



**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria**

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2025**

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## From the Commissioner

I am pleased to present this annual report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Whilst 2025 has brought challenges and community tensions nationally it has also been a year of meaningful progress across our region. In tackling inequality, addressing hate crime and strengthening community cohesion, the 2025-29 Police and Crime Plan features Hate Crime and Cohesion as a standalone priority for the first time. This report reflects both the progress we have made and our continued determination to do better in how we respond effectively to the issues affecting our communities.

Fairness remains central to my role. Everyone who lives, works or visits our area should feel safe, respected and supported. We recognise that different communities experience policing and public services differently, and that some face additional barriers and challenges. We are committed to listening, understanding and responding effectively to diverse needs.

Engagement continued to underpin this work. Over the past year, I have met with residents, community organisations and partners – particularly in areas affected by hate crime or rising tensions – to ensure that voices of those too often unheard are reflected in our decisions, priorities and services. This work is ongoing, and there is always more to learn as communities and challenges evolve.

We have enhanced our approach to hate crime through the launch of the UK's first Enhanced Reporting Centre with Northumbria Police and Citizens Advice Gateshead, expansion of Safe Reporting Centres and the establishment of Community Cohesion Monitoring Groups. Through the Commissioner's Community Fund, we have supported initiatives promoting cohesion, supporting victims countering misinformation, including region-wide migration myth-busting initiatives and targeted awareness campaigns during Hate Crime Awareness Week.

Within my office, we continue to foster an inclusive culture that reflects our communities, refresh our equality objectives through wide consultation and strengthen scrutiny through innovations such as digital reporting for Independent Custody Visitors. Also, we hold and support external advisory panels (EAPs) in respect of a number of key policing topics such as Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Police Powers, Custody and Out of Court Resolutions. The EAPS, made up of representatives from diverse community groups and services, bring people together to provide expert advice, guidance and recommendations around key areas to improve and maintain public trust and confidence in Northumbria Police.

Looking ahead, collaboration across policing, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations, and regional partners will remain essential. Together, we will continue to champion a culture rooted in respect, inclusion and accountability. This report sets out both what we have achieved and where we are heading next. Together, we will continue building safer streets, stronger communities for everyone.

## Key Highlights and Achievements in 2025

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) made hate and cohesion a standalone priority in the 2025-2029 Police and Crime Plan reflecting feedback from communities.
2. Partnered with the North East PCCs and the North East Migration Partnership to launch a Migrant Myth Buster leaflet, challenging myths and strengthening community inclusion.
3. Funded Out North East and The William Leech Charity to research LGBTQIA+ experiences and ally perspectives, helping shape our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) approach.
4. Increased fairness and accountability in the use of police powers through stronger independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force.
5. Strengthened Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Case Review accessibility and equity, leading to higher activations during 2025, particularly in areas of high socio-economic deprivation.
6. The Violence Reduction Unit's Local Youth Fund empowered young people from marginalised communities to design and lead creative initiatives that prevent violence and promote inclusion.
7. The Lead the Change programme empowered over 350 people as Active Bystanders, driving a regional culture that confidently challenges sexism, harassment and misogyny.
8. The Northumbria Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funded Age UK to specialist *support to over 600 older adults who have been victims of crime.*
9. In 2024/25 funded from the Commissioner's Community Fund within Operation Payback Round 5, the OPCC have supported a total of 62 grass roots projects, at a total value of £167,861.20, helping to support youth diversionary activities across all local authority areas in Northumbria.
10. The PCC funded West End Women and Girls to deliver an intergenerational cohesion project in an area of high deprivation where residents were encouraged to work together and volunteer to repair damage and improve the gardens of properties in the area, increasing their pride in the place that they live.

## **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, Communications, Standards and Complaints and the Violence Reduction Unit.

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.

The OPCC recognises intersectionality across all protected characteristics – this is where an individual may have a number of protected characteristic. Intersectionality is at the forefront of our strategic planning when considering how to ensure equity, equality, diversity and inclusion across all our services. We also consider the impact that socio-economic deprivation can have on our communities. These communities are statistically more likely to experience hardship and be victims of crime which can impact on their perception of crime and policing in their areas.

### **1.1 Our Vision**

Our vision for equality, diversity and inclusion 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, 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 having 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, Insights and Strategic Commitment**

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

## **Working with Partners**

**Objective 4:** We will work with partners to put systems in place within wider business frameworks (shared and owned by us, our leaders, our workforce and partners) that will help identify and address disparity, disproportionality and inequality, enabling a more effective public service provision.

### **1.3 Strategic Fit**

The equality objectives sit within the wider context of the Police and Crime Plan and help to ensure that activity to deliver the priorities in the plan are tackled through an EDI lens. Our EDI Business Plan provides the structure for us to deliver against the plan.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have developed an Equality Framework for PCCs and their Offices, of which The OPCC EDI Business plan priorities align with. These focus on four key areas:

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

The OPCC have reviewed and refreshed our equality objectives and outcomes to ensure they are relevant and reflect what is important to our communities, the workforce and our partners.

Vision 2040 sets out Northumbria Police's roadmap for policing in the coming years. It is helping shape decisions around the character of policing's operating environment over the next 20 years and identifies trends such as rising inequality and social fragmentation, changing population demographics, technology and Artificial Intelligence. We will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of their equality objectives detailed in the [Annual Equality Monitoring Report](#) and 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 throughout 2025.

## 2. Working with Our Communities

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

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

### 2.1 Connecting with Communities

Engaging with and listening to our communities is vital as it enables us to deliver services that are fair, accessible and 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.

#### Listening to and Engaging with Communities

The PCC remains committed to ensuring all voices and lived experience help inform priorities, strategic decisions and service delivery to strengthen trust across communities. She engaged faith groups, LGBTQIA+ groups, disability networks, people from black and minoritised backgrounds, as well as with women, young people, older people and carers. We find that areas of high deprivation in Northumbria often align with our seldom heard communities, so we make extra effort to engage and get insights from them. Engagement was delivered through varying methods to ensure accessibility and participation. Some examples are outlined below:

**Community Voices** – In 2025 she convened meetings (online and in person) to hear directly from seldom heard communities gaining first-hand insight into local issues, some examples of this include:

- **Jarrow Community Engagement Event** - brought together residents of all ages, community groups, and local partners to discuss national tensions and community feelings. It was an opportunity to look at intergenerational perspectives, share ideas, experiences and good practice, promoting the range of support available for those affected locally. It explored how to strengthen South Tyneside's strong sense of place and identity as well as a whole-system approach to build resilience and unity across the borough.
- **Stories of Colour** – following the 2024 summer riots, the PCC supported an event to showcase the insights report and artwork that was created by women and service users of the Angelou Centre, a Black-led and women's support service. These pieces of work articulated the impact of the disorder on Black, Minority and Migrant women and children and highlighted key recommendations which have been used to inform the development of the PCC's Women's Safety in Public Places work, as well as the standalone hate and cohesion priority in the Police and Crime Plan.

- **Female Re-offending Post Prison Release** – The PCC visited the women's prison HMP Low Newton, where she met 'Edith' (not her real name) and professionals working with her. She heard about the challenges women face when they are released from prison that can lead to serious safety and security concerns, homelessness and unemployment, particularly if there is no family support. For example, 'Sofa Surfing' is a short-term solution to homelessness on release but can result in reoffending or serious safety issues due to factors outside of her control at the address. The PCC heard how difficult and daunting it can be for a woman to access employment post release, but how important the women viewed working to rebuild their lives. This insight has been used to inform the workstreams of the Local Criminal Justice Board ensuring all LCJB partners services are shaped with this in mind.
- **North Tyneside Disability Forum (NTDF)** -the Deputy PCC attended a meeting and heard about all the great work of the NTDF - a user led charity supporting people of all ages in North Tyneside who are disadvantaged by some aspect of disability, ill health and or vulnerability. This has helped shape how the OPCC engages with disabled people ensuring that barriers are removed so that they have equal access to participation with our work.
- **Age UK** - Northumbria OPCC through our engagement continue to recognise the increased vulnerability, growing fears of becoming a victim and varying needs of our region's older victims of crime. In response, our Supporting Victims Programme identifies older people as a funding priority, and we have commissioned services like Age UK to provide specialist cope and recovery support to older adults as well as proactive support to help address their fear of crime. During 2025, Age UK have engaged with over 600 older people across the region by providing emotional support and safety planning inputs.
- Other groups the Commissioner met with throughout 2025 include: Newcastle Reform Synagogue, Pride Action North, Young Women's Outreach Project, Scotswood Community Cohesion Event, Holocaust Memorial Day, Hate 2 Riot, Soroptomists, James Place, Roma Access Holocaust Memorial, Show Racism the Red Card, Bake Not Hate and Gem Arts.

### **Developing Services and Interventions**

Some other examples of how the OPCC engaged with our communities to ensure the services and interventions are fair, accessible and responsive to the needs of the communities are outlined below:

- **Victims of Crime Needs Assessment** – Undertaken during 2025, this included surveys, designed specifically for child victims as well as adult victims and for specialist services, ensuring our commissioned services are fair and responsive to our local need. It helped us gather feedback from communities and victims' services to help shape the PCC's Supporting Victims Programme commissioning intentions for 2026 to 2029, which includes:

- specialist by and for services for black and minoritised women who have been a victim of crime
  - specialist children and young people services
  - specialist services for men who have been a victim of domestic or sexual abuse
- **Bespoke Research** - The OPCC provided funding to Out North East to support regional research into the lived experience of LGBTQIA+ people and allies across our communities. The findings provided insights into the challenges the LGBTQIA+ community face, including experiences of discrimination, exclusion and barriers to accessing support. Recommendations from this work are being incorporated in the OPCC's EDI work, strengthening our commitment to promoting inclusion, tackling prejudice and ensuring that all communities feel safe, valued and represented in policing and community safety initiatives.
  - **Community Consultations** - As part of our commitment to EDI, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) undertook a targeted programme of community consultation in 2025. This work involved structured focus groups and one-to-one engagement with individuals from diverse backgrounds and lived experience. By working closely with partners, young people and adults, we aimed to better understand what works and how we can more effectively embed the voices of those who access our services.
  - **Workshops** – The VRU hosted a dedicated workshop with the network of Violence Prevention Ambassadors (VPA), engaging directly with people who had completed the programme provided valuable insights into how we could improve existing modules, introduce new modules and how we might broaden participation to expand the programme's reach. Evidence from these discussions highlighted the importance of creating a platform that is flexible and accessible that allows individuals to engage at their own pace as they learn.
  - **Communication and Engagement Working Groups** – The VRU used this forum to explore how best to reach more learners and ensure that our interventions remain equitable and evidence-led. Drawing on specialist input, this forum was used to develop a new module for the programme—County Lines and Child Exploitation—which has now been added to the VRU training offer.
  - **Service User Feedback** - Feedback from individuals engaged through Drug Testing on Arrest and the Young Futures Prevention Panels was incorporated in intervention design, and their insights helped ensure that our delivery approach remains inclusive, intelligence-driven, and aligned with community priorities.
  - **Transforming Together Network** - The OPCC worked with Represent Women to enable women, and professionals who support them, to directly influence local decision-making. This engagement focused on women, including those from underrepresented groups, who are experiencing poverty and multiple unmet needs, and understanding the impact on their children. Insights from the sessions are informing how the OPCC and partners meet the statutory duty to collaborate in commissioning more inclusive,

trauma-informed support. This has also been key to informing considerations around the Supporting Victims Programme 2026 to 2029 funding for commissioned services.

### **Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions**

The OPCC continued to deliver the Domestic Abuse (DA) Workplace Champions scheme, which works with the community to raise awareness around issues of domestic abuse and guide people towards specialist services. Whilst men are impacted by domestic abuse statistics show that women are disproportionately affected.

In 2025 'Basic Awareness: understanding domestic abuse and signposting' continued to be delivered with a further 72 staff joined the network drawn from a range of workplaces in our communities.

The DA Workplace Champions E-newsletter continued to be distributed 6 monthly and was supplemented with a new series of monthly emails reaching over 885 DA workplace champions, offering up-to-date information on local and national developments, resources and training opportunities.

### **2.2 Community Cohesion**

The OPCC works with communities to strengthen cohesion, tackle hate and build a shared sense of belonging across the region. This includes supporting local projects that bring people together, challenge harmful narratives and ensuring all communities feel safe, heard and are treated fairly.

