

NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

violence
reduction
unit

Improving lives to prevent crime

KIM MCGUINNESS

NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO MY NEWSLETTER

This is my last newsletter of the year and it's quite a year to look back on. It's certainly not the year any of us had planned nor would we want to repeat. But, as is often the case, alongside the bad there has been a great deal of good.

I'm proud of the work of my office, the Violence Reduction Unit and in working for the public to prevent and fight crime – it's definitely been a year of progress. I'm proud of our police force - all officers, staff and volunteers who have risen to the challenges presented by 2020 and have worked tirelessly to keep us all safe and will continue to do so through-out the festivities too.

And finally, I'm proud of us in the North East. Sometimes the best things in life come out of the worst situations. If anything, the last 12 months have proven how wonderful our community spirit is right across the region and I know this will keep shining through as we come out the other side of this cruel pandemic.

So for now, I want to thank everyone who has done their bit to see us through 2020. I also want to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and happy New Year. Let's make it a good one.



Kim McGuinness
Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner



UPDATE: FIGHTING CRIME, PREVENTING CRIME SURVEY



Following several months of hard work, our Police and Crime Plan consultation has now closed and I just want to say how pleased I am with how our communities and partners responded to ensure we have a plan that reflects the region's priorities and works for us all.

As well as our Fighting Crime, Preventing Crime survey, we also launched a youth specific survey for those aged under 16 - to help steer our early intervention planning, which I believe is a crucial area of our work.

I have to admit, the consultation wasn't quite what I had in mind. For me, I like to meet people in person, face-to-face, and discuss what matters most to them. Restrictions sadly put a stop to all our plans for an engagement bus to tour the region and to visit as many people as possible. Despite this, we really ramped up our digital efforts and our survey still reached an impressive 5,000 people!

So now we are onto the next step. As we move into the New Year I will be working closely with the Chief Constable to produce a new plan setting out the policing needs of local people and how our Force will deliver on these. Look out for further updates over the coming months.



VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT: MORE FUNDING NEEDED TO KEEP PREVENTING CRIME

Since launching my Violence Reduction Unit in June last year we have worked with Northumbria Police to prevent serious violence and address the issues that cause violent behaviour. However, without suitable future funding I am worried our work will largely be in vain.

More than 40 local organisations have benefitted from investment through the VRU with upwards of £2m being allocated to community based work. We've shown in the past 18 months that this approach works - a 17% reduction in knife crime, and 13% fall in total recorded crime from June 2019 to 2020 - but this type of work requires long term interventions, and funding to make it happen.

It's a concern for me that there was no mention of future funding in the recent Spending Review, and we are now left with decisions to make about important projects, funded workers, and interventions that need to continue - yet we have no funding to allow us to do so.

I know I have so much support with this work and will keep calling on the Home Secretary to urgently agree the next round of violence reduction funding we so desperately need. We've got big plans and we want to push ahead. We certainly don't want to risk reversing everything we have achieved to date!

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: OPERATION PAYBACK LAUNCHED



You've probably seen in the papers that a few weeks back my office launched Operation Payback and I'm quite excited about it.

The idea is simple – I want to put criminals' cash back where it belongs. So, a £350,000 pot of money, includes money from items seized from criminals will be used to bring to life new ideas, initiatives and encourage collaboration with others. In the years to come the fund will be topped up with some of the money seized from criminal activity under the Proceeds of Crime Act (PoCA), with some recovered funds also going to Northumbria Police to help them target more criminals.

If your aim is to improve lives or keep neighbourhoods safe, you could fit the bill and help with our work to repair the harm caused to communities by crime.

I'm very much looking forward to seeing this money used to bring to life new ideas, initiatives and encourage collaboration with others, particularly in areas with high crime rates. For more information and to get your applications in, please visit my **website**.

COVID

#BEATCOVIDNE CAMPAIGN

I know it's not easy fighting Covid - remembering to wear your mask, keep your distance and cancel social get-togethers if they don't meet the rules.

This is why I'm joining local people from across the North East, like our very own Police Officer, Amii, who is helping front the new **#BeatCovidNE** campaign.

This is about saying a big thank you to everyone for everything you're doing, but it isn't over yet. We're at a critical point and we've got to keep going. Every effort we make helps to reduce the spread and take us closer to the future we all want.

For more info on the campaign, up-to-date advice and support visit orlo.uk/jTPxT

We'll beat this together. Thank you.

**"Thank you
North East"**

Amii Stewart, Police Officer

BeatCovidNE.co.uk

DOMESTIC ABUSE:

REACH OUT TO OTHERS OVER CHRISTMAS

Domestic abuse is everyone's business. We know the risk of domestic abuse increases at Christmas time - we see it year on year.

And this year, Christmas will be made worse for some due to restrictions and people being cut off from the outside world - it really is a dangerous mix. I really feel for those suffering.

Sadly, for many, lockdown has made them more vulnerable and I am expecting to see domestic abuse reports higher this Christmas than previous years. The reality in many homes is far from the picture perfect impressions we're often led to believe on social media.

So, at a time when survivors are being isolated by both the pandemic and their perpetrator we need to make sure we are reaching in and keeping in touch.

Domestic abuse is everyone's business

If you're worried, don't
make excuses, act.



Here's important advice for if you're worried about someone:

- Be safe: remember - social media, phone and emails might be monitored. Don't confront the abuser.
- Be kind: listen, make suggestions, not demands.
- Be there: be understanding and available.
- Get help: contact organisations for support and information
- Call 101 if you are concerned about a friend or loved one, or that someone's behaviour is abusive.
- Call 999 if you think there's an immediate danger.

FUNDING SECURED

Great news! Victims of domestic abuse throughout the region are set to benefit from two new funds totalling £420,000 - a significant boost for our efforts in supporting everyone affected by the cycle of abuse.

- Half of the money secured is emergency funding to help key organisations continue delivering support services to vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence as the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions continue.
- The Drive Project will target the most high-risk, high harm and serial perpetrators and protect hundreds of associated victims, including children.

SVCA: NORTHUMBRIA

PILOT HAILED A SUCCESS

A report on an innovative pilot scheme which has supported nearly one hundred of sexual violence and abuse victims across the region has been published this month highlighting the positive differences a Northumbria project has made in supporting brave victims seeking justice.

The Sexual Violence Complainants' Advocates (SVCAs) scheme, previously funded by the Violence Against Women and Girls Transformation Fund, offered free and independent legal advocacy to complainants and came about due to concerns regarding over-intrusive requests for personal material on report of a sexual offence, a practice which does not occur in any other area of crime. Now funding has ended the scheme is unable to continue. Without Government funding this local success story can't continue, which is beyond a shame.

As the findings of the report by Dr Olivia Smith at Loughborough University show, the SVCA role is something every single victim should benefit from. Victims need to be treated with respect and we need to improve conviction rates. We can only hope that the findings are the wake-up call the Government needs to ensure victims have access to support and the guidance they deserve as they journey through what can be a very complex and intimidating system.

Thanks to everyone involved in both the pilot and the research – especially the victims who have bravely shared their experiences in the hope of improving the process for others.

Report link - <https://tinyurl.com/ydc34nan>



MY TOP 3 HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020



ONE PUNCH CAMPAIGN

As we all know, enjoying the party season will be different this year, but the message from one mother remains the same.

Maxine Thompson-Curl is a remarkable woman who this year launched her 7th annual Punched Out Cold Campaign which she began after the devastating loss of her son Kristian. Kristian was just 19 when he was punched on a night out in Consett in 2011. He passed away 10 months later.

The annual campaign aims to warn people of the devastating consequences just one punch can have, especially when fuelled by alcohol.

It is about making people think twice, especially this year when it's been hard – people might find themselves getting carried away over the festivities so Maxine is doing everything she can to prevent more parents suffering like she has.

For more information visit onepunch.org.uk/PunchedOutCold or search for One Punch North East on Facebook and Twitter.

Violence Reduction Unit
- In the last 18 months we've reduced knife crime, total recorded crime, and invested over £2,000,000 into our communities to improve lives to prevent crime.

Coronavirus Response Fund - More than £300,000 awarded to support victims and communities in light of the pandemic.

Smashing recruitment targets - From April 2020 to March 2021 the Force will take on a record of 459 new officers, well above Government targets.

