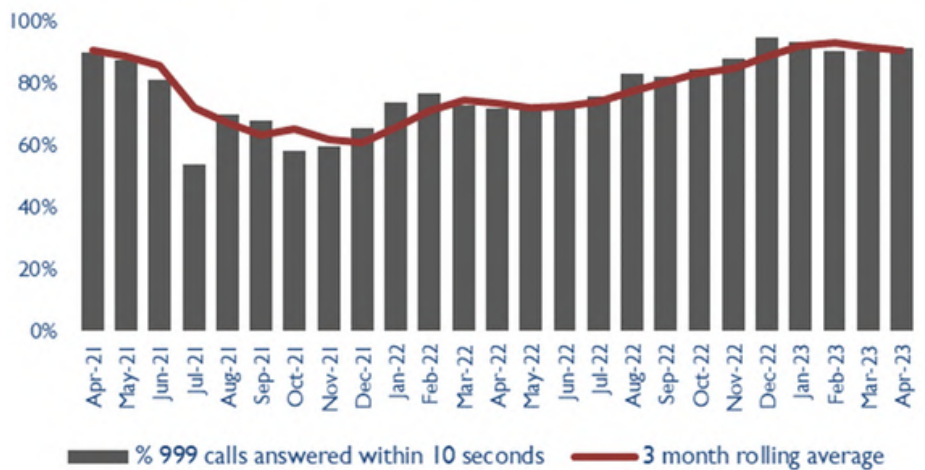
ANSWER TIMES - 999 EMERGENCY CALLS

Performance Headlines

For the 12 months to April 2023, the number of 999 calls increased by 1.8% compared to the previous 12 months, from 296,296 to 301,853.

There has been a consistent improvement in the percentage of 999 calls answered since March 2022. This improvement has continued in the last quarter, with 91% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds.

999 Calls answered within standard



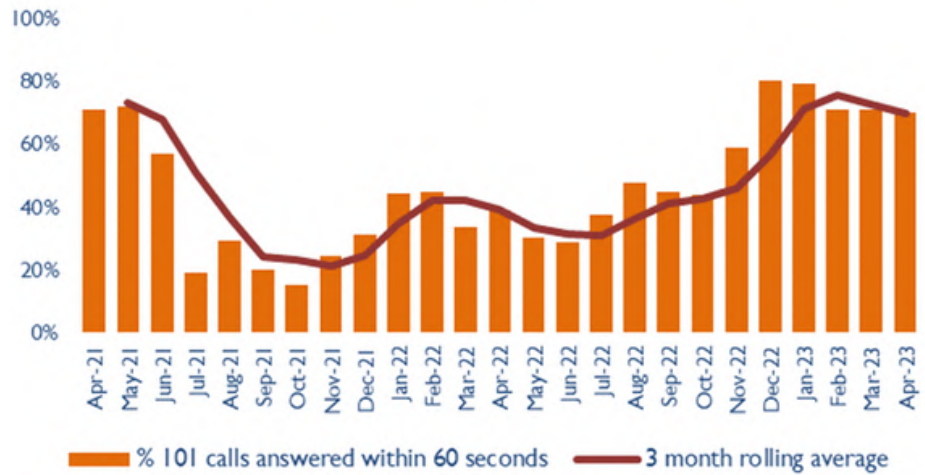
ANSWER TIMES - 101 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

Performance Headlines

The percentage of 101 calls answered within 1 minute for the 12 months to April 2023 is 54%; this compares to 35% for the 12 months to April 2022.

For the month of April 2023, 70% of 101 non-emergency calls were answered within 60 seconds with an average answer time of 1 minute and 18 seconds.

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 September 2020	12 months to September 2021	12 months to September 2022
Total	2,056	2,017	2,004
<i>Adults</i>	1,873	1,877	1,854
<i>Juveniles</i>	184	141	151

SERIOUS VIOLENCE OFFENCES

Indicator % change	12 months to December 2019	12 months to February 2022	12 months to February 2023	% change
Serious violence offences	18,709	21,705	23,370	+8%
Knife enabled serious violence	800	899	1,048	+17%
Homicides	12	16	16	-
Hospital admissions (under 25s for assault with a sharp object)	25	25 (to Dec 21)	30 (to Dec 22)	+20%

IMPROVING LIVES

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Indicator	12 months to April 22	12 months to April 23
Percentage of people who think the police do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood	77%	69%

Performance Headlines

▶ Most residents that rated their local police as good or excellent referred to their own positive experiences with the service and/or expressed the sentiment that the 'police do what they can' despite of stretched resources.

In contrast, residents that rated the performance of police as fair or poor frequently provided explanations associated with police visibility, unresolved issues in their local area, such as ASB and the perception that police were not adequately resourced in terms of officer numbers and funding.

OVERALL VICTIM SATISFACTION

62

Performance Headlines

▶ 73% of volume crime victims are satisfied with their overall experience, which is a significant decrease compared to the same period last year.

The satisfaction of volume crime victims with their initial contact with police remains high and stable over time.

Significantly less victims were satisfied with their response time, compared to the previous period. Although the expectations of victims varied, most dissatisfied victims felt that their response time was longer than they anticipated and/or was not proportionate to the type of incident they were reporting. Other victims expressed dissatisfaction as they were not visited or contacted at the time that police had specified to them. Victims having to chase the response from police and not being informed about delays were also sources of dissatisfaction.

SATISFACTION - HATE CRIME

Indicator	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023
Whole experience	75%	74%

SATISFACTION - DOMESTIC ABUSE

Indicator	12 months to April 2022	12 months to April 2023
Whole experience	88%	87%

DELIVERY OF THE POLICE & CRIME PLAN

IMPROVING LIVES PANEL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2023

M Wallsend

global

Have you taken a kitchen knife?

Please don't do anything stupid

They're saying someone your age has been stabbed

Noooooo way 😞

I'm worried sick. Let me know you're alright

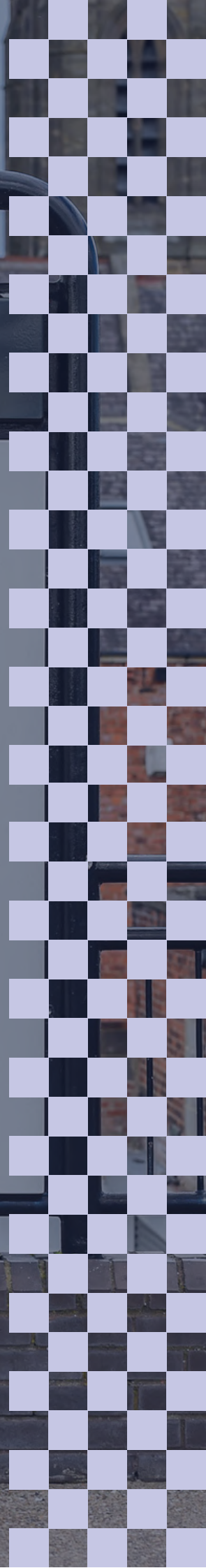
I'm scared to leave the house

Was just a stupid argument that got out of hand

KNIVES IMPACT EVERYONE

Knife crime cuts deep.
Whether you're carrying or you're a victim,
the consequences impact everyone; family,
friends, emergency services and communities.

Get the facts at
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