#### **Commissioners Community Fund**

In 2025 almost £150,000 was distributed to 42 grass roots organisations across Northumbria to tackle hate crime and anti-social behaviour and promote community cohesion in their local community. Some of the money used to create this fund is recovered by the police from criminal activity, under the Proceeds of Crime Act (PoCA). The PCC wants to make sure this money is put back into the hands of the local communities affected by anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime, and to help bring communities together. Below are some of the examples of the community cohesion work that the fund has supported:

- **United Women's Project** - a partnership project in South Tyneside, involving Compact in Race Equality, Sangini, Apna Ghar and Women's Health in South Tyneside for the benefit of the local community's diverse residents, using a strengths-based approach to raise awareness of hate crime and VAWG. The project helped create cross-cultural understanding and raise awareness about the issues, such as hate crime and racism to 'provide a platform for women' to share their experience.
- The **Al Azhar Mosque** in South Shields held a community day in July 2025 which was attended by 80 people from different sectors and backgrounds. The event, which included a tour, a talk on Islam and a Q & A session, received excellent feedback as it helped break down barriers and misconceptions about Islam and the Muslim Community.

- **LD North East** delivered hate crime awareness and online safety sessions for people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and autism across North Tyneside. Funding helped produce accessible easy read materials, and create safe, supportive spaces where people could explore sensitive topics in a structured way. Training sessions helped facilitate healthy discussions around recognising and challenging hate crime and celebrating diversity in race, culture, disability and sexuality.
- **West End Women and Girls** delivered ‘tidy up and plant events’ where during term time 92 residents from local estates in Elswick (an area of high deprivation) were involved in and/or received mini garden makeovers. The session brought intergenerational groups of neighbours together to help each other in their own gardens, repairing the damage caused by hate crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. Residents were encouraged to get to know each other better, breaking down barriers and increasing understanding and cohesion between older and younger people.

### **2.3 Holding Northumbria Police to Account**

The PCC continues to strengthen governance and accountability arrangements for Northumbria Police, ensuring fairness, transparency and inclusion remain central to policing. Through ongoing scrutiny and community engagement, the PCC promotes equality, legitimacy and public confidence across Northumbria Police service.

Oversight of powers such as stop and search and use of force ensures they are applied lawfully, proportionately and without bias. Further details and data around these are included in section 4 of this report.

#### **Race Action Plan**

The Race Action Plan, released by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing, aims to create an anti-racist police service. It focuses on improving trust and confidence in policing among black communities and outlines changes within policing to benefit black people who work with or interact with the police.

The PCC holds the police to account on the progress made on their Race Action Plan as part of her regular scrutiny programme. Some examples of how Northumbria Police are aiming to achieve their objectives under their Race Action Plan are outlined below:

- Northumbria has a clear plan for positive action running up to 2029, with a targeted recruitment campaign to attract officers from black and minoritised communities into the workforce.
- New data dashboards have been developed to identify and address areas of disparity within policing.
- A comprehensive leadership development programme, which includes an ‘inclusive leadership’ module is being delivered to over 6,000 leaders.

- External youth and internal scrutiny panels continue to provide independent oversight to stop and search across the force area, with a clear focus on fairness, transparency and community confidence. Over the past 12 months, the volume of stop and search has increased by 2%, alongside a positive outcome rate, and this activity is routinely reviewed bi-monthly to monitor use of powers, find rates, legitimacy, protected characteristics, supervisor checks and dip sampling, helping to identify and address any emerging disproportionality.
- Community engagement is a key focus, with efforts to ensure black communities' experiences shape the Race Action Plan's future and an Independent Police Powers Advisory Panel has been established to scrutinise stop and search and use of force.

## Hate Crime

Hate crimes are serious offences that target individuals because of who they are or what they represent, causing significant harm to victims and wider communities. The Commissioner remains committed to working with Northumbria Police and partners to prevent hate crime, improve reporting and recording and ensure victims receive the support and justice they deserve.

In 2025, there were 3,894 hate crimes in the 12 months to December 2025, compared to 3,792 in the 12 months to December 2024, with public disorder being the most common type in both categories. 71% of hate crime victims surveyed by Northumbria Police's Public Insight Team were satisfied with their overall experience of the service.

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

- **Hate Crime Panel** – established by Northumbria Police it plays a key role in promoting continuous improvement and strengthening the police response to hate crime. With representatives from within Northumbria Police as well as the OPCC and CPS, the panel provides scrutiny and constructive feedback through the review of body-worn video footage and case material. The panel's insights directly inform officer learning and development, helping to ensure that police practice remains inclusive, victim-centred and responsive to community needs, such as ensuring supportive victim-centred language is used when dealing with victims of hate and access to specialist support is offered. Both Northumbria Police and the PCC are keen to ensure community help shape service improvements so 2026 will see this panel move across to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, be chaired by the Deputy PCC and members of the community will be recruited to be panel members.
- **Hate Crime Board** – established by Northumbria Police it provides strategic oversight of the Force's Hate Crime Action Plan, which sets its approach to preventing hate crime, improving performance, increasing victim satisfaction and strengthening partnership working, it include things like bespoke training packages on hate crime to all frontline officers and staff, with a focus on victim support and correct identification of hate crime.

The Board includes representation from the OPCC and the Crown Prosecution Service

(CPS), taking learning from the Hate Crime Panel and professional insight to strategically drive improvement in how hate crime is investigated and prosecuted. Through this collaborative governance, the OPCC helps to ensure that the Hate Crime Action Plan remains aligned to the Police and Crime Plan and the views and needs of communities across Northumbria, contributing to a 15% increase in hate crime referrals to the CPS.

- **Hate Crime Champion scheme** – Northumbria Police train individuals from different organisations across the region to identify hate, challenge intolerance and better support victims of hate crime. The Hate Crime Champions play a key role in helping those who have experienced hate receive the right advice and support, and ensure that our local businesses are looking after the wellbeing of their own diverse workforces. The OPCC ensures the Hate Crime Champions Scheme is promoted around the region, and over 130 new hate crime champions have been recruited in 2025.

### **OPCC Work to Address Hate Crime**

Tackling hate crime and building community cohesion continues to be a key priority for the PCC and it is embedded as a standalone priority within her Police and Crime Plan. As well as holding Northumbria Police to account there are many things the OPCC does to help prevent hate crime, as well as reduce and repair the harm it causes, which are as follows:

- **Show Racism the Red Card** – the OPCC funded an educational programme focussed on hate crime prevention, which was delivered to over 8,380 primary and secondary school children addressing and challenging prejudice and discrimination. The workshops help to raise awareness and resilience around hate crime, racism, sexism, religious discrimination and bullying as well as helping children understand the British Values.
- **Newcastle United Foundation** – the OPCC funded workshops to be delivered in primary schools on discrimination and hate crime. The programme tackles discrimination across the region, helping to raise awareness of hate crime, racism, sexism, religious discrimination and bullying as well as helping children understand the British Values.

