



SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

Priority 5: Hate Crime and Community Cohesion

September 2026

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Engage with communities to understand and identify community tensions, ensuring that policing feels a part of those communities, rather than something that is happening to them.

Question

Is the Chief Constable confident that the community cohesion monitoring groups are operating effectively across each of the six local authority areas?

Northumbria Police have established Community Cohesion Monitoring Groups (CCMGs) across the force area, which are operating effectively, with each area adapting its structures to local need and threat levels. While the maturity of the groups varies, all six local authorities now have established processes for monitoring community tensions, sharing intelligence, and coordinating multiagency responses.

Northumbria Police noted that local concerns differ by area and referenced examples including misinformation and it was emphasised that arrangements were deliberately bespoke to reflect differing community needs and threat levels across local authority areas.

Common strengths across all areas include:

- Regular multiagency attendance, including policing, local authorities, education, health, asylum services, universities, and the victim commissioned services.
- Clear governance structures, with most groups using action trackers, agreed terms of reference, and escalation routes.
- Growing emphasis on early identification of tensions, particularly where misinformation, online narratives, or geopolitical events may undermine cohesion.
- Improved use of hate crime data, prevent information, and partner insight to inform reassurance activity.

It is great to see that all Community Cohesion Monitoring Groups have been established and working well in partnership, identifying the differing needs of local areas and communities. It is vital that these groups continue to communicate and respond effectively, and I will continue to monitor these moving forward

”

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Work with communities and partners to encourage reporting of hate crime and make it easier and safe to do so.

Question

How are Northumbria Police using their own and partner intelligence to proactively identify emerging community tensions and hate related risks?

Northumbria Police use a combined approach through Community Engagement Teams, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Intelligence Teams, local authority insight, university and education reporting, housing information, and community feedback gathered through the Community Cohesion Monitoring Groups.

The Community Engagement Teams work more closely with the Force Intelligence Bureau to ensure intelligence from community engagement, partners, open-source information and national issues are brought together. This provides a clearer and more broad understanding of community tensions linked to emerging local and national issues.

This means Northumbria Police:

- Increase visibility and reassurance in sensitive locations.
- Monitor misinformation and social media narratives that may escalate tensions.
- Convene extraordinary meetings or Joint Engagement Groups and deploy targeted engagement where required.
- Analyse hate crime trends and emerging patterns.
- Share real-time partner updates from schools, universities, housing providers, victim service organisations, and faith communities.

This enables early detection, coordinated intervention, and reassurance to communities when tensions begin to emerge.

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Make communities and individuals active partners by building trust and listening to voices such as the Police Powers External Advisory Panel, the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board and the Northumbria Police Hate Crime Board.

Question

How are seldom-heard communities involved in shaping the force's response to hate crime and cohesion and how do they demonstrate that their input leads to change?

Northumbria Police engage with seldom-heard communities through structured co-production, independent scrutiny, and multi-agency mechanisms that translate community insight into tangible operational and cultural change.

• Co-produced training and resources

Training is co-developed with community groups, third sector organisations, and social housing providers to identify reporting barriers, cultural sensitivities and gaps in police understanding.

Northumbria Police's Community Engagement Team have co-developed refreshed Hate Crime training with Nexus, ensuring learning reflects victims lived experience on public transport and addresses known barriers to reporting.

Targeted training with hospital trusts has strengthened understanding of Outcome 22 in Hate Crime contexts, improving recognition, recording, and victim support within healthcare settings where under-reporting is prevalent.

Findings are integrated into officer training, service-user resources, and operational guidance, ensuring seldom-heard voices shape expectations of empathy and investigative quality.

• Hate Crime Panels and developing external scrutiny

Hate Crime Panels are attended by community and system partners, review real cases with a focus on victim experience and language. Themes directly inform updates to Northumbria, Information and Knowledge (NIK) guidance, investigate practice, and early investigative decision-making.

• Safe Reporting Centres and accessibility improvements

Expansion and enhancement of Safe Reporting Centres is driven by community feedback on language, accessibility, and trust. Steps include

translated materials, accessibility standards, and trauma-informed training for partner staff.

The Gateshead Enhanced Report Centre model, co-designed with local partners and offers specialist support to those less likely to engage and is viewed as a template for wider replication.

• Internal awareness and cultural change

Hate Crime Champions support sustained internal culture change, bringing learning from community conversations into teams and promoting understanding of protected characteristics and intersectionality, including complex areas such as philosophical beliefs and trans rights.

• Digital co-production and practical innovations

Collaboration with partners has delivered an online hate crime assessment tool to support recognition and reporting across agencies and communities.

Digital reporting options are being piloted in response to community requests for clearer, simpler routes to report.

Co-produced changes include updated NIK investigation guidance, child friendly/community friendly awareness materials, digital reporting pilots, strengthened partnership training for migrants, disabled people, LGBTQ+ communities and faith groups, and refined use of Out of Court Disposals in mental health settings to support victims and staff while preventing unnecessary criminalisation.

I challenged Northumbria Police in relation to the uptake and performance of the Enhanced Reporting Centre to ensure that these are being utilised with improvement needed on communication and visibility of promoting them.



Police and Crime Plan commitment: Ensure officers and staff are trained to communicate empathetically with victims of hate crime and where needed connect them with victim support services.

Question

How confident is the Chief Constable that Northumbria Police are treating hate crime victims with the correct response and making them feel their crime is a priority

Northumbria Police have strengthened both quality and consistency of its response to hate crime victims through a multi-layered approach focused on trauma informed practice, improved investigative standards, learning from victims and communities, and strengthened cross sector tension monitoring.

- **Improved investigative standards and governance**

Each area command has a designated Hate Crime SPOC at Chief Inspector level to drive consistency in supervision and investigative oversight.

Crime desk actively reviews