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NORTHUMBRIA  
**POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**

# Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

**Priority 4: Violence  
Against Women and Girls**

July 2025

**Police and Crime Plan commitment: Work with partners to make sure women are safe and feel safe from sexual violence and harassment in public places including transport systems and in the night-time economy.**

**Question 5**

What learning have you taken from the enhanced activity in the night time economy (NTE) in recent years to help women are safe and feel safe from sexual violence and harassment in public places and how will this influence and strengthen your strategic plans?

**Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) continues to feature highly on the national agenda with the current government committing to halving violence against women and girls in the next decade, as part of its new 'Safer Streets' mission. In my scrutiny of this priority, I have sought reassurance around a range of areas that will collectively support this ambition. The government has confirmed there will be no continuation of Safer Streets funding however, there are opportunities to deliver targeted activity through the current Project Shield provision and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. I wanted to understand how the force will use learning from the Safer Streets work moving forward.**

- Several NTE focussed activities and operations exist with the overarching aim of reducing harm to women and girls and safer spaces.
- Learning is constantly being taken from these activities, alongside the other agencies involved. For example, monthly and annual analysis is undertaken in relation to the users of the Safe Haven Van so mechanisms and tools of support and signposting can be adjusted accordingly.
- Wider learning from the activity and operations in the NTE has focused on the need to ensure the communication to the public, and the demographic which operations are tailored towards, is right. Promoting success with figures does not necessarily enhance a feeling of safety, which is something police need to be mindful about.

- The last formal evaluation of Op Cloak, police initiative focused on enhancing safety in the city's nightlife by deploying both uniformed and plain-clothed officers, was two years ago, and part of Home Office funded activity. Newcastle Area command is currently working with Newcastle University to discuss evaluation of several NTE operations.
- We have also taken learning from other forces. Specifically, Avon and Somerset, Wiltshire and the Met in relation to the walk and talk initiative which will be piloted in Newcastle. This will enable us to obtain community feedback to enable a multi-agency approach to the targeting of those areas where people feel unsafe.

There is an understanding that we need to better promote our activities. Northumbria Police created a VAWG page on their website with shared details about their VAWG strategy, the stalking and harassment action plan and initiatives and operations we have across the force.

We have also shared learning with other forces and promoted our pro-active operations in preventing VAWG with Merseyside, Greater Manchester Police, Durham Constabulary, Thames Valley Police, West Yorkshire Police and Jersey Police have spent a weekend with us in the NTE.

**Police and Crime Plan commitment: Work with partners to increase confidence to report VAWG crimes to the police through campaigns and awareness raising.**

**Question 6**

In March 2025, we welcomed the narrative in relation to the increase in the use of Clare’s Law, are there any other areas of your response to VAWG crimes where you have a similar trajectory that would provide confidence to communities that NP take this seriously and are contributing to the government ambition to half VAWG?

**The force has reported a substantial increase in the use of Clare’s Law. This provides reassurance in relation to messaging and public confidence, but I wanted to understand what other areas of business may be contributing to halving VAWG.**

- The force has seen huge increases in applications in relation to Clare’s Law rising from 450 in 2018 to over 4000 in the last year. Despite these rises, the force has very good overall performance with ‘Right to Know’ and ‘Right to Ask’ applications with responses given in a timely manner, far quicker than most forces nationally.
  - Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) are involved in the process and have been introduced with great success, providing additional support for the person at risk.
  - Northumbria is one of 5 forces selected to trial the ‘Raneem’s Law’ initiative on a funded basis this year. This approach enables direct support and training to control room staff. The early indications show good uptake of communication staff training, enhanced data sharing between police and partners and key learning from other force approaches. A 6-month review is being commissioned and will be shared with the Home Office. The Home Secretary recently visited Northumbria to see this project in action.
  - GoodSAM and Rapid Video Response are technological tools which provide additional avenues of quick and bespoke support to VAWG victims. The force is utilising them across several functions and points on the victim’s journey. The force is keen to learn from other forces approaches and is scoping further expansion.
  - Area Command Paladin Single Points of Contact provide a pivotal link to victims of stalking, aiming to improve our response on case progression, victim engagement, victim satisfaction and improved outcomes.
- Governance of domestic abuse investigations is through Area Command daily management meetings. The force currently has a positive outcome rate of 15%, an increase on the previous 12-month period. There is also a slight increase in the conviction rate compared to the previous period and puts us above the national average in our report to conviction rate.
  - The force has also seen an increase in the use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN’s) and an increase in Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO’s) granted at court.
  - The force sits well below the national average for Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference repeat rate and has continued the reduction for the second year in a row and now sit at 26% compared to 31% nationally. Victim satisfaction for Domestic Abuse remains high at 88%.
  - All frontline officers have completed mandated, full day, Domestic Abuse matters training.

