



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion



Annual Report

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POLICE & CRIME
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FROM THE COMMISSIONER

As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I am delighted to present this report which highlights our continued work in tackling inequalities and demonstrates how we ensure equity in the services we provide to all residents.

I am committed to creating a level playing field where everyone here in the North East can participate and have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential. For those individuals who face barriers to accessing these opportunities, additional support will be provided to help them.

Engaging with communities is central to our work and we have established excellent relationships with a range of community groups that have contributed to the work of the OPCC. We have made a concerted effort to give a voice to individuals and community groups that are least heard as it enables us to better understand their needs and provide services that help to understand their issues.

The OPCC has introduced strategies to ensure we have a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. Through training and development opportunities, we have created an environment where everyone can be themselves and flourish and where staff can make the best use of their talents and work with our communities effectively.

My office will continue to work with partners to ensure difference is valued and create a culture where people feel welcomed and respected for who they are. I am committed to helping make sure fairness and inclusion remain at the heart of all that we do. This report highlights our successes and sets out our hopes and goals for the future.

*Yours,
Kim*



KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

1. A new Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy, and a dedicated behaviour change campaign highlighting the everyday sexual harassment and unwanted behaviours that women and girls disproportionately have to deal with.
2. A new Neighbourhood Policing Model putting more officers back into our communities, strengthening relationships with our diverse neighbourhoods and providing high visibility to vulnerable residents who tell us they want to see more officers in their communities.
3. Introduction of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure our policies, practices and decision-making processes are fair and mitigate barriers to participation or removes disadvantage to any protected groups.
4. Delivered Active Bystander training with a focus on tackling root causes of VAWG such as harmful gendered norms, misogyny, sexism and gender inequality.
5. Engagement with small businesses to better understand barriers to reporting hate crime and engaging with the criminal justice system.



Pictured: (Top L) Launching my VAWG Strategy with Northumbrian Water, (Top R) announcing the new Neighbourhood Policing Model with ACC Howe, (Bottom L) Engaging with businesses & shop owners and (Bottom R) Op Salus in action, funded through my Safer Streets work

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

6. Worked with Northumbria Police to introduce a pilot in Southern Command Area, with the aim of increasing the level of service by response officers and improving consistency of outcomes for hate crime victims.
7. Commissioned specialist services to provide support to victims of sexual violence from protected characteristics.
8. Staff received training on neurodiversity and LGBTQIA+ awareness which has helped to ensure OPCC practices are accessible and inclusive.
9. The Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review helped victims that were targeted due to their protected characteristics have their voices heard and their cases reviewed.
10. Secured £1.7 million of Safer Streets Round 4 funding for interventions focused on improving the safety and feelings of safety of women, girls and marginalised groups throughout the region.



Pictured: (Top L) Filming for 'It All Adds Up', our behaviour change campaign encouraging people to ask if they are part of the problem, (Top R) launch of the new Neighbourhood Policing Model, (Bottom L) officers and wardens out as part of our Safer Streets work to improve feelings of safety in the night time economy (Bottom R) engaging with businesses and residents.

1 OUR VISION & EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria is to be the voice of the people; improving community engagement to bring communities, local partners and the police closer together whilst holding the police to account and ensuring an efficient and effective police service.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria is made up of 4 teams who support the PCC to carry out her role – Commissioning and Policy, Development and Delivery, Standards and Complaints and a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

The public sector equality duty places a legal duty on public authorities to tackle unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities and encourage good relations between everyone. Delivering this duty is at the core of our business and our vision for equality.

1.1 OUR VISION

Our vision for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is one where everyone, whether a member of the public or staff is treated fairly and with respect, and has the right to the same opportunities, freedom and equal access to services.

We value and celebrate the differences of individuals and communities by embracing people's different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture to strengthen communities. By recognising the benefits of a diverse workforce, people can use their unique talents to provide services that meet the needs of diverse communities.

1.2 EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

We aim to achieve our vision by delivering our equality objectives by engaging our communities, workforce and partners to inform and tailor our services to ensure they respond to the needs of our communities, which are summarised below.

Working with communities

- Objective 1: We will provide services, which embrace diversity, providing fair and responsive services to the communities we serve.

Our workforce

- Objective 2: We will commit to have a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, provide an inclusive working environment and ensure all staff have similar opportunities to develop their potential.

Data and insights

- Objective 3: We will continually review our efforts through targeted intelligence gathering and analysis to promote a culture of continuous improvement to deliver better services to our communities.

Working with partners

- Objective 4: We will ensure a coherent vision of equality which sits within the wider business framework and is shared and owned by us, our leaders, our workforce and partners.

1.3 STRATEGIC FIT

The equality objectives sit within the wider context of the Police and Crime Plan. Following extensive consultation with communities and local partners, the Police and Crime Plan was refreshed that focuses on the priorities of preventing crime, fighting crime and improving lives.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have developed an Equality Framework for PCCs and their Offices which focuses on four key areas:

- Understanding and Working with your Communities
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment
- Responsive Services
- Diverse and Engaged Workforce.