### **2.4 Commissioning of Services**

We embed an EDI lens across all our commissioning processes to ensure that commissioned services not only meet the diverse needs of our communities but also advance equity, accessibility and inclusion, reflecting our core values and strategic priorities, and ensuring that every commissioning decision contributes to fair and responsive services and outcomes – below are some examples of this:

- **Supporting Victims Programme** - Over £3.5 million has been allocated through various funding streams, including the Supporting Victims fund and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Fund, to enhance specialist victim support services across the region. This investment enables organisations such as the Angelou Centre, Connected Voice and Pride Action North to deliver tailored professional support, including practical, emotional and therapeutic provisions.

Funding is targeted to meet the needs of marginalised communities, including specialist services for each sex, black and minoritised groups, people with disabilities, young and older people, as well as those from the LGBTQIA+ communities. We ensure comprehensive support for all victims of all forms of hate crime, providing practical, emotional and therapeutic assistance.

In addition, the above funding streams have helped create over 30 Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA), Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA) and Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) posts, supporting ethnic minority victims, victims with learning disabilities and LGBTQIA+ victims. These combined funding streams have enabled our commissioned services to deliver support to around 30,000 victims.

The OPCC rigorously monitors equality, diversity and inclusion within our commissioned services through our grant management framework, requiring providers to demonstrate how they identify barriers to access, extend their reach into under-represented and marginalised communities and co-design provision using victims' insights. This ensures victims with protected characteristics and those who experience multiple forms of disadvantage have access to safe, culturally competent and trauma-informed support tailored to their individual needs. Some examples of our specialist support services are outlined below:

- **Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund** - the OPCC secured over £570,000 to expand specialist support for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse, including counselling, play therapy and therapeutic groupwork for 683 children across Northumbria. Many of these children faced additional disadvantages or had vulnerabilities with 14% recorded as disabled, 22% from ethnic minority communities and 10.5% aged five and under at the time of exposure to abuse. In 2025, five commissioned providers also delivered joint parent-child interventions and wider parenting engagement, enabling 351 children and young people, and their non-abusing parents, to work together to rebuild relationships and support recovery from domestic abuse.
- **Stalking and Harassment Training for Professionals**- The OPCC has strengthened its response to stalking and harassment by commissioning Paladin to deliver stalking awareness training to over 50 front line practitioners and professionals; as well as providing our region with an Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC) for high-risk victims (DA and non-DA related stalking). Our funding has also enabled Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) to provide an Independent Stalking and Harassment Advisor (ISHA) for standard and medium-risk victims of non-DA related stalking.

These provisions ensure a specialist, trauma-informed offer for all victims, including those with disabilities and from ethnic minority and LGBTQIA+ communities and the ISAC and ISHA roles are fully integrated within the Northumbria Stalking Intervention Programme (NSIP) - a multi-agency response to high-risk stalking supported by the OPCC and the VRU.

To address emerging trends among young people, the OPCC has also commissioned the

Alice Ruggles Trust to deliver stalking awareness assemblies in schools, with 2,941 young people receiving this input in 2025.

- **Connected Voice – Specialist Hate Crime Advocacy Service** – since 2017, Connected Voice has provided a vital service through its nationally recognised Specialist Hate Crime Advocacy Service, offering expert guidance and compassionate support to victims of all forms of hate crime. The service assists individuals in navigating the complexities of the criminal justice system, while promoting confidence, resilience and recovery. In 2025, more than 100 victims received tailored support, demonstrating Connected Voice’s ongoing commitment to empowering victims, championing equality and strengthening community cohesion across Northumbria.
- **Jewish Women’s Aid** were commissioned to lead culturally sensitive outreach and education within the Jewish Community. This project helps to raise awareness of sexual violence and domestic abuse, empowering victims to seek specialist, trauma-informed support in a safe and understanding environment. This initiative demonstrates the Commissioner’s ongoing dedication to inclusion and equality, ensuring that every victim has access to the support they need.
- **Community Counselling Co-operative** have continued to provide specialist counselling for male victims of sexual abuse. Having worked with over 100 new clients in 2025 they have built support groups alongside one-to-one work resulting in continued improvements in clients’ anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and ability to cope and recover from sexual abuse. This work has continued to support men from diverse ages and sexual orientations via the Supporting Victims Programme our office has supported the organisation to increase accessibility to their services for men from Black and minoritised backgrounds.
- **Local Youth Fund** - Dedicated to young people only this initiative provides them with the opportunity to propose innovative ideas that prevent serious violence and knife crime and help create safe neighbourhoods and stronger communities. An example of work funded is outlined below:
  - Gen D (a Sunderland based community interest company focusing on empowering young people through digital art, creativity and technology) received funding to engage with marginalised young people using digital art and technology to create a permanent Digital Hub. The funding will enable Gen D to promote the Hub on Tiktok and Instagram to ensure accessibility for their target service user demographic. The Hub will include a breakout area for anyone who may feel overwhelmed, a prayer space, wheelchair accessible ramps and secure, well-lit parking. The project has also ensured that staff members speak several languages, which will help young people for whom English is not their first language.

### 3. Our Workforce

**Objective 2:** We will 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 including volunteers, and has opportunities for learning and development, ensuring staff and volunteers are knowledgeable about the diverse needs of our local communities. While ensuring that staff are trained in key aspects of equality and diversity, as the examples below demonstrate.

#### 3.1 Recruitment and Retention

##### Workforce development and support

The OPCC continues to prioritise the development and support of our staff as a key enabler of equitable and effective service delivery and an engaged, committed and competent workforce. Some examples of how we have supported our staff and provided development opportunities are outlined below:

- **Equality Impact Assessments Training** - In 2025, all staff undertook training on Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), to ensure a consistent approach to assessing fairness across our policies, practices and decisions. This has strengthened the organisation's ability to identify and mitigate disparities, ensuring that equality considerations are integral to strategic and operational decision-making.
- **Lunch and Learn** - Equality and inclusion are now embedded across all learning and development, with staff regularly attending Northumbria Police 'Lunch and Learn Hour' sessions on topics such as women in the workplace and Black History Month. As a result, staff have greater awareness of barriers faced by under-represented groups and are better equipped to create an inclusive workplace and deliver fair, accessible services.
- **Inclusive and Supportive Ethos** - The OPCC continues to lead by example in fostering an inclusive workplace culture through reasonable adjustments, flexible working and family-friendly arrangements. Regular supervision and personal development discussions ensure staff feel supported, valued and empowered to contribute fully to the OPCC's strategic objectives and to the wider ambition of delivering fair and equitable outcomes for all communities across Northumbria. Staff were given the opportunity to participate in Northumbria Police's Leadership Development Training, supporting their personal growth and contributing to a more inclusive and empowered workplace culture.
- **HIVE Staff Working Group** - The OPCC has established a dedicated staff working group – the HIVE working group, bringing together colleagues from every service to strengthen belonging, autonomy, openness and transparency across the organisation. This group represents the workforce and has an open-door approach for staff to share ideas, opportunities and challenges. The group plays a vital role in fostering a more connected

and collaborative workplace culture, where colleagues can deepen their understanding of each other's workstreams and identify opportunities to work together. By enhancing awareness, collaboration and mutual support, the group is helping to increase the overall impact and efficiency of the OPCC's work, ensuring that inclusivity and respect are embedded in the way we operate.