CHRISTMAS CARD

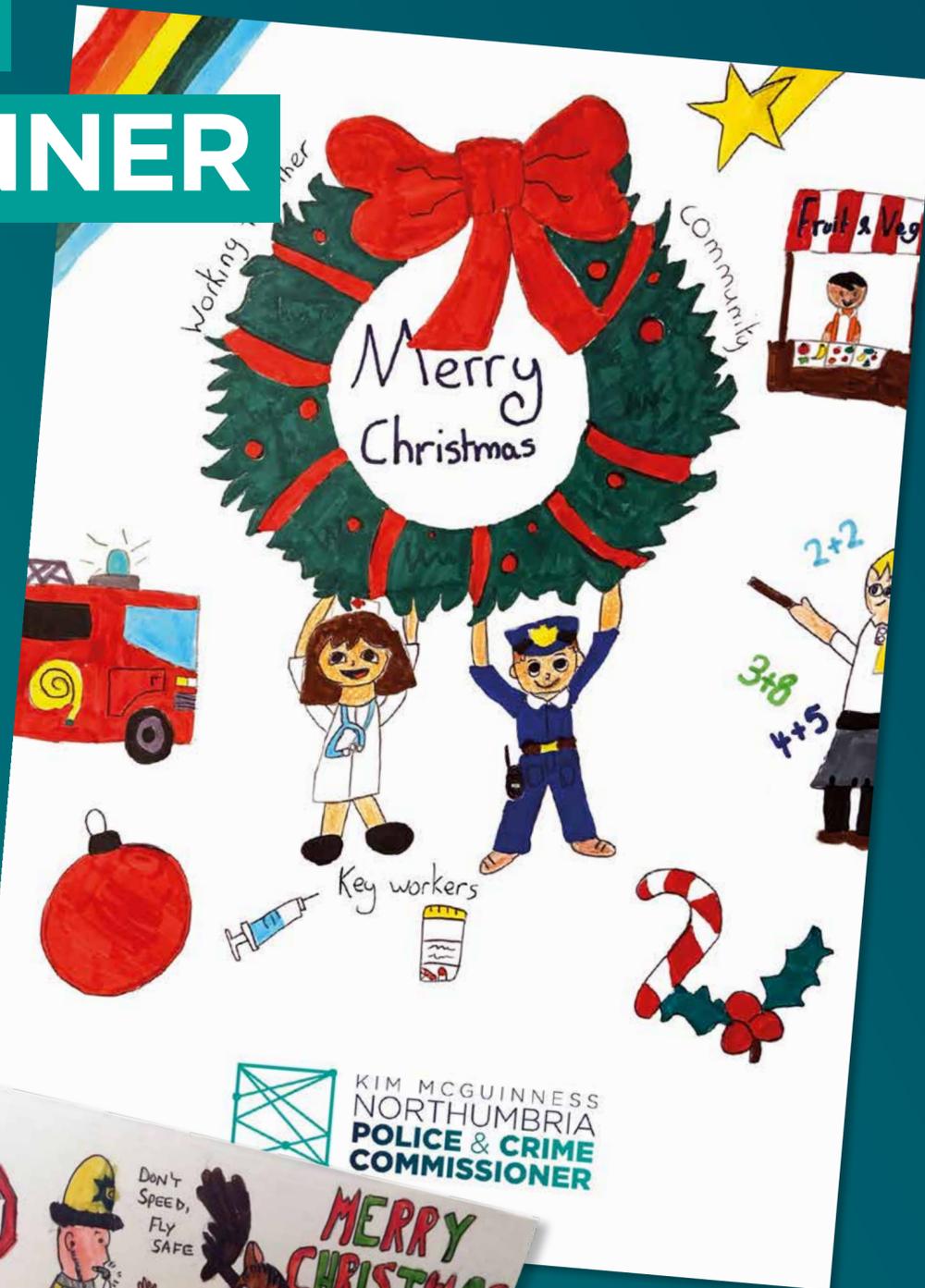
COMPETITION WINNER

And so I have a rather nice way to wrap my newsletters up for the year and that is by thanking all the children who designed some really fantastic Christmas cards in our design competition.

I'm sure you'll agree, we clearly have a very talented bunch of artists living here in the North East! It has certainly made picking a winner VERY difficult as they all deserved to win, but one has now been chosen. How good is this?! Congratulations go to Prudhoe West Academy's resident artist, Lauren Otterson, age 9. Here is her festive masterpiece!

Thanks to all the talented stars and Merry Christmas to you all!

PS. Here are some other fantastic designs which I'm sure will make you smile....



Let's Talk...

Follow me

You can follow my work as Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria.



Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit

I now have a dedicated Facebook page on the work of my Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit - you can like it here - @NorthumbriaVRU