Following a mapping exercise, the OPCC have ensured that the key priorities in our EDI Business Plan match with those in the Equality Framework so we are confident that we are addressing all areas that have been highlighted by the APCC.

Vision 2025 sets out Northumbria Police's road map for policing in the coming years. It is helping shape decisions around transformation and ensures EDI is truly embedded into the Police's workforce and into the services they provide. We will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of their equality objectives to eliminate disparity to help create a truly diverse and inclusive service.

The following section of the report provides a wide range of examples of our work over the last year.



Pictured: (L-R) Engaging with communities and our workforce

2 WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

Objective 1: We will provide services, which embrace diversity, providing fair and responsive services to the communities we serve.

Working with and understanding our communities helps inform the PCC's equality objectives and other priorities, as outlined in the Police and Crime Plan, as the examples below demonstrate.

Under this objective there are four key themes, Connecting with Communities, Community Cohesion and Preventing Extremism, Hate Crime and Commissioning of Services.

2.1 CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

Engaging with and listening to our communities is vital as it enables us to deliver services that are responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

The PCC is committed to building trust and confidence through open and honest conversation with diverse groups. Below are some examples of how we have ensured the OPCC has been accessible and inclusive whilst connecting with our communities, the PCC has:

- Continued to convene meetings in communities to hear from people who do not normally engage and see first-hand the issues they are experiencing such as safety on public transport.
- Invited people who have lived experience of being discriminated against and who have experienced crime, anti-social behaviour or being stopped and searched to join External Advisory Panels to provide independent challenge and oversight to address disparity in practices.
- Via targeted Community Grants Programme, funded a range of projects / organisations that break down access barriers and provide opportunities for our diverse communities. Some examples are:
 - Birkheads Wild – supporting young people by providing an alternative provision to mainstream school, supporting their individual Special Educational and Disability needs through outdoor learning and practical activities.
 - International Community of Sunderland – helping to improve the quality of life of people from ethnic minority backgrounds by breaking down barriers and providing support ranging from housing and benefits to education and employment, to hate crime and domestic abuse.
 - Perth Green Community Association – working to reduce isolation and improve health outcomes for older people by bringing the community together in a safe space and through social activities, workshops, classes and other events.

- Ensured her Violence Reduction Unit focuses their engagement in areas most in need, where there are high levels of serious violent crime. They work with individuals with ‘lived experience’ and from different protected characteristics to better connect with communities and improve their access to services.
- The VRU communications and engagement plan focuses on keeping partners and members of the public informed of activity, as well as establishing opportunities to involve, consult, collaborate and empower communities. This has led to the development of the Engagement Working Group, which has a key focus on engaging diverse and faith-based communities.



Pictured: (L-R) Birkheads Wild, International Community of Sunderland and Perth Green Community Association

Domestic Abuse Champions

The PCC has continued to develop her Domestic Abuse (DA) Workplace Champions Network across Northumbria. Nine training courses have been delivered to a total of 139 staff drawn from workplaces in our communities from across the force area. Of these, 85 attended the newly rebranded ‘Basic Awareness: Understanding Domestic Abuse and Signposting’ course and 54 participated on the ‘Enhanced Awareness: Responding to Domestic Abuses’ course.

The Workplace DA Champions E-newsletter was distributed 6 monthly and was supplemented with a new series of monthly emails sent to over 840 workplace DA champions that aims to offer up to date information on local and national developments, resources and training opportunities. The DA champions have also attended ‘Lunch & Learn’ short online sessions which introduces them to new ideas, important issues and local services/service developments in the field of domestic abuse.

2.2 COMMUNITY COHESION AND PREVENTING EXTREMISM

The PCC has committed to supporting all efforts to work with communities and partners to strengthen relations, understand issues and improve cohesion. As well as actively tackling extremism, the PCC is also committed to ensuring our force continues to build on collective efforts to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist activity.

Some of the examples of the work my office has commissioned to support this objective include:

- Skills 4 Work in Birtley received Operation Payback funding to deliver an inter-generational project to repair the harm caused by anti-social behaviour (ASB) and to keep people safe. Young people connected with the charity invited a series of guest speakers to address concerns that were raised about fears and anxiety regarding ASB, the findings which were forwarded to the local councillors for action. This project helped break down barriers between the generations as the young people had taken a lead in delivering a project for the benefit of all the community.
- North East Diversity Education & Solidarity used Operation Payback funding to teach children and young people living in the UK about cultures and traditions of their local community. They enhanced cohesion by bringing together the local community through discussion forums, workshops, multi-cultural events and celebrations.