In 2025 the HIVE Working Group:

- Delivered two staff led engagement events to capture insights on how to enhance the already positive workforce experience and acted swiftly on the insights. Some examples include introducing more in-person meetings across the OPCC to enhance accessibility and connection and the 'Hive Five' system to recognise and reward colleagues for a range of things from support to teamwork.
- Commenced work on refreshing the vision and values of the Northumbria OPCC
- Launched the OPCC 12@12 series, a short bitesize lunch time input from colleagues on their workstream to help raise awareness of the wider OPCC and partnership areas of business.

## **Workforce Profile**

To increase the diversity of our workforce, we continue to ensure that job adverts are inclusive and are targeted at underrepresented groups.

We ensure equality of opportunity by reviewing equality monitoring information on a regular basis, in line with our statutory requirements. We analyse the information relating to the OPCC and for all new positions that we recruit to, we ensure that through our recruitment process we have a diverse workforce which reflects our communities. The equality profile of the OPCC as of December 2025 is as follows:

- Total staff: 42
- Women: 76%
- Ethnic minorities: 5%
- With a disability: 7%

## **Northumbria Police Recruitment Programme**

Northumbria Police's Positive Action Programme offers additional support and insight throughout the recruitment process. The programme continues to provide opportunities to those who would not ordinarily consider Northumbria Police as an employer of choice, whether in relation to culture, perception 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 2025, a total of 2,897 police officers and police staff are female, which is 47.2 % of the workforce. During the same period, 171 declared their ethnicity as being from an ethnic minority background, which is 2.79% of the workforce, 589 declared that they are disabled, which is 9.6 % and 372 are gay, lesbian or bisexual, which equates to 6.06% of the workforce.

## **3.2 Our Volunteers**

### **Independent Custody Visitors**

In Northumbria, we are committed to ensuring that police custody environments reflect the principles of fairness, respect and inclusion. Our gold standard Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) scheme is central to this commitment, with dedicated community volunteers making unannounced visits to monitor the treatment, rights and welfare of detainees, ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

This year, ICV's took part in an Annual Training Seminar with Durham and Cleveland OPCCs which focused on anti-racism and unconscious bias, this was supported by the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA). They also completed online training on Human Rights, Autism and neurodiverse conditions to enhance awareness of diverse needs. Through this ongoing investment in learning and inclusion, the ICV scheme continues to promote fairness, accountability and public confidence in policing, aligning closely with the OPCC's wider EDI objectives.

### **Appropriate Adults**

The OPCC continues to deliver an excellent partnership with Sunderland University through the Appropriate Adult scheme, supporting vulnerable individuals in police custody. Fully trained students assist young people and adults (18+) experiencing poor mental health, learning disabilities or neurodiversity, ensuring their rights and entitlements are upheld. The scheme reduces waiting times and provides timely support when it is needed most, while maintaining a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. In 2025, the Appropriate Adults provided support on more than 455 occasions, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve.

## **3.3 OPCC Equalities Steering Group**

The Equalities Steering Group has been instrumental in advancing the OPCC's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. By championing EDI across all directorates, providing informed advice and supporting the implementation of the new EDI strategic objectives, members have helped to embed fair, equitable and inclusive practices into everyday work. Their leadership and role as key points of contact for colleagues have strengthened organisational awareness, accountability and a culture of respect and inclusion across the OPCC.

In 2025 the Equalities Steering Group delivered lunchtime events which celebrate our diverse workforce and commitment to EDI, these were themed around PRIDE, Diwali, World Mental Health Day, White Ribbon Day (ending men's violence against women and girls), and Wear Red Day to challenge racism.

## 4. Data, Insights and Strategic Commitment

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

Demonstrating our strategic commitment the 2025 – 2029 Police and Crime Plan recognises the importance of addressing hate and cohesion, that is why for the first time there is a standalone priority dedicated to preventing hate, building cohesions and improving the victim experience through the criminal justice system.

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 External Advisory Panels (EAP)

The five External Advisory Panels are aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and community relations. These panels involve key partners and community representatives to ensure that the police's engagement strategies are effective and inclusive. They open police practices to communities for closer examination, with a view to communities providing constructive oversight and challenge, which is used to improve overall service delivery.

#### Police Powers External Advisory Panel

In support of the PCC's commitment to transparent and proportionate policing, the Police Powers EAP provides independent scrutiny of police use of force and stop and search. The Panel comprises members from a wide range of communities across Northumbria, bringing diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

Through systematic review of body-worn video footage and structured engagement with Northumbria Police, the Panel offers informed challenge and constructive feedback to enhance operational practice. Its work promotes fairness, integrity and accountability in the use of police powers and contributes to continuous improvement in line with the OPCC's equality objectives. The insights generated by the Panel continue to strengthen public confidence and support the delivery of equitable policing across all communities.

One such example from the Panel feedback led to earlier activation of Body Worn Video (BWV) during police encounters, strengthening scrutiny of how the police exercise their powers. Targeted measures have delivered a sustained increase in BWV usage, enhancing transparency, improving understand of the context of stop and search and supporting efforts to reduce disproportionality in policing practice.

#### Violence Against Women and Girls External Advisory Panel (VAWG EAP)

Through the VAWG EAP the OPCC continues to obtain valuable 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.

The VAWG EAP also provides valuable insights to improve police response and mitigate disparities in how VAWG crimes and victims are dealt with.

