



NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

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NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS

I am pleased to receive the Northumbria PEEL report following its most recent inspection. Although several areas for improvement have been identified, I feel that this is a well-balanced report with several areas of innovative practice also identified.

The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable work to understand where progress can be made and implement improvements which lead to positive change. One such area is in relation to improving call handing, something acknowledged within the report. I am pleased that the inspectors recognised that some progress has been made and I am confident that the force will be able to consistently achieve the 90 percent standard before the next inspection. It is essential that the public is able to contact the police when they need to and that they are able to do so in a way that suits them. This report reassures me that the force is offering the public a good service in this area with the range of options that they have available.

Last year, Northumbria amended its Force Operation Model, moving from 3 Area Commands to 6, aligning the command areas with the 6 Local Authorities. We are already seeing local improvements for communities from this shift.

I have noted the recommendation that we increase the number of cases that are reviewed within my external advisory panels and my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner will review this and identify what opportunities are available to achieve this.

I am delighted that Northumbria Police have been rated 'Good' in relation to Preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability. In recent years, my office has secured funding through Safer Streets and the Hotspot Action Fund (Project Shield) to deliver a range of activity and these have had a positive impact on reducing crime and ASB in the areas targeted. From April 2024 – March 2025, Project Shield saw a 20% reduction in ASB, a 13% reduction in serious violence. The partnership project achieved 227 Arrests with ASB powers used 339 times. Throughout the patrols police and partners carried out over 77,000 engagements with members of the public, providing reassurance, advice and guidance. I am delighted with the success of this project and the contribution it has made to achieving a positive outcome for this area of inspection.



The force leads on the Safer Transport Partnership, formed through the Safer Streets projects, and this partnership continues to grow in strength and numbers. Following the formation of the Combined Mayoral Authority we have reached out to their office and had initial conversations in relation to working together. This activity will further enhance our ability to tackle crime and ASB occurring on, or facilitated by, our public transport network.

In order to have a real impact on making our communities safer, we need to prevent crime and ASB in the first place, I believe that education is a key part of achieving this. The trainee detective programme, highlighted as innovative practice in the report, is funded through my Violence Reduction Unit which has long been delivering educational inputs to young people. We have previously hosted a national conference to showcase the variety of work delivered by the education team.

The force is currently hampered by an ageing IT system which does not have the capabilities needed to effectively meet the needs of modern policing. Although this has taken significantly longer than hoped, a new system has been identified and, it is anticipated that this will have a significant positive impact across the force. This system should be fully implemented at the time of our next PEEL inspection and I look forward to the future assessment of its implementation and impact on policing in Northumbria.

The force recognises that it needs to do better in relation to protective orders. The force has a shared legal resource, funded by my office through Project Shield, which provides additional capacity so that NP and LAs can apply for orders more quickly.

In relation to the recommendations, Northumbria Police have updated me on their current position as follows:

Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

AFI: The force needs to improve its oversight and governance of coercive powers

- The Force has established new processes for the monitoring and management of Public and Personal Safety Training (PPST).
- The Force is committed to ensuring that all operational officers, staff and volunteers receive annual PPST to maintain their competency and safety standards.
- An extension has been applied on the validity period of PPST to maintain competency whilst ensuring the effective delivery of the training plan. An uplift in operational training staff has also been agreed.
- Systems and processes will be further developed to consistently capture organisational learning from coercive powers to ensure that it influences staff training and operational practices to improve the use and legitimacy of policing powers.

Responding to the public

AFI: The force needs to improve its response to calls for service, update the caller about delays and effectively supervise deployment decisions

- Opportunities are being reviewed to bring improved capacity for the response to grade 1 and 2 incidents through the use of technology such as GoodSAM and by



implementing best practice from high performing forces in this area.

- Response rates continue to improve but are still below service level agreements (SLA). For 12 months to April 2025, 84% of grade 1 incidents and 64% of grade 2 incidents were attended within SLA.
- The management of delays is subject of improved governance to ensure the consistent application of the secondary call (SECCALL) model.