Some of the work Northumbria Police have been involved in to support this objective include:

- **The Northern Vulnerability Support Hub**
 - Mental-ill health and Neurodiversity, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder, continue to feature as a significant vulnerability factor in radicalisation and increases the risks of individuals carrying out Self-Initiated Terrorist (S-IT) attacks. The number of young people being referred to Prevent continues to increase. Many of these individuals also potentially have the added complexity of mental ill health, making them particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. The Northern Vulnerability Support Hub approach has continued to operate remotely with specialist mental health professionals advising on interventions and securing additional mental health services as required.
- **Strengthening Capability and Connections**
 - Following recommendations from the HMICFRS at a national level, the Force have a Prevent Strategic Lead who links up with wider Partners and raises awareness of Prevent within the Force, ensuring officers and staff have a knowledge of Prevent and referral processes. The Force have refreshed the role of Prevent Champions, with over 150 staff volunteering to become Champions.

2.3 HATE CRIME

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. The PCC scrutinises Northumbria Police's performance data on satisfaction levels of victims of hate crime and the work undertaken by the police to support victims.

In 2023, Northumbria Police recorded 3,807 hate crimes and 2,150 hate incidents, in both sets of data, the majority of cases being public disorder. 74% of hate crime victims surveyed by the Public Insight team at Northumbria Police were satisfied with their whole experience of the service.



Pictured: National Criminal Justice Hate Crime Conference in Newcastle

Some examples of where we have made a difference this year are:

- **Sunderland University Film Project** - The OPCC worked closely with Sunderland University, Northumbria Police and Connected Voice to produce a series of short films which focused on and raised awareness of barriers and challenges to reporting hate crime and the impact of hate crime on individuals and communities if it is not reported. The films will be used by Northumbria Police to enhance their Hate Crime Champions Training.
- **Hate Crime Week** - Northumbria Police's Community Engagement Teams hosted a 'Future Forum' event in November 2023, which was part of the work with their Youth Independent Advisory Group. The event which the OPCC helped to facilitate, focused on hate crime and was held during National Hate Crime Awareness Week. Around 60 young people across the force area attended the conference and discussed barriers to reporting hate crime and what they thought Northumbria Police could do to support victims. Recommendation from the conference have been included in Northumbria Police's Hate Crime Plan.



Pictured: Sunderland University film students & staff, along with Northumbria Police Chief Inspector Rob Bosson

Some of the things Northumbria Police are doing to support this objective are:

Hate Crime Champion scheme:

- Northumbria Police's Hate Crime Champions Scheme enables organisations to better support victims of hate crime and Hate Crime Champions play a key role in helping people who have experienced hate receive the right advice and support.
- The OPCC works with Northumbria Police, third sector partners and communities to promote the scheme, to challenge intolerance and hate.

- Northumbria Police recruited over 300 hate crime champions, including staff from educational institutions, college students, health services, charities, voluntary and community groups who support vulnerable people within their local areas.
- The Hate Crime Champions Scheme is currently endorsed by NCFE (formerly Northern Council for Further Education), and individuals who complete the training are acknowledged and awarded with a Northumbria Police certificate.

Safe Reporting Centres:

- Safe Reporting Centres are a safe neutral location within the community where anyone can report hate crime and hate incidents without having to contact the police directly.
- There are 28 Safe Reporting Centres covering the force area, which have received Hate Crime Awareness and Hate Crime Champions training. There are several other centres in the process of arranging the training and to be added to the list.

2.4 COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES

We apply an EDI lens to all of our commissioning processes to ensure the services we provide are responsive to the needs of our communities and are as accessible and equitable as possible, below are some examples of this:

Supporting Victims Fund:

- Over £3 million has been provided to a range of specialist victim support services as part of various funding streams, including the Domestic Abuse (DA) & Sexual Violence (SV) Community Fund, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)/Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Fund and the Supporting Victims fund. Collectively, these funds have enabled local services such as the Angelou Centre, Connected Voice and Pride Action North to provide a variety of professional support, including counselling provision and therapeutic group support.
- In addition, these funding streams have enabled the commissioning of over 15 ISVA and IDVA posts that provide specialist support to ethnic minority victims, victims with learning disabilities and LGBTQIA+ victims, benefitting over 32,720 victims.
- The OPCC continues to monitor EDI on a quarterly bases as part of our grant management process to ensure that services are able to demonstrate that they are extending their reach into diverse communities, enabling victims with protected characteristics to access support.
- **Operation Payback** - We have delivered two rounds of our Community Grants programme this year, ensuring each round has an EDI lens applied. We really value the opportunity for the communities to design and deliver solutions that best suit and meet their needs.