The panel representation has been enhanced throughout 2025 and includes women from a range of diverse backgrounds and incorporates 'victim voice' accounts to capture a wide range of experiences. The EAP identified the following learning points for Northumbria Police:

- Consideration that the wider context of a case (not just looking at the incident itself) has been sought to help have a better understanding of the case and the possible victim impact.
- To ensure that the use of all relevant orders has been considered as a method of prevention.
- Ensure good use of communication and appropriate language with victims.
- Consideration of pathways for perpetrators to reinforce possible intervention and prevention methods.
- Some positive policing actions were highlighted by the panel in relation to some cases showing good victim support and being connected with relevant support services.

### **Custody External Advisory Panel (EAP)**

The Custody and Detention panel was formed to review areas of police custody within Northumbria Police, which are of interest to the local community and where feedback from the panel identifies good practice as well as identify improvement needs within local policing. EDI is important in policing and police custody to ensure that interactions are fair for all members of the community. This in turn promotes a culture of respect, accountability and trust which is essential for policing.

**The Baird Report** was a key area of work that the panel considered. In August 2023, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, commissioned Dame Vera Baird KC to carry out an independent Inquiry into the treatment of women and girls who had been arrested and taken into police custody in Greater Manchester. The report contained accounts of those detained and strip searched and made several recommendations in respect of Greater Manchester Police to address the issues found as part of the enquiry.

Whilst acknowledging that this enquiry didn't relate to Northumbria Police, the PCC it felt it important to benchmark our force against the report's recommendations. With input from the Police Detention Advisory Panel the Custody EAP's has focussed on this since September 2024, dip sampling case studies relating to females, males, young people and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) members of the community. Northumbria Police updated Panel members on their current custody provision against the relevant Baird Report recommendations.

Northumbria Police have commissioned work in relation to strip searching where self-defined ethnicity isn't given by the person, for example detainees enter custody and may be too violent or unwell the officer will record the ethnicity using their professional judgement, this categorisation then cannot be changed at a future date.

In 2025 the panel members agreed that Northumbria Police were correct, proportionate and a reasonable use of force was used in all cases reviewed, with it being evident that de-escalation is used as a matter of course in the first instance

### **Out of Court Resolution (OOCR) EAP**

The OOCR EAP has representatives from a range of statutory organisations such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Youth Offending Services (YOS), His Majesties Court Services – Magistrates and judiciary for both youths and adults, and the regional core victim service - Northumbria Victim and Witness Service. The OOCR EAP applies an EDI lens to ensure that there is no disparity or disproportionately in how Northumbria Police utilise out of court resolutions.

Each panel independently reviews a random selection of 24 anonymised cases, 12 adult cases and 12 youth cases, that have been resolved by use of an out of court resolution to determine whether the method of disposal is considered appropriate. In reaching their decision they consider the views of the victim and the offender, the offence type and seriousness and previous offending history. They also consider the Northumbria Police rationale for the OOCR decision, the outcome and any potential alternative options that may have been available. In the latter part of 2025, the panel also started to consider the ethnicity of the offenders to help identify disparities; data and insights around this will be available in the 2026 report.

The cases throughout 2025 considered stalking, harassment and sexual offences, domestic abuse, serious violence, and volume crime types such as criminal damage. Overall, the panel felt there was clear consideration of victim's views and needs, and 74% of all cases were deemed to have been appropriate. The panel observed that there were some missed opportunities in use of Community Resolution as a disposal, particularly in the youth cases, this has been raised through the PCC's scrutiny framework and Northumbria Police have implemented measures to quality assure the use of all Community Resolutions so as to ensure that they are appropriate for each case.

### **4.2 Police Powers Data**

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have continued to recognise Northumbria OPCC for its exemplary approach to addressing disparities in stop and search. Featured within the APCC's Race Disparity Toolkit as a model of good practice, this national recognition reflects Northumbria's continued leadership in promoting fair, transparent and evidence-based policing.

For Stop and Search, the performance data in the 12 months to December 2025 highlighted:

- Through scrutiny we observed an overall increase in the use of stop and search across all demographic groups from 10,256 in the 12 months to December 2024 to 10,422 in the 12 months to December 2025.
- The use of Body Worn Video (BWV) during stops has improved, increasing from 90% in the 12 months to December 2024 to 92% in the 12 months to December 2025.

- The disparity ratio in stop and search for ethnic minority individuals has increased from 1.2 in the 12 months to December 2024 to 1.3 in the 12 months to December 2025, with a similar increase seen for black individuals from 1.9 in the 12 months to December 2024 to 2.1 in the 12 months to December 2025.

Northumbria Police remain firmly committed to understanding and addressing disparities in the use of stop and search. To ensure these powers are exercised fairly, lawfully and with transparency, Operational Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) within each Area Command undertake regular reviews of stop and search activity. Their oversight helps to confirm legitimacy, identify good practice and highlight opportunities for improvement.

In addition, internal scrutiny panels in Northumbria Police continue to play a key role in promoting accountability and learning. These panels review both performance data and BWV footage to provide valuable insight and assurance on the proportionality and fairness of police actions. Together, these measures demonstrate the Northumbria Police's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and to maintaining the confidence of the communities it serves.

For the Use of Force, the performance data up to December 2025 highlighted the following:

- The proportion of force used against ethnic minority subjects (7.2%) aligns closely with their representation in the population (7.9%), based on the 2021 census data.
- The disparity ratio for force used against black subjects remains static at 1.7%. while it stands at 0.9% for other ethnic minority subjects.
- In 2025, 1.1% use of force incidents resulted in injuries to black individuals, compared to 1.2 % in 2024. The proportion of black individuals among all persons injured remained constant in both years.

### **4.3 Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) underpin the OPCC's commitment to fair, inclusive and evidenced-based decision making. They ensure that our policies, practices and decisions actively promote equality and inclusion, meet the diverse needs of our communities and staff and do not advertently disadvantage any protected group. This approach directly supports the OPCC's revised equality objectives and reinforces our organisational commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all areas of work.

EIAs completed to date demonstrate overall excellent integration of EDI into all areas of the OPCC business. Accessibility continues to be a guiding principle, with regular reviews helping to maintain fairness, transparency and compliance with equalities legislation. Strong collaboration with partner agencies has enhanced understanding of community needs, enabling the co-design of more responsive and inclusive services. This has resulted in greater community trust, improved representation and more tailored support for diverse groups.

We are continuing to improve our approach to targeted communication and promotion to marginalised communities, strengthening translation and advocacy support and enhancing staff capability in applying EDI principles consistently and effectively. Insights from our EIAs

directly inform future workforce development, commissioning priorities and community engagement planning.

While there is no legal requirement to publish EIAs, the OPCC is committed to transparency and accountability. To provide assurance and confidence in our decision-making, summaries of EIAs with a direct impact on communities are published on the OPCC website.