I am pleased with the range of activity being delivered by the force to reduce VAWG offences and protect women and girls. In the recent PEEL inspection, the force was praised for how it obtains feedback from victims to enhance and improve its services to protect vulnerable people. The outline of our position nationally, shared by the Chief Constable, is evidence that the force is making progress in this area. There are, however, further areas for improvement, one of which is in relation to the use of orders, and therefore, my next question focussed on this.



**Police and Crime Plan commitment: Ensure effective use of all available protection and prevention orders to safeguard victims of domestic abuse, sexual offences and stalking and harassment.**

**Question 7**

How is the force ensuring that the use of VAWG related orders continues to increase and that they are enforced and breaches dealt with?

**Although the force uses orders effectively in some areas of work, the PEEL Inspection identified an Area for Improvement (AFI) for the force in relation to making more use of preventative orders to safeguard victims. I wanted to be reassured that activity was underway to address this and ensure that all opportunities are taken to protect victims. The Chief Constable provided the following update to provide this assurance and I will continue to focus on this area as part of my scrutiny programme:**

- Northumbria Police identified this issue prior to it being identified as an AFI in the HMICFRS 2035-25 PEEL Inspection Report. The force had already established a dedicated working group with monthly meetings to discuss progress and issues relating to the management and enforcement of orders.
- A dedicated resource was approved on a 12-month pilot to coordinate activity to increase use and enforcement of orders. The resource ensures collation and oversight of internal and external orders, provides consistency, supports the wider workforce in educating and increasing awareness, and coordinates enforcement activity.
- The force is exploring how automation can be used to streamline the notification and allocation of orders to Area Command Inspectors, which will aid performance management.
- Further dedicated resource has been allocated with the Legal Services Department, to support the application process and increase throughout.

**Police and Crime Plan commitment: Work with partners to provide the best response to stalking and harassment ensuring that alongside support for survivors, we are also targeting priority perpetrators causing the most harm.**

**Question 8**

Whilst not all VAWG related, there have been several recent ASB Case reviews where stalking and harassment has not been identified. What learning is being taken to strengthen your approach to identifying all forms of stalking and harassment?

**All applications to activate an ASB Case Review come through PCC office for initial assessment. We have identified a recurring theme and I want to ensure that this is being addressed within force to maximise the opportunity to provide the correct support for victims at the earliest opportunity.**

- In 2024 Northumbria Police led a task and finish group with partners including all 6 Local Authorities to redraft the Case Review process to enhance the service we give to victims.
- Learning has been taken from cases at both a local and strategic level. Some have identified instances of reports that would meet the stalking/harassment criminal reporting threshold. In these cases, feedback is given to individual officers and supervisors for the area in which the victim lives. Additional investigative and safeguarding activity is instigated where service delivery failure or risk is identified.
- A comprehensive Stalking and Harassment e-learn package has been developed in line with national best practice. This is mandated in Protected Learning Days over a 9-week period from 14/4/25. Business Assurance has been built in to determine an increase in knowledge and confidence levels post training.
- The Orders Sergeant reviews all open Stalking Protection Orders applications where further information has been requested by the Legal Department, to expedite the application process and have orders granted at the earliest opportunity.
- The Northumbria Stalking Interventions Programme (NSIP) is a multi-agency project involving collaboration between police and partners. This pilot raises awareness of stalking within the region, upskills staff, addresses victim support and responses to stalking and ensures an enhanced multi-agency response to the highest risk stalking perpetrators. Having a specialist stalking service in our region puts us ahead of the curve compared to many other areas in the country. Funding for the NSIP trial has been extended for a further year which will provide improved evaluation of delivery, benefits and outcomes.
- The force, in conjunction with the Alice Ruggles Trust and OPCC, has delivered an initial stalking and harassment input at Sandhill School, Sunderland. The aim was to increase awareness, aid pupils in identifying stalking and harassment, and provide signposting to the support available. Further school deliveries are planned as part of the Alice Ruggles Trust School Assemblies Programme, with 18 schools signed up and 13 assemblies already delivered.
- OPCC funding for Workforce Development will enable Paladin to deliver face to face stalking training to a cohort of 25 members of the organisation across a range of departments
- The stalking super complaint recommendation is to ensure the identification and investigation of stalking. The force will ensure that solutions relating to stalking are built into the new force operating system prior to its implementation in early 2026.

## PRIORITY 4: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

- Our current dedicated stalking resources are Independent Stalking & Harassment Advocates (ISHA) and Paladin Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC). This existing capability is funded by the OPCC and was extended for this financial year ensuring support to victims and links with officers, identifying opportunities for Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs).

As all requests for ASB Case Review activations come through my office, we will be able to continue live monitoring of the prevalence of cases where stalking and harassment may be a component of the behaviour. The interventions highlighted by the Chief Constable should ensure that more cases, where stalking and harassment is a feature, have this identified at an earlier stage and provide a strong level of response and support to victims of stalking and harassment in Northumbria.

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**SAFER STREETS  
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



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