- **Connected Voice – Advocacy Service.** The OPCC engages with a range of partners who play a crucial role in supporting individuals who experience hate crime. Connected Voice which has received national awards for outstanding service, has been commissioned by the OPCC since 2017, to deliver a specialist advocacy service focused on providing individual support to victims of hate crime and those at risk of hate crime, guiding them through the complex Criminal Justice System. This was the first service of its kind in the country. Targeted promotion of the service with seldom heard communities has improved access by 70% to help people cope and recover from their experiences.
- **Stalking and harassment** - In response to an identified gap in the support provisions available for victims of stalking and harassment, the OPCC commissioned Paladin who are a well-established and specialist stalking service, to work with clients with protected characteristics, with a particular focus on sex, gender and sexuality. In addition to supporting high risk victims of stalking and harassment, Paladin have delivered essential stalking and harassment awareness training on the needs of women and girls, LGBTQIA+, disabled and ethnic minority victims to key professionals across our region, including local IDVA's, Domestic Abuse Leads and other OPCC commissioned services. The VRU is also supporting the work of the Northumbria Stalking Interventions Programme which is delivering training and awareness of stalking and has a multi-agency clinic for cases of high concern, to address the behaviour of stalking perpetrators.
- **Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund** - The PCC secured more than £900,000 of Home Office funding for the period October 2022 to March 2025 to strengthen outcomes for children and young people (C&YP) impacted by domestic abuse. In 2023-24, the 6 local providers grant aided to undertake this work, have delivered counselling, play therapy and therapeutic groupwork to 382 C&YP (as well as additional support for their parents) many of whom have experienced domestic abuse alongside other sources of potential disadvantage, vulnerability and/or discrimination including disability (20%), black or minoritised ethnic status (19%) being particularly young when exposed to abuse (16.5% aged 5 and under) or being exposed to the difficulties /poverty caused by a parent having no recourse to public funds and an uncertain right to remain in the UK (6%).

Home Office Perpetrator Fund

- The VRU is commissioning a range of interventions to tackle perpetrators of domestic abuse, including stalking which cover early response, behaviour change and intensive case management. In commissioning these services, the providers are expected to meet the Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions. These set out the overarching principles and practice guidelines for commissioning and delivering interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Within these standards is a requirement that interventions should be delivered equitably with respect to protected characteristics that intersect and overlap. Where commissioning has included domestic abuse perpetrator programmes (like Make a Change) or intensive case management (like Hub and Spoke), the providers are also required to seek Respect Accreditation. This has a standard specifically around equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Our commissioned partners have to demonstrate what they are doing to increase the diversity of their workforce and ensure their services are accessible. This includes demonstrating knowledge of who the potential service users are and having an understanding that services must respond to their diverse needs, to increase accessibility and inclusive practice. Providers have to evidence their organisational commitment for improvement in this area and this must be accompanied by consultation with local communities and planning on how to improve services and staff responses.

Local Youth Fund

- Young people can often find themselves as a marginalised group, they have specific needs and requirements to help them reach their potential. The VRU recognises how important it is to hear from young people on what matters to them in their local area. The Local Youth Fund offers young people from across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear, with the opportunity to bid for activities or projects that have a benefit to them and the communities they live in. The VRU targeted groups that work with, and support young people with protected characteristics, resulting in an increase in applications received from these groups.
- The Do-It Profiler is used by selected VRU commissioned services, targeting young people (under 25) to assist with the identification of vulnerability through a tested screening tool, which looks at self-reported neurodivergent signs and symptoms.



Pictured: VRU Local Youth Fund Projects - (Top L) Haltwhistle Young & Sweet, (Top R) Hat-Trick Girls Group, (Bottom L) ACANE, (Bottom R) Auxilla Youth

3 OUR WORKFORCE

Objective 2: We will commit to have a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, provide an inclusive working environment and ensure all staff have similar opportunities to develop their potential.

The OPCC has a diverse and engaged workforce which has opportunities for learning and development, ensuring staff are knowledgeable about the diverse needs of our local communities and are well trained in key aspects of equality and diversity, as the examples below demonstrate.

3.1 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Workforce development

To strengthen the delivery of the EDI Business Plan, OPCC staff have received regular training on equality and diversity to help develop their skills and understanding of how to engage effectively with diverse communities and to ensure services are responsive to diverse needs.

Training on neurodiversity helped staff to ensure workplace policies and practices are accessible and inclusive to support colleagues who are neurodivergent and ensure there is equity in service provision.

Northern Pride's Proud Allies Training was delivered to OPCC staff in partnership with Curious Arts, to help raise awareness and increase confidence around inclusive language, engaging with LGBTQIA+ communities and people and increased understanding of the intersectionality of the LGBTQIA+ community.

We delivered Active Bystander training to give people the knowledge and practical tools and techniques to intervene skilfully and safely in a range of situations to challenge unacceptable behaviour and prevent gender based violence. Not only have we delivered it as a train-the-trainer model to ensure the wider roll-out across Northumbria, but we ensured that our staff have received the training.

Workforce profile

To increase the diversity of our workforce, we have ensured job adverts are inclusive and are targeted at underrepresented groups.

