



SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

**Priority 1: Engaged and
Responsive Police Force**

April 2025

Building greater trust and confidence in Northumbria Police - Engage with local communities to understand their needs so that everyone feels confident to report crime and share concerns.

Question 1

How confident is the Chief Constable that her strategic and local approach to community engagement ensures that NP understand and respond to need?

The focus of priority one is to build greater trust and confidence in Northumbria Police. The Chief Constable and I both seek to ensure that the force understands the needs of local communities and that those communities feel heard. It is important that communities have the opportunity to raise concerns with Northumbria Police and that they feel confident to report crime. In outlining her approach, the Chief Constable advised me that:

- Locally based Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Engagement deliver effective two-way engagement, working with partners and community groups to provide bespoke proactive engagement, promoting police activity and developing cohesion. To further improve this approach a full review of the role and make up of Northumbria Police's Community Engagement Teams is ongoing, resetting their terms of reference and role profiles.
- During the disorder in 2024 the force identified gaps in understanding the needs in some of the communities that we serve. The force is currently working on a refreshed Engagement Strategy to enhance activity across a range of partners and communities.

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has carried out national inspections in relation to the disorder in Summer 2024. The first report identified that there was insufficient understanding of tension within communities nationally. The updated Engagement Strategy will ensure we are addressing the recommendations within the report.
- Use of the engagement platform 'Next Door' will provide targeted, localised, communication of key messages delivering relevant updates and prevention, enhancing the force's ability to understand community sentiment and concerns. To start receiving updates through this service, you can download the app, Nextdoor, or sign-up online at www.nextdoor.co.uk.

I am confident that the above areas of work, and the approach encompassed within the engagement strategy and delivery plan will provide improved confidence that the strategic and local approach to community engagement ensures we understand and respond to need. I will continue, in future scrutiny meetings, to understand progress in this area.

”

Building greater trust and confidence in Northumbria Police - Respond to crimes such as domestic abuse, hate crime by listening to service experts and seldom heard voices.

Question 2

What approach is taken to engage with people with lived experience and how is this learning used to improve service delivery?

I want to know that the force is listening to victims and adjusting practice to give the best possible service. I sought assurance from the Chief Constable that there are opportunities to do this and to understand how this is embedded into practice:

- The Public Insight Team conducts telephone surveys with victims of various incident/crime types to understand their experiences and to identify opportunities for service improvements.
- A telephone survey is also conducted with victims who receive Cope and Recovery support from the Northumbria Victim and Witness Service (NVWS) for the same purpose.
- Over the last two years, 8,000 surveys have been completed via SMS messaging relating to experiences with the force’s 101 telephone service, Response Policing Teams, Telephone Investigation Unit and Crime Investigation Teams.
- The table below summarises the satisfaction results from these surveys:

Issue Type	Indicator	12 months to March 2024	12 months to March 2025
Volume Crime	Initial Contact	91%	95%
	Response Time	79%	85%
	Actions Taken	69%	73%
	Follow-up	61%	66%
	Treatment	91%	92%
	Whole Experience	73%	77%
ASB	Actions Taken	69%	69%
	Follow Up	48%	46%
	Whole Experience	71%	72%

PRIORITY 1: ENGAGED AND RESPONSIVE POLICE FORCE

Issue Type	Indicator	12 months to March 2024	12 months to March 2025
Domestic Abuse	Actions Taken	82%	82%
	Follow Up	86%	89%
	Treatment	95%	95%
	Whole Experience	86%	88%
Hate Crime	Actions Taken	66%	67%
	Follow Up	59%	60%
	Whole Experience	75%	76%

- Dashboards summarising the results and verbatim comments from these surveys are circulated to each area command. This is also available to everyone in the force through the force’s intranet page. Feedback also forms part of local performance management conversations taking place within Area Commands and departments.
- Themes and measures arising from the surveys are monitored and discussed at strategic governance level within force at the Trust and Confidence and Strategic Performance Board.
- Data informs the activity of an internal victim satisfaction working group, formed to drive improvement in this area, and is shared within other appropriate groups such as the OPCC VAWG External Advisory Panel and an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) steering group.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) seek permission from victims to complete a short survey at the conclusion of their case. Any learning is shared and relayed to the service managers for broader consideration.
- The force is focused on bringing real-life stories and perspectives into the learning environment to enhance understanding of subjects from both internal and external sources.
- In January 2025, the force ran an initial one day lived experience workshop entitled ‘Keeping Sexism and Misogyny in the Spotlight: The Lived Experience Sessions’. The session included real, anonymised, stories and examples sourced from our force regarding Sexism and Misogyny in the workplace, helping to challenge assumptions and promote inclusivity. Actors brought the scenarios to life with learning taken from the room to form short, medium and long-term goals.
- The force added the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) team into the Organisational Development and Culture portfolio. ‘Lived experience’ will be a core strand in this portfolio. This will specifically address any systemic inefficiencies at a strategic level and enhance learner experience at a tactical level.
- There is a gap in terms of understanding the impact of this work and the force’s need to capture the action taken resulting from feedback. In turn, the force needs to understand the impact of this action, so that we can be assured it is used effectively and to improve service delivery and performance so that no opportunities are missed.

From my perspective further reassurance was provided in the latest HMICFRS PEEL inspection report, published in May 2025. Northumbria Police was recognised for innovative practice in this area, stating that it, “effectively gets feedback from victims to enhance and improve its services to protect vulnerable people”. I am delighted with this outcome and that the force is demonstrating an ongoing commitment by identifying how it seeks to monitor impact and utilise all opportunities.