#### **4.4 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. Recent data and initiatives show progress in several key areas as outlined below:

##### **Victims' Satisfaction**

We continue to support Northumbria Police's workstream that specifically looks at victim satisfaction as this demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement with a clear focus on ensuring no disproportionality in the level of service provided and satisfaction with their whole experience.

Northumbria Police's victims' satisfaction data is showing that in the 12 months to December 2025, 75% of crime victims reported satisfaction with the overall service provided by Northumbria Police, marking a 2% decrease from the previous year. This positive trend extends across various aspects of victim interaction, including initial contact, response times, and treatment by police officers and staff. In her scrutiny role, the PCC continues to work with Northumbria Police to strive for better outcomes for victims of crime and the victim satisfaction working group within Northumbria Police continues to work to gain a greater understanding of the factors impacting satisfaction levels.

##### **Domestic Abuse within LGBTQIA+ Communities**

The OPCC has asked the local domestic abuse perpetrator services to gather information on LGBTQIA+ perpetrators using a new data tool, developed in collaboration with The Drive Partnership and Durham University. This aims to inform the future development of specialised interventions for LGBTQIA+ perpetrators of domestic abuse.

##### **Victim Voice**

The OPCC works with commissioned services to identify the barriers that prevent victim-survivors of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) from diverse communities from engaging with the police and the criminal justice system. The resulting learning, including effective practices that reduce these communication barriers and promote engagement, is shared with specialist RASSO officers to drive continuous improvements in how these victim-survivors are supported and involved, ensuring that those directly affected by RASSO from marginalised groups or underrepresented communities are offered support in a way that meets their specific needs.

## **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

The OPCC remains committed to tackling and preventing VAWG as demonstrated through our VAWG strategy. Whilst men and boys can experience violence and abuse, we acknowledge that these crimes and behaviours are primarily committed by men against women and girls. Over 90% of those prosecuted for domestic abuse, stalking or sexual offences are male. Our Supporting Victims Programme has provided funding to specialist services across the region to support women and girls who have experienced VAWG.

The Local Criminal Justice Board has also recognised the high levels of Domestic Abuse reported across the region and are therefore focusing on this as a theme for the criminal justice service and relevant partners. This includes a multi-agency approach with the aim of improving the experiences of victims of domestic abuse when navigating the criminal justice process to prevent victim withdrawal and secure more domestic abuse convictions.

## **Public Surveys and Consultations**

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 2025 to help shape our understanding and help us deliver the best services to our communities.

For example, in January 2025 the office also launched its annual public consultation asking residents whether they would support an increase to their police precept contribution. The consultation was promoted and undertaken via a range of accessible methods such as online or telephone based, a letter inviting residents to have their say was also sent to over 102,000 households, as well as being promoted on social media, through our email database and in the local press, a printed version of the survey was also available. The data and responses helped inform the PCC's decision making around the precept proposal presented to the Police and Crime Panel.

## **Strategic Needs Assessment**

The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) provides a comprehensive analysis of serious violence across the Northumbria Police force area, examining its scale, nature and causes, and outlining actions to reduce its impact. Developed with Community Safety Partnerships in 2025, the SNA dashboard supports evidence-based decision-making and the design of targeted interventions, updated every three years with interim reviews as needed.

The assessment explores changes over time and key risk factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, gang activity, county lines, drugs and domestic abuse, with an explicit focus on equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that prevention and reduction efforts are fair, inclusive and responsive to needs of all communities.

## **Victim Needs Assessment**

In preparing for our next round of the Supporting Victims Programme (SVP), a region wide victim needs assessment was completed to help identify needs, demands and trends. An instrumental part of this needs assessment included the launch of several surveys to obtain direct feedback from our region's victims (including children and young people) and victim service providers to ensure we captured the voices of the victim.

Some of the key findings from the victim needs assessment identified the region's Black and Minority Ethnic communities were the least well-served in terms of available provisions and that there was a gap in the available support for teenage victims of domestic abuse. This data and information helped shape the Supporting Victims Programme funding priorities (including domestic abuse, Hate Crime and children and young people) and as highlighted in section 2.4 *Commissioning of Services*, enabled the commissioning of culturally specific services and services who have reduced their age limits to support those young people suffering teenage relationship abuse.

## 5. Working with Partners

**Objective 4:** We will work with partners to put systems in place within wider business frameworks (shared and owned by us, our leaders, our workforce and partners) that will help identify and address disparity, disproportionality and inequality, enabling a more effective public service provision.

The OPCC works with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to drive progress on the equality objectives, as demonstrated below.

### 5.1 Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)

Criminal justice partners jointly monitor and address disproportionality across communities, using data and lived experience to identify and reduce disparity, eliminate discrimination and improve confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) so people feel safe and fairly treated in their local communities and are served by a CJS that is fair, consistent and transparent.

We know that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls and has significant impact on children and young people. The Domestic Abuse Retention Plan was developed to support victims of domestic abuse engaged in the criminal justice process and to:

- Help streamline and provide clarity in communication with victims so they receive consistent, regular updates about their case
- Working as a cohesive criminal justice partnership to reduce the length of time the justice process takes
- Create confidence that support services can fulfil the needs of victims as their recovery needs change over time
- Understand what a good or better criminal justice outcome is for each victim so that justice is delivered and their experience of the criminal justice process is positive and consistent.
- build trust and confidence in the criminal justice process by promoting successful CJS outcomes and experiences and the support available to victims and witnesses.

### 5.2 Myth-busting Resource

The three Police and Crime Commissioners in the North East (Durham, Cleveland and Northumbria) worked with the North East Migration Partnership to develop and launch the Migrant Myth Busters leaflet – a concise, evidence-based resource that challenges common myths about asylum seekers, refugees and forced migration. It provides clear UK and regional data on issues such as crime, welfare, housing and employment, and equips communities, practitioners and local leaders with trusted information to support more informed debate, reduce tensions and strengthen the region's wider efforts to tackle hate crime and promote cohesion.

### 5.3 Women's Safety in Public Places (WSiPP) Partnership

Building on the successful delivery of Home Office Safer Streets programmes partners including all six community safety leads, Northumbria Police and Voluntary Community organisations have committed to continue their collaboration through a dedicated WSiPP forum. The forum will share learning, agree local activity and develop co-ordinated regional approaches to preventing violence against women and girls in public spaces. It prioritises male allyship, the promotion of gender equality and the application of a public health approach to secure sustained cultural and behavioural change across communities.

