

**NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF
NORTHUMBRIA POLICE**

Inspection title	An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations
Type of inspection	<input type="checkbox"/> Northumbria-specific <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Thematic
Date inspection published	1 December 2022
Deadline for PCC response (56 days)	26 January 2023
Recommendations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Local

NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS

I thank the Inspectorate for this report into how effective the provision of digital forensics is in forces and ROCUs, how well they understand and plan for future demand. and whether victims of crime were receiving a quality service.

I was disappointed to read about the current backlog of devices awaiting examination, and that some forces are overwhelmed by digital forensics. A long wait for digital forensics services can have a huge impact on victim confidence and their desire to stay engaged with the criminal justice system.

Northumbria Police Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) is part of the Forensic Services Department and has been governed alongside traditional forensic services since October 2022. An ongoing programme of work is being led by Forensic Services Senior Management Team to identify and respond to demand, growth, and efficiencies within service delivery to ensure quality delivery across the Force. As part of the current DFU Improvement Plan, Northumbria Police is reviewing the use of digital triage of devices at scenes in a holistic approach considering the use of CSIs/Digital Forensic Investigators and DMIs. A proposal relating to these changes will be developed in Q1 2023. Northumbria Police is currently running a pilot in one Area Command to evidence the service and quality benefits of DFU control of our kiosks, the evidence from which will form part of a proposal for improved governance and control in Q1 2023. Further, Northumbria Police has recently been successfully recommended for ISO 17025 accreditation in the use of Magnet Automate, which has been utilised within DFU since 2019 to assist with the processing of digital devices.

The Force will update me on their plan to address the recommendations made by the Inspectorate and I will monitor progress through my Scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely



Kim McGuinness
PCC for Northumbria