Building greater trust and confidence in Northumbria Police - Have a well-trained and diverse workforce that is reflective of local communities.

Question 3

What is the priority focus in relation to training and how does the Force monitor what impact training is having on service delivery?

The force has previously told me about training that is being implemented to focus on service improvement. I have sought to understand how they are monitoring the impact this is having and to ensure that their training focus is addressing the most relevant issues. The following assurance was provided by the Chief Constable:

- Training priorities are identified through identifying local performance issues and following national training requirements. The Learning Design Team works with business leads and subject matter experts (SME) to develop suitable resources and learning experiences which are delivered through protected learning days (PLDs).
- Current training priorities include:
 - Raising Investigation Standards (RIS)
 - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
 - Operational Systems and Leadership Development
 - Core operational competencies: Public and Personal Safety Training (PPST) and Public Order training.
 - The force has a five-day leadership course for all first and second-line leaders.
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) training is a priority, with a full day's training in the initial student officer course and mandatory training packages for all in the organisation.
- The force has developed three e-learning packages for all public facing officers which focusses on the areas of highest police complaints; 'Delivery of Duties and Services,' 'Improving our Communication' and 'Use of Force'.
- The force has committed to roll out the College of Policing Code of Ethics training programme. This training programme is being complimented by current force roll- out of "Upstander Training" which is designed to empower the organisation to challenge unprofessional behaviour.
- Although this training may lead to some initial increases in internal reporting and conduct matters. Longer term, it is expected that there will be a reduction in the number of recorded complaints thus demonstrating an improvement of standards within the workforce.
- Staff surveys consider how well training has been received with performance improvements monitored in specific business areas where training has been focussed.

**Building greater trust and confidence in Northumbria Police -
Ensure that all officers act in an ethical and professional
manner and are fair, impartial and trusted by all.**

Question 4

What are the recurring themes of complaints received by the force - how do you identify and target activity where standards and service can be improved? Are there currently any priority areas?

It is imperative that the public has trust and confidence in our force and they will be treated fairly. Where issues with service delivery are identified, the Chief Constable and I need to be assured that both individual and wider force factors are understood, and action taken to improve standards. The following update was provided:

- The top three areas of complaints both nationally and for Northumbria are:
 - Delivery of Duties and Services
 - Individual Behaviours
 - Police Powers, Policies and Procedures
- Complaint data is monitored via a data dashboard, allowing Professional Standards Department (PSD) to analyse data to identify themes across the force, departments, teams, and down to an individual level. Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) data supports the comparison against most similar forces and nationally.

- Complaint trends are shared within the force People Intelligence Meeting, as well as via bespoke inputs and reports to Area Commands and departments. This also includes identifying individuals with high numbers of complaints to ensure a reflective conversation takes place with supervision to prevent further occurrences and provide support and training where appropriate.
- Emerging trends are also fed through to the Learning and Prevention Team within PSD to shape and target inputs and circulated material. Complaint data and trends is strategically reported through the force's Culture and Leadership and the Trust and Confidence Board.

I will continue to monitor standards through the Key Performance Indicators report and through further questions where necessary, to ensure that the public is receiving a good service from the force.

”

Getting in touch - Carry out investigations with a focus on victim care and safeguarding, and keeping victims informed in a timely way.

Question 5

How confident is the Chief Constable that NP can retain the progress made in relation to the improved resolution rates and does this work reduce the number of high harm cases open for significant periods of time (longer than 12 months)?

The force has been making positive progress in raising investigative standards. I asked the Chief Constable to confirm that this progress will be sustained to ensure we continue to improve positive outcomes for victims. We have identified that some cases have been open for long periods of time and I wanted to understand if this progress will improve this situation.

- The Chief Constable has assured me she is confident that Northumbria Police can retain the progress made in relation to the improved resolution rates. The force is confident that further improvements are achievable given the ongoing work in this area.
- The force continues to solve more crime, with a consistent increase in the positive outcome rate for all crime types and better use of Out-Of-Court-Resolutions. The positive outcome rate for the 12 months to February 2025 is now 16.7%, which is higher than the national average at 13.5%.
- The force has increased the amount of recorded crime that it allocates for investigation. This increase equates to 6,000 more crimes for further investigation per year.
- Evidence shows that for some high harm cases, the amount remaining open for longer than 12 months is increasing. As of 1st April 2025, the force has 19% of all Rape and Serious Sexual Assault (RASSO) related crime cases that have been open for over 12 months. The same period last year indicates that only 15% of RASSO cases had been open beyond this period. There is further work to be done to progress this area of work to reduce investigation timelines.
- The improvements should have a greater impact on 'volume' crime and as such the force currently has less 'Volume' crime open beyond 12 months than last year (10% in 2025 and 13% in 2024). There is confidence that this will reduce further as the improvements are embedded.
- National challenges remain to recruit and retain new investigators. The force utilises a range of initiatives to tackle this issue including professional support when undertaking the National Investigators Exam, attraction events and close links to the NPCC Investigators Wellbeing Group.
- The emergence of new crime types linked to digitalisation (such as crypto- currency and on-line crime) alongside better identification of county lines and exploitation, contribute to the growing demands of the force investigation functions. Advances in technology, automation of systems and the sharing of best practice around the UK, will ensure the force is future ready.



**SAFER STREETS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



**SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**