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COMMISSIONER**

# Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

**Police vetting**

February 2026

## Vetting

In addition to the inclusion of priorities from my Police and Crime Plan I also hold the Chief Constable to account where there are national or local matters that may cause community concerns and therefore lead me to examine and challenge Northumbria Police on that specific issue.

I sought assurance from the Chief Constable regarding the robustness, integrity, and outcomes of Northumbria Police's vetting practices, particularly in light of recent concerns nationally about police standards and vetting failure in the Metropolitan Police's vetting system. In response to this:

- Northumbria Police confirmed that all core requirements of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) were met during uplift recruitment, with two temporary national context exceptions:
  - Social media checks were not conducted until late 2021 due to a lack of national clarity, but a now robust process is fully embedded.
  - Employment references were paused (2022–2024) due to limited value but reinstated following updated national guidance.

The force exceeded APP expectations by introducing additional measures for transferees including interviews and applying Management Vetting rather than Recruitment Vetting, regardless of role. Vetting refusal rates rose from 6% (2021) to 15% (2024), in contrast to reductions seen elsewhere, indicating strengthened scrutiny.

- The national data wash identified 19 individuals requiring further assessment. All cases were reviewed and resulted in proportionate action, including conduct findings, business interest reviews, and disclosure of associations. No unmanaged risks remain.

- Northumbria Police operate comprehensive systems to identify and manage staff criminality risks, including daily local database checks, cross-referencing across vetting, Professional Standards Department and counter-corruption records, and structured triage of all cautions and convictions. A recognised national gap exists where other forces may not notify Northumbria Police of external investigations, but the forthcoming Continuous Integrity Screening programme (expected 2026) will resolve this. All cases are assessed proportionately with clear mitigation processes.

- Unlike the Metropolitan Police's uplift-era vetting panel, Northumbria Police has not overturned any vetting refusals outside statutory appeal processes. A Vetting Disproportionality Working Group considers declines for learning purposes only, not decision reversal.
- Northumbria Police remain confident that uplift recruitment standards were robust and that more recent increases in interventions stem from cultural reform, not declining recruitment quality.

I am assured that Northumbria Police's vetting, risk management and cultural oversight arrangements are robust, compliant with national standards, and subject to continuous improvement. The force has taken proactive steps to enhance integrity processes both during and following the national Police Uplift Programme.



**SAFER STREETS  
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



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