To ensure equality of opportunity we review equality monitoring information on a regular basis. We analyse the information relating to the OPCC and for all new positions that we recruit to, we ensure through our recruitment process that we have a diverse workforce that reflects our communities. The equality profile of the OPCC as of December 2023 is as follows:

Number of staff:
45

% women: 70.5%

% ethnic minorities: 5%

% with a disability: 7%

Northumbria Police recruitment programme

Northumbria Police's Positive Action Programme, which offers additional support and insight throughout the recruitment process, has been recognised as an example of best practice by the APCC, who have included it in their Race Disparity Toolkit. The programme provides opportunities to those who would not ordinarily consider Northumbria Police as an employer of choice, whether in relation to culture, perceptions of the role or accessible role models.

Through the scrutiny of Northumbria Police, the PCC has ensured the recruitment of diverse applicants is integral to the Uplift programme. As of December 2023, a total of 172 of police officers and police staff declared their ethnicity as being from a Black, Asian, and/or ethnic minority background, which is 2.8% of the workforce. During the same period, 648 declared that they are disabled, which is 10.6% and 355 are gay, lesbian or bisexual, which equates to 5.8% of the workforce.



Pictured: Welcoming new recruits to the force on their first day.

3.2 OUR VOLUNTEERS

Independent Custody Visitors

In Northumbria it is very important that our custody settings are inclusive and free of any discrimination, so to support our Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) to be able to do this we offer opportunities such as the ICV Annual Training Seminar in partnership with Durham and Cleveland OPCC offices which this year focused on anti-racism and unconscious bias training, with input from the Independent Custody Visitor Association (ICVA).

We also work closely with the Independent Custody Visiting Association in providing our volunteers with equality and diversity training, in addition to our ICV scheme adopting the ICVA anti-racism policy. The ICVs also received ICVA's training on 'An Introduction to Racism within Custody and Policing'.

The ICV form was amended to include a question around whether the visitor felt the detainee had experienced any disproportionate treatment due to their race or gender and monitoring of the returns have not highlighted any disparities in treatment.

A proactive approach has been taken to the recruitment of ICVs which has resulted in an increase in the diversity of the scheme – this approach will be continued into the New Year.

Appropriate Adults

Our excellent partnership with Sunderland University has fully trained students who give help and support to young people and adults (18+) with poor mental health, learning disabilities and those who are neurodiverse in police custody. The role of the appropriate adult is to ensure the rights and entitlements of the detainees are upheld. The scheme, which ensures the diversity of students reflect the communities we serve, has made a real difference, cutting down waiting times during which vulnerable people are detained and offers support when it is needed most.

3.3 OPCC EQUALITIES STEERING GROUP

The Equalities Steering Group is helping to shape services, processes and policies right across the OPCC by ensuring an EDI lens is applied to the work in all our teams. The group has been instrumental in developing the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Toolkit, which consists of guidance on how to complete an assessment and an EIA template. Members of the group have also identified programmes and strategies in their directorates which require an EIA and work is underway to complete assessments.

Members of the group have actively contributed to the refresh of the Equality Objectives consultation and will continue to be the EDI Champions across all areas of our business.

4

DATA & INSIGHTS

Objective 3: We will continually review our efforts through targeted intelligence gathering and analysis to promote a culture of continuous improvement to deliver better services to our communities.

The OPCC uses monitoring and public feedback to improve access to services and to ensure the diverse needs of our residents are met. Some examples of how we have done this can be seen below.

4.1 HOLDING NORTHUMBRIA POLICE TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR USE OF POLICE POWERS

The PCC continues to strengthen and ensure the effective governance and accountability of Northumbria Police. The use of stop and search plays a key role in the prevention and detection of crime to keep our communities safe. However careful balance needs to be struck to ensure that the power is used fairly and proportionately for transparency, and to support legitimacy.

Police powers data

For Stop and Search, the performance data up to December 2023 highlights:

- through scrutiny we have observed an overall increase in the use of stop and search across all groups from 4,998 in 2022 to 7,925 in 2023.
- the use of Body Worn Video has increased from 73% in 2022 to 84% in 2023.
- an increase in the stop and search disparity ratio of ethnic minority individuals from 1.1 in 2022 to 1.3 in 2023, with black individuals facing the highest increase from 2.0 to 2.3.

The force is committed to understanding and tackling this disparity. Operational Single Points of Contacts (SPOCs) have been established within each Command Area who review the use of stop and search to ensure they are legitimate, fair and help identify areas for development.

For the Use of Force, we are pleased to report that the performance data up to December 2023 highlights a decrease in disparity:

- The overall disparity ratio for force used on black subjects has decreased from 1.8 in 2022 to 1.7 in 2023.
- There are 15 records in 2023 where taser was used against a black person, compared to 16 in 2022 and the overall use of taser has decreased from 842 in 2022 to 767 in 2023.
- In 2023 there were 12 Use of Force records where a black person was injured as a result of force used, compared to 14 in 2022. Of all persons injured, 1.3% were black in 2023 compared to 1.6% in 2022.

Police Powers External Advisory Panel

To assist the PCC in scrutinising the Police use of powers, the OPCC established a Police Powers External Advisory Panel which provides constructive oversight, discussion and challenge on the use of force and stop and search. The panel comprises people with lived experience and members from key diverse communities across Northumbria including those representing people who are neurodivergent or may have poor mental health. The work of the Panel has improved police practice and highlighted areas for development, as set out below.