Some examples of ongoing WSiPP work during 2025 are:

- **Active Bystander Training** – delivered to over 350 delegates, with Change Leaders delivering training from multiple organisations across the region, with local media coverage by BBC Look North promoting engagement of men on the courses as allies who can play a role in tackling gender norms and sexism that are the root causes of VAWG.
- **Women in Policing Research** - The OPCC commissioned Northumbria University to work with Northumbria Police to understand women's pathways, recruitment and retention within leadership roles. Looking at career progression and development experiences of women police officers and civilian staff and evaluating reasons why women leave the profession, it will make recommendations to inform the design of interventions and organisational practices.

The findings will be brought together with those from three other force areas and will be used to inform Positive Action programmes of work that aim to advance opportunities for women in policing. The force is seeing record numbers of women joining and the PCC aims to ensure that pathways to progression and professional development are given equitable resources to ensure male and female officers are on the same footing, so that we can continue to attract officers from all walks of life.

- **Newcastle Safe Haven and Community Engagement Vehicle** - the van was refurbished to enable it to be deployed for longer periods around the night-time economy and to make it a more welcoming space for those who access it – often at a time of vulnerability. The vehicle now has a dual purpose, also serving as a community engagement vehicle that can be used outside of the night-time economy in community spaces across marginalised areas and communities of Newcastle to enable Northumbria Police to build trust and confidence with those who are seldom heard.

### 5.4 White Ribbon

The OPCC is a White Ribbon 'supporter' organisation meaning that we have committed to making positive changes in our culture, systems and communities to address the root causes of men's violence against women and girls.

Our commitment to addressing gender-based violence is evidenced with 40% of our staff being either White Ribbon Champions or White Ribbon Ambassadors. They use their influence, for example in meetings or across various social media platforms, to promote gender equality and prevention work to tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls. They promote the White Ribbon message and inspire men to think differently and in challenge social norms around gender-based violence to create a world where everyone is safe, equal and respected.

## **5.5 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

The OPCC continues to lead a coordinated partnership approach to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB), one of the most frequently reported concerns within our communities. ASB can significantly affect people's sense of safety, belonging and wellbeing. Through collaboration with a wide range of partners, the OPCC is driving forward inclusive, evidence-based solutions that promote community cohesion, resilience and improved quality of life across our region. Some examples of the work we have co-ordinated are outlined below:

### **Hotspot Action Fund – Project Shield**

The PCC secured over £1.8 million of Home Office funding to tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) and serious violence in 14 hotspot areas across Northumbria. Locally known as Project Shield, this initiative brings together Northumbria Police, Local Authorities, British Transport Police, Nexus, Stagecoach, and wider transport partners to deliver high-visibility patrols and community reassurance.

The hotspot areas include some of the most diverse communities in Northumbria, and this work is helping residents feel safer where they live and work.

Some highlights of the project's impact in 2025 are outlined below:

- In 2025 Project Shield has contributed to a 19.6% reduction in ASB in comparison to the previous year (23/24).
- Over 25,000 additional patrol hours delivered by police and partners and over 90,000 community engagements, building trust and confidence within communities.
- Intelligence gathered during patrols enables the police and partners to adapt and improve services, ensuring they meet local needs and expectations.
- Detached youth workers offering support and diversionary activities, including creative initiatives like DJ-led sessions in high youth footfall areas.
- Safeguarding in the night-time economy, with street marshals improving access to Safe Haven spaces in Sunderland and Newcastle where women in particular can feel more unsafe.

Project Shield is a true example of partnership working making our communities safer, stronger, and more inclusive

## Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Case Review, coordinated by the OPCC since July 2022, provides a vital safety net for victims and communities experiencing persistent anti-social behaviour, ensuring their concerns are reviewed and acted upon. The process is designed to be as accessible as possible, with multiple activation routes and increased support from commissioned specialist victim services, helping to remove barriers faced by people with protected characteristics. The ASB Case Review is actively promoted in communities.

In 2025, there were over 85 requests for a review and approximately 25% of cases involved victims who felt targeted because of a protected characteristic. The ASB Case Review is used to drive improvements in practice across local partners not only in how ASB cases are dealt with but also across the wider EDI landscape. The data and insights relating to victims who felt targeted because of a protected characteristic are as follows:

- Age – 19%
- Disability – 10%
- Gender Reassignment – 10%
- Pregnancy/Maternity – 5%
- Race - 19%
- Religion/belief – 0%
- Sex – 14%
- Sexual orientation – 10%
- Undisclosed/prefer not to say 14%

The data highlights the crossover between hate crime, non-crime hate related incidents and ASB. Identifying these trends has allowed agencies to ensure the correct recording of reported incidents and has led to cases where legal action has been identified at panels to tackle hate crime in our communities. In 2025 a link has been made between areas of high deprivation and the ASB Case Review applications which will be explored further in the future.

## 6. Looking forward 2026

In 2026 we will ensure EDI is at the heart of our delivery against the 2025-2029 Police and Crime Plan (PCP), which has specific priorities around hate crime and community cohesion as well as VAWG.

We will review our equality objectives to ensure they are still relevant and meeting the needs of our communities and we will continue to deliver our EDI business plan that focuses on how we will work collaboratively to deliver the refreshed objectives and expected outcomes:

### **Working with our Communities**

- Engage with communities so that they participate and influence decision making, including those from underrepresented groups.
- Work with partners to plan and deliver activities that foster good relations amongst communities.
- Effective governance and accountability of Northumbria Police on behalf of our communities.

### **Our Workforce**

- Strive for greater diversity in our workforce which will broadly reflect the communities we serve, widening the scope of staff demographics that we collect beyond the statutory minimum and publish this to promote our strong commitment to EDI.
- Enhance workforce equality and diversity to ensure we have an inclusive culture where our staff can flourish.
- Provide a range of accessible learning and development opportunities to support staff in achieving our equality objectives and outcomes.

### **Data and insights and Strategic Commitment**

- Produce comprehensive equality data to plan and assess the impact of decisions.
- Ensure informed decision making through the effective use of equality analysis, equality impact assessments and scrutiny.
- Ensure our refreshed equality objectives are integrated into service and policy planning.

### **Working with Partners**

- Work with partners to deliver our key priorities of the equality objectives.
- Work with partners to apply an EDI lens to all performance management frameworks and reporting elements.
- Strengthen EDI focus when commissioning new services and improving reach and accessibility within existing grants and contracts.

If you have any feedback, please contact enquiries on [enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk)