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NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

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

November 2025

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Engage with local communities to understand their needs so that everyone feels confident to report crime and share concerns.

I want to ensure Northumbria Police are effectively engaging with our communities to understand their needs and concerns so they can be as responsive as possible. I asked the Chief Constable for an update on the refresh of the Engagement Strategy Delivery Plan.

Question 1

In April, you told us that the force wide Engagement Strategy Delivery Plan was being refreshed, can the Chief Constable provide an update in relation to this?

The refreshed Community Engagement Plan has incorporated lessons learned from the 2024 summer disorder, insights from various internal departments and as well as the public. The refreshed plan is structured around three key elements:

1. **Rolling Force Engagement Plan** – Force wide engagement activity is coordinated quarterly enabling it to be proactive. Each quarter proposed themes (subject to final agreement) will be considered, some examples may include:
 - a. **Operations** - Communicating how they are tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, aligned and informed by seasonal plans.
 - b. **National Events** – Supporting events such as Black History Month.
 - c. **Performance / Service** – Sharing successes and how these are communicated to communities and partners.
 - d. **Internal Drivers** – Promoting recruitment and workforce priorities, including online reporting and agile front offices models.
 - e. **Transparency and Openness** – Exploring opportunities to “open ourselves up” to the public and partners, such as inviting observers to training sessions, operational briefings, or exercises.
2. **Tension Monitoring** – identifying and understanding potential for shifts in community feelings through strengthened internal collaboration between departments reviewing incidents, particularly hate crime and other potential trigger events, and supporting engagement and intelligence development to ensure appropriate engagement. Daily reviews by Gold Commanders, monthly Tactical Coordination and Community Tension Assessments reviews ensures engagement plans remain responsive and effective.
3. **The Role of the Community Engagement Team (CET)** – each of the three CET teams cover two Area Commands and are aligned to Neighbourhood Inspectors in Northumberland, Sunderland, and Newcastle resulting in more localised focus and initiatives. Currently, thematic communities such as asylum seekers, LGBTQ+, the travelling community, and broader Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) are being mapped, and each CET Sergeant will be assigned a force-wide portfolio.

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Engage with local communities to understand their needs so that everyone feels confident to report crime and share concerns.

The public contact me to raise any concerns they have about Northumbria Police; recently my office has had an increase in contact about how quickly Northumbria Police respond to their complaints. I have sought reassurance from the Chief Constable about what they are doing to address this.

Question 2

My office is seeing an increase in contact about timeliness of response to police complaints. Can the Chief Constable provide an update on progress to reduce this waiting time?

- A sustained increase in complaint volumes over the past three years to an average of almost 300 a month (January to October 2025) has resulted in delays in contacting complainants and resolving issues informally. The number of Complaints Service Advisors (CSAs) has increased from 4 to 5.5 full time equivalent (FTE) with 1 supervisor, this has contributed to a gradual improvement in response and resolution times over the last six months and is expected to continue.
- **Increased administrative support** – administrators make initial email contact with all complainants within 2 working days, managing expectations around timescales. They also complete data entry and other administrative tasks which allows CSA to concentrate on direct engagement and complaint resolution. Whilst this change has only been in place for six weeks, its impact cannot be statistically evidenced yet, but it does seem to be having a positive impact.
- **Average CSA contact time** – from April 2025 to September 2025 this has improved and is now at 25 days, which is a reduction from 33 days between October 2024 and March 2025.
- **Informal complaint resolution rate** – this is now at 85% of all complaints received which is a significant improvement from the pre 2020 the rate of around 50%. Whilst resource intensive, it's vital for effective complaints management, the unit will review how best to balance timeliness whilst maintaining a high level of resolution at point of contact.

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Deploy officers and respond to you in the best way with response and investigations being a mix of face to face, video, and telephone conversations.

GoodSAM is one initiative that Northumbria Police has introduced to improve how they respond and interact with their communities and victims of crime. It's a digital solution to enhance and modernise the quality and accessibility of the service to the public. It enables a range of functions including consultations, statement taking, and missing person investigations, offering a flexible blend of face-to-face, telephone, and video-based interactions. I sought reassurance from the Chief Constable that it's improving services to communities, confidence in reporting and improving investigations.

Question 3

Initial assessment of the GoodSAM implementation – do you have any assessment yet of the value of this tool in improving services to communities, confidence in reporting or improving investigations?

Although it is still early days, the initial indicators suggest GoodSAM is positively influencing service delivery and user experience. Improvements in response times, high levels of user satisfaction, and operational flexibility point to its potential.

- **Usage** – there have been almost 3000 successful force-wide deployments over the past six months, a temporary usage decline over the summer due to abstractions provided valuable learning to inform future planning and ensure consistent service delivery during time of peak demand and lower resource availability. Grade 3 appointments were the largest share of GoodSAM usage at 61%, followed by Grade 4 Domestic Abuse cases at 30%, and Grade 2 incidents at 9%.
 - Response times - Since GoodSAM implementation, there have been improvements across several categories, suggesting that it may be contributing to more timely and effective responses in meeting targets (though further analysis is needed to confirm its influence and full impact):
 - Domestic Abuse related incidents improved by 7.9%
 - Grade 1 (immediate) urban response times improved by 3.5%
 - Grade 2 calls improved by 3.6%
 - Grade 2 Vulnerable calls improved by 7.4%
- **User Satisfaction survey** - over 7,000 responses between March and September 2025 reported positive results where over 95% found it easy to use, were satisfied with the video call response times, and would further recommend it. There was praise for the convenience, safety, and effectiveness of remote engagement, particularly

the ability to interact discretely from home, which along with professionalism of the Virtual Response Officers (VRO) is contributing to increased reassurance and confidence in the service.

- **Areas for development** – include occasional technical issues, limitations with file uploads, and refinements to the user interface, all feedback is being actively reviewed and service delivery enhancements are in progress, with exploration of how GoodSAM involvement in incidents can be captured, tracked and analysed.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - It is too early to draw definitive conclusions about GoodSAM's overall impact, but further data collection, consistent performance tracking, and review will help fully understand its impact on enhancing service delivery, reporting and public confidence and investigative effectiveness.
- **Examples of promising practice:**
 - Retail crime victims welcome the large file sharing capability, enabling swift and direct transfer of CCTV footage and evidence to Police, which supports timely investigations, early offender identification and increased reporting confidence. Video transfer requests increased by 6% in September 2025 compared to August 2025.
 - Officers are actively using the 'Location Request' feature within GoodSAM during Missing Person investigations to help pinpoint individual's whereabouts. September 2025 saw a 7% increase in location requests compared to the previous month.

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Carry out investigations with a focus on victim care and safeguarding, and keeping victims informed in a timely way.

Victim care and victim experience are very important to me, I sought reassurance from the Chief Constable that there are mechanisms in place to ensure better victim communication, regular reviews of their level of risk and that compliance with this is monitored.

Question 4

In relation to victims, what mechanisms are in place to ensure they are kept informed and their level of risk is assessed throughout the journey and what processes are in place to monitor compliance with this?

Victim Care - Support and Risk Management

- The Northumbria Victim & Witness Service (NVWS) employs a 'Cope and Recovery Support' model, offering strategies to help victims manage the impacts of crime. The Officer in Charge (OIC) carries out a Victim Needs Assessment (VNA) with each victim so that NVWS can ensure the Cope & Recovery Plan is tailored to their individual needs and risk levels, including referrals to specialist services and practical assistance; performance is monitored through a software system.