Investigating crime

AFI: The force doesn't consistently achieve appropriate outcomes for victims

AFI: The force should make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with effective supervision to make sure that all investigative opportunities are taken

- Both AFIs are being addressed through the delivery plan for the Force Investigations Strategy and actions in support of the AFIs will be governed through the Investigations and Criminal Justice Board.
- The strategy aims to ensure the delivery of high-quality investigations, including effective supervision, throughout the life of a crime. The Force is investigating more crime and following reasonable lines of enquiry to achieve the right outcome for victims.
- There has been continued improvement in outcome rates with a total positive outcome rate of 17.7% (12 months to April 2025); 13.9% of victim-based crimes recorded over the same period have been brought to justice.
- Continuous professional development is ongoing, and Hydra-led investigation sessions commenced in April 2025 and will run into 2026, targeting support to those teams most in need of improvement.
- Chief Superintendent Custody and Criminal Justice will lead a piece of work under the Investigation and Criminal Justice Board to develop and implement a plan to ensure effective victim updates and communication for all crime investigations.

Protecting vulnerable people

AFI: The force should comply with published national guidance when making disclosures as part of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

AFI: The force needs to make more use of preventative orders to safeguard victims

- The Force now has video capability (GoodSAM) alongside dedicated Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) across each multi-agency safeguarding hub; both of these enhance victim service. Each disclosure uses both video and IDVA unless specified otherwise by the person at risk.

A number of activities are underway to increase the use of orders including:

- All open applications for Stalking Protection Orders are reviewed and timely contact is made with officers to expedite applications.
- Domestic Violence Protection Order applications rejected at court are reviewed for learning with feedback provided to both the officer and supervisor who applied.
- The Force intranet orders page has been fully updated to include all available orders with guidance on when to consider them; this includes a section on domestic abuse.
- A force wide training package is being produced which will promote what orders



are available including those to tackle violence against women and girls.

- MS Sharepoint is being used to help better manage orders in the interim period until NicheRMS is implemented.

Managing offenders and suspects

AFI: The force should improve its governance of and approach to managing wanted and outstanding suspects

- The 'wanted person' protocol has been updated and further guidance has been provided to ensure clarity in the application and updating of the suspect status field on the Force records management system. Strategic governance for wanted and outstanding suspects is provided through Prevention Board and Strategic Performance Board.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

AFI: The force needs to further develop its understanding of the well-being challenges its workforce faces and should focus improvements to make sure it is effectively supporting the welfare of all officers and staff

- The Force is continuing to progress with the wellbeing plans and strategies in place. A comprehensive activity log has been created against the action plan for the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework which tracks the activities undertaken, allows gaps to be addressed and risks escalated where necessary.
- A refreshed Local People Board will consider local wellbeing activity and track Great Place to Work (GP2W) and local culture actions. Each local area will hold a 'people plan' which sets out their commitment to addressing local wellbeing, GP2W feedback, and culture actions. This action forms part of a wider review of Local Health Management Group/Resource Management Group meeting structures, and links to the ongoing culture project.
- An assessment of mental health first aid support has taken place and underrepresented areas have been encouraged to increase the number of available mental health first aiders. A peer support co-ordinator is being introduced, to assist in coordinating many of the peer functions which should improve the approach.
- Leadership training for Level 2 and Level 3 leaders is ongoing, part of which reinforces their role in managing staff welfare/wellbeing.
- A force wide response to the demands within specialist investigative teams has been initiated in the form of Operation Wakefield, which prioritises officers into the Safeguarding Department. Alongside this, targeted variable payments have been introduced to assist with recruitment and retention into Safeguarding.

Leadership and force management

AFI: The force needs to improve its effectiveness and productivity through better use of technology, including mobile working

- The Force is scheduled to transition to NicheRMS in February 2026. This implementation will include the deployment of the Niche Mobile application, significantly enhancing operational capabilities for officers. Key features will



support functions such as digital pocket notebook entries, stop and search documentation, identity verification, and comprehensive records searching.

- Aligned with this rollout, the Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) Strategy places strong emphasis on enabling mobile-first capabilities for frontline policing. To support this vision, a set of architecture principles has been established to guide the development and integration of mobile technologies across the Force.
- Beyond mobile enablement, the DDaT Strategy also prioritises the rationalisation and consolidation of existing technologies. This approach aims to reduce system complexity and lower the total cost of ownership. Central to this strategy is a focus on process optimisation, ensuring that technology investments deliver maximum value. By aligning processes with data, the Force will be better positioned to generate actionable insights and drive more effective and efficient operations.

Activity in response to all the AFIs will be monitored through the Force's governance and decision-making structure. Progress will be reported to the Scrutiny Meeting and updates provided to HMICFRS to enable review and closure at the earliest opportunity. Regular meetings will be undertaken with the HMICFRS inspection officer to review progress in response to AFIs.

I am confident that the Chief Constable will ensure these recommendations will be implemented effectively. I will continue to monitor the force's progress against these recommendations through my regular scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Dungworth

Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria