

NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

Inspection title	Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic 2021
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NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS

I welcome this fifth report in a series of thematic domestic abuse inspections. Ensuring the right response to victims of domestic abuse is a key priority for the force.

I have read the report with interest and received an update on the current force position from Northumbria Police, particularly around the three recommendations for action.

Regarding recommendation 1: Online contact methods are available to victims of domestic abuse in Northumbria. Upon receipt of an online report, these reports are queued as non-emergency contacts but the queue is regularly reviewed for incidents containing risk every day. The report is reviewed, THRIVE assessed and routed through the same mechanism as a telephone report for allocation and appropriate response. A webchat digital service is also available during the business hours of the Customer Service Centre. This service allows the user to speak to online advisors in real-time via a secure online service. This is also a non-emergency service. It is acknowledged by the force that data analysis around online reporting requires enhancements. As such, an options appraisal is currently being progressed to determine Northumbria's new digital platform, to ensure that it has the best reporting and monitoring mechanisms, for likely implementation in May 2022. A new digital contact handling team will also be implemented in Autumn 2021. This will see a dedicated team servicing digital submissions.

Regarding recommendation 2: During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic Northumbria's Court liaison resources were temporarily increased by 50% to facilitate both increased contact with victims (two-weekly contact for reassurance), and to support additional trial-readiness checks to assist with case progression. The Court liaison resources were provided internally at first, with temporary staff subsequently recruited on a fixed-term basis. These staff will remain in place until a wider review of victim services has been conducted to make these resources permanent. This will add further capacity to the Victim Liaison Unit, thereby significantly strengthening support for victims and witnesses throughout the criminal justice journey.

Regarding recommendation 3: Improvement of Domestic Abuse outcomes is a key performance challenge for Northumbria. In order to improve Domestic Abuse outcomes, a Domestic Abuse Improvement Plan has been created and actions aligned to Victims Service Standards.

I will continue to monitor progress through my Scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely



Kim McGuinness
PCC for Northumbria