Keeping victims informed

- Under the Victims' Code of Practice (VCoP) Right 6 requires that Investigative updates (e.g. No Further Action, Bail, Arrest, Charge) are provided to the victim. Currently the OIC can delegate Right 6 updates to NVWS, with updates recorded and dip sampling compliance monitoring. From February 2026 OICs will be solely responsible for Right 6 updates, the incoming Niche RMS will mean outstanding updates are automatically routed to the OIC's task list with persistent reminders until completed. This will eliminate any duplication where NVWS contact the victim only to find the OIC has already updated them.
- VCoP Rights 8 and 9 require the victim be given court updates. NVWS are assigned when the offender is charged and are responsible for keeping victims and witnesses informed of court hearing dates, outcomes, and attendance requirements. NVWS address barriers to attendance (e.g. transport, childcare) and provide post-trial updates including explanation of outcomes. They also keep victims' needs under review to identify additional Cope & Recovery requirements, reassess special measures, and arrange further Victim Personal

Statements. Any new risks are escalated to the OIC or Safeguarding Department.

Monitoring and Compliance

- NWVS Support Officers are audited monthly through the Performance and Development Review process and NVWS Team performance as well as Right 6, 8 and 9 compliance is reviewed at the ACC Performance Meeting and through the multi-agency Victim and Witness Sub-Group of the Local Criminal Justice Board(LCJB).
- Currently NVWS Support Officers consistently deliver timely updates to victims.

Example - Operation Aegis:

- Domestic abuse (DA) victims' risk levels are regularly reviewed by a dedicated OIC from their local Neighbourhood Policing Team who considers police and partner-held information to identify patterns in DA incidents. High-risk DA cases are supported by Safeguarding teams, external Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) services, or Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). If further risk is identified it is escalated to the OIC or relevant safeguarding department. Compliance is monitored through the Neighbourhood Prevention Area Command Meeting structure.

Future Developments

- Criminal Justice, in collaboration with internal stakeholders, is currently reviewing victim journeys across various crime types with the aim of identifying service gaps, reducing duplication, and improving efficiency. This work will inform the first phase of a broader project to implement a future Victim's Hub.

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Have a well-trained and diverse workforce that is reflective of local communities.

As a result of the disorder of 2024 which highlighted the importance of public order capability, coupled with the ongoing policing of protests within the force area I sought reassurance that the force has sufficient public order capability and is supporting those officers and staff who may be repeatedly exposed to public order incidents.

Question 5

In the SPR report to August Scrutiny meeting you confirmed that the training programme in respect of public order capability would increase the force profile to 720 by the end of 2025. Are you still on target to meet this and reflecting on the challenges currently being faced in respect of policing protests how does the force support those officers and staff who might be affected by exposure to repetitive incidents of public disorder?

Public order capability

- Public order capability has tripled over the past 12 months due to coordinated efforts in force, the target by December 2025 is 673 trained officers, but with 600 officers currently trained and the anticipated end of year profile at 693 they are on target to easily meet the target. The profile is expected to reach 731 by February 2026.

Wellbeing of officers

- Officer wellbeing at events is a key focus of the public order assessment and strategic intentions for all public order and public safety events. The Northumbria Police welfare van is an accessible resource during events, with further contingency options linked to Oscar Kilo (the national police wellbeing service) and the Salvation Army has provided hot food support through their mobile catering unit at recent significant incidents.
- Through resource planning and management, where resourcing allows, the same officers are not used for repeated incidents, and each incident is debriefed for any learning and resourcing considerations. Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) provision and wider trauma support arrangements linked to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) and Oscar Kilo are in place for all officers and are seen as best practice.

- It is recognised that officers policing protests are more at risk of being assaulted on duty, so Op Hampshire is available, which ensures police and staff get the tailored support they need. Consideration is being given to broadening Op Hampshire to include officers and staff who are targeted with verbal abuse in relation to a protected characteristic.
- In response to last summer's protest activity, the needs of officers and staff were captured via surveys, engaging with staff associations, support associations and the Federation so that the force could respond to concerns, and for the first time listening circles were used to create an environment for officers to directly raise their concerns. Internally the welfare capability for police is viewed as very positive.



**SAFER STREETS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



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