Outcomes

- Through the contribution and feedback of panel members, the force has improved how it records stop and search and use of force, ensuring it provides a greater understanding in the use of police powers.
- The panel also highlighted good practice regarding the speed with which the force reviews stop and search and use of force, addresses areas for improvement and is proactive in sharing that learning through officer safety training.
- Over the course of the last 12 months, the panel have observed a clear improvement in comparison to previous video footages of stop and search and use of force, commenting that there has been less critique required and officers demonstrating the development and benefits of the training they are receiving.

Learning

- In relation to collecting demographic data on stop and search and use of force, the panel identified that the 'other' category asking the subject to specify their background wasn't meaningful or beneficial. As a result, the force is looking at how to better capture this information as well as researching what other forces are doing with data collection.
- Panel members have raised issues about the lack of effective communication by police officers with the subject and the need to provide reassurance, they also observed that the process can sometimes be long and drawn out after the search when no weapons have been found. The Force has recognised that officers need to 'have a plain English conversation' with the subject so have refreshed their training on communication skills.
- The panel have emphasised that Officers' understanding of different cultures is vital to ensure their engagement with diverse communities instils a sense of confidence in the public. In order to aid effective community engagement, officers receive a wide range of briefings to assist them in understanding our communities. In recognising the increased diversity of our communities, panel members are also assisting the police with the briefings.

The APCC have included the work on stop and search and the External Advisory Panel in their Race Disparity Toolkit, citing it as an example of best practice.

Race Action Plan

The PCC holds the police to account on the progress made on their Race Action Plan which sets out changes across policing to improve outcomes for black people who work within or interact with policing.

The primary aim of the plan is to address disparities affecting black people and to improve levels of trust and confidence in the police amongst some black people.

4.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) is a tool that helps the OPCC to place equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do and makes sure our policies, services and functions do what they are intended to do and for everybody.

We have produced an EIA Toolkit for the OPCC and have identified a range of programmes and strategies that will be subject to an EIA. Training will be delivered to all staff to ensure they know when an EIA is required and that any EIAs undertaken are suitable and sufficient, monitoring undertaken to ensure that actions identified as required to mitigate and minimise disparity are implemented.

Programmes and strategies requiring EIAs have been identified and training to all staff will be delivered before EIAs are undertaken.

4.3 VICTIMS SATISFACTION & VICTIMS EXPERIENCE INSIGHTS

Ensuring the highest level of victim satisfaction and providing the best possible support services to achieve better outcomes for victims continues to be key priorities for the PCC.

Victims' Satisfaction

We are supportive of Northumbria Police introducing a workstream specifically looking at victim satisfaction demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement with a clear focus on ensuring no disproportionality in level of service provided and satisfaction with their whole experience.

Northumbria Police's victims' satisfaction data (December 2023) is showing that 73% of crime victims are recorded as being satisfied with the service as whole, this is in line with the satisfaction rates of victims of hate crime. In her scrutiny role, the PCC continues to work with Northumbria Police to strive for better outcomes for victims of crime and a victim satisfaction working group has been established within Northumbria Police to gain a greater understanding of the factors impacting satisfaction levels.

Victims Experience Insights

Through the PCC's Victim and Witness Service External Advisory Panel, the OPCC continues to obtain invaluable insight and understanding of victim experiences throughout the Criminal Justice System, with the aim of ensuring services are responsive to the needs of victims across Northumbria and any disparity is mitigated.

Whilst the membership of the board is currently being reviewed to ensure there is representation from diverse communities, there remains a good diverse membership on the board, including representation from various thematic specialists and victims and witnesses, all continuing to offer specialist input and lived experiences across a variety of crime types.

Over the last year, the Board have offered input into various aspects of the Criminal Justice System, ranging from the Victims Right to Review (VRR) through to the importance of being offered special measures and support whilst attending court.

Super complaints

One way we try to understand and improve the experience of victims is by listening to and taking learning from a national insight process such as the outcomes of super-complaints. Super-complaints can be made by designated bodies and are designed to identify systemic issues within policing that are or appear to be, significantly harming the interest of the public.

In 2023 one super complaint was concluded and the following actions were taken:

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service, the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct have published a report regarding how the police respond to victims of sexual abuse when the victim is from an ethnic minority background and may be at risk of honour-based abuse (HBA). The OPCC responded as follows:
- The OPCC continues to engage and consult with ethnic minority service providers and local ethnic minority networks.
- The Victims' service commissioning has been informed by the Ministry of Justice BAME Commissioning Framework and quarterly Grant Surgeries with commissioned services incorporates discussions on the needs of ethnic minority victims.
- The OPCC have mapped out recent consultations and community engagement events with ethnic minority communities to capture their needs.

- The OPCC’s Victims’ Champion and ISVA Champion continues to engage directly with victims of crime and service providers to build a localised picture of the challenges faced, feeding operational issues directly back to services to ensure victims’ voices are central to PCC commissioning decisions.
- The OPCC continue to work alongside the specialist commissioned Black and Minority Ethnic service, the Angelou Centre, in devising and cascading messaging on HBA across local commissioned services. This will further support local services’ understanding and awareness of HBA, alongside sharing the Angelou Centres contact details for additional support and guidance. The VRU worked closely with the Angelou Centre to develop multi-agency guidance and a toolkit for safely supporting migrant survivors of violence and abuse, including those with no recourse to public funds.

Public surveys

Getting feedback from the public is integral to helping shape the work of the OPCC to ensure we are responsive to the issues which matter most to them. There are a range of public surveys that were carried out in 2023 to help shape our understanding and help us deliver the best services to our communities. Below are two examples of how we have used public surveys to ensure our services are meeting local needs.

- Refresh of the Police & Crime Plan gave residents an opportunity to have their say on whether they agreed with the priorities within the existing plan and the consultation ensured views of our diverse communities informed this piece of work.
- At the end of Round 4 of the Safer Streets Fund, we sought feedback from the women’s sector on feelings of safety, awareness of the work that has been delivered so far, and the personal experiences of residents in relation to Violence Against Women & Girls, are pleased to confirm that we are improving women’s feeling of safety and helped us shape our proposal for Safer Streets Round 5.



Pictured: Engaging with communities across the force area on the issues that matter the most

5 WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Objective 4: We will ensure a coherent vision of equality which sits within the wider business framework and is shared and owned by us, our leaders, our workforce and partners.

The OPCC works with partners in the public, private, community and charitable sectors to drive progress on the equality objectives, some examples of how we have done this are below.

Local Criminal Justice Board

The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) brings key agencies together to deliver an effective and efficient criminal justice system (CJS). This enables victims, witnesses, defendants and their families to receive the best support possible, brings offenders to justice and helps to increase public confidence in the CJS and support people to feel safe in their local communities. The criminal justice partners have commenced work to better understand any disparity that exists within the CJS and identify ways of reducing and addressing it, this will help develop and promote confidence in the CJS.

The LCJB's Victims and Witnesses subgroup have been looking at business hate crime and victim and witness attrition and how referrals through to court can be increased.

Consultation was held with businesses, namely taxi drivers and those working in take aways and small convenience stores to better understand the barriers they face to reporting hate crime and challenges they face to remaining in the criminal justice process.

A report on the findings of the Consultation, including recommendations addressing the issues raised, has been submitted to the LCJB for consideration, and we will update the progress on this in our next annual report.

Northumbria Sexual Assault Referral Centre

In August 2023, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, the Angel Centre, was opened, providing a safe and supportive environment to victims/survivors who have experienced sexual violence – they can attend for a forensic examination, medical assessment and can access referrals to supportive services.

In the development of the centre, experts were consulted to ensure the centre was inclusive to all people who need to access services regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender and disability. The new site has disabled access, the victim area is on the ground floor level, and there is also disability access for staff to access the office on the first floor.



Pictured: Official opening of The Angel Centre, Northumbria's new state of the art Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Safer Streets

The OPCC secured £1.7m of Safer Streets Round 4 funding to address neighbourhood crime, VAWG and ASB in public places with a particular focus on public transport and rural communities.

All of these projects are achieving great results for our communities and ensure accessible, inclusive and representative service provision resulting in:

- Improving feelings of safety for women and girls on public transport and in public places, with 61% reporting they feel safer.
- Engaging with and signposting over 3200 young people to access diversionary activities.
- Engaging young people in consultation on their feelings of safety in their alternate night-time economies with a particular focus on the experiences of young mothers and LGBTQIA+ voices.
- Training 165 members of the public to become active bystanders and 70 professionals in key partners organisations, to challenge misogynistic, sexist and anti-social behaviours.
- Making improvements to the Safer Transport Northumbria App to improve the ease of reporting incidents to transport providers. This will also support us in shaping future interventions through increased data collection around incidents. Members of a student forum in Newcastle commented that 'just knowing the app was there made them feel safer'.
- Scheduled Monthly Briefings were delivered to Local Authority, VCSE and Police partners addressing the specialist service needs of Black and minoritised women, women and girls with learning disabilities, women engaged in sex work and survival sex, girls under the age of 18 and children and young people in relation to VAWG prevention to enhance provision and tackle barriers to support.

In October 2023 we were awarded additional funding through Safer Streets Round 5. The total bid was for £1m with almost £800,000 going towards interventions focused on improving the safety and feelings of safety of women, girls and marginalised groups on public transport, in our parks and the Nighttime economy across the region. The work also tackles motorcycles and transport ASB and secondary fires.

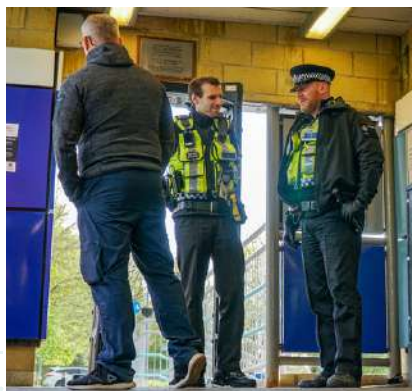


Pictured: (L-R) Safer Transport deployments in hotspot areas, Active Bystander training and Northumberland Rural Partnership Against Crime

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

There are two key strands of partnership work that particularly demonstrate our role around community cohesion and improving lives.

The Hotspot Response project has seen £1 million being used to provide enhanced uniform patrols, from Northumbria Police, Local Authorities, transport providers and British Transport Police, in 3 ASB hotspots and the wider transport network. The work involves a combination of enforcement against offenders and engagement with the communities to increase trust and confidence. The project is seeing really high levels of engagement with young people in communities and is helping to educate and myth bust about ASB and the perceptions around it. It is improving community cohesion through intergenerational work that it is breaking down the myth that all ASB is caused by young people and all young people are anti-social. The increased presence is helping to build rapport and break down barriers with members of our diverse communities.



Pictured: (L-R) ASB Hotspot patrols in West Denton, joint operations with British Transport Police at South Hylton and visiting North East Probation Service at Walker Park

Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review

An Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Case Review 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 try to find a solution for the victim(s). It has been carefully designed to be as accessible as possible with multiple methods to activate it.

The ASB Case Review is now administered by the OPCC on behalf of all 6 Community Safety Partnerships and since its relaunch in July 2022, we have had 107 requests for a Case Review during 2023. Further actions have been recommended in 91% of the cases and in 22% of the cases the victim has advised that they felt targeted due to their protected characteristics – the breakdown of the protected characteristics is as follows:

- Race - 37%
- Disability – 21%
- Sexual orientation – 17%
- Sex – 17%
- Religion – 4%
- Gender Reassignment – 4%
- Age – 0%

In the coming year we will be seeking to use the strategic learning from the ASB Case Reviews to help drive service improvement for all victims, ensuring vulnerable victims are identified and supported, and those who feel targeted due to their protected characteristic receive the best possible service and support tailored to their individual needs.

Strategic Violence Reduction Board

In Northumbria, the Strategic Violence Reduction Board brings together the six Community Safety Partnerships, providing oversight in delivering the priorities and measures of the Response Strategy. This includes exception monitoring of local area action plans. The Board contributes to the delivery and implementation of this strategy by capitalising on existing local arrangements to tackle inequalities and to ensure partners work effectively across the system to avoid duplication.

The Serious Violence Delivery Group oversees progress made against the recommendations identified in the Strategic Needs Assessment and commissioned interventions. The group utilises the Delivery Plan to build on each of the priorities, developing key actions to address serious violence.

To support governance arrangements, there are two thematic working groups, which contribute to the success of achieving the identified priorities.

- Data and Insights Group – has led the planning and co-ordination of the Strategic Needs Assessment including information sharing arrangements to obtain relevant datasets, to help identify disparity and appropriate action taken to mitigate or minimise barriers to service delivery.
- Engagement Group – delivers on a strategy that supports communities, including disability groups, ethnic minority and faith communities, through communication, engagement, and reassurance.

The VRU also sits on all 6 Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards in Northumbria to help ensure work to tackle domestic and sexual violence is aligned with the serious violence duty. The work of the Boards, through their needs assessments and strategies are informed by those with lived experience and people with different protected characteristics.

6

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

We are more determined than ever to promote equality and celebrate diversity in our communities. In 2024 we will continue to engage our communities through surveys and focus groups and analyse data and insights to review our equality objectives to ensure they are relevant and address areas of most importance to our communities.

We will continue to deliver the key priorities of the OPCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan which focuses on:

Working with communities

- We will:
 - Involve people with lived experience on the OPCC's External Advisory Panels.
 - Ensure the Engagement & Communication Plan engages with community groups that need to have their voices amplified.
 - Deliver community cohesion activities to break down barriers and to strengthen relationships between diverse communities.

Our workforce

- We will:
 - Achieve Disability Confident Committed level.
 - Continue to provide training and development opportunities for staff to ensure our services are accessible and inclusive to all our residents.
 - Incorporate EDI in staff Performance Development Reviews.

Data and insights

- We will
 - Continue to roll out equality impact assessments across the office.
 - Develop a business plan to deliver refreshed equality objectives/priorities.
 - Strengthen/embed EDI within scrutiny processes.

Working with Partners

- We will
 - Work with the Local Criminal Justice Board to increase reporting of hate crime from small businesses and improve engagement with the Criminal Justice System.
 - Ensure appropriate support is provided to ASB Case Review victims who are targeted due to their protected characteristics.
 - Work with Commissioned Services to ensure they deliver on their EDI commitment.

If you have any feedback, please contact enquiries on enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

Annual Report 2023

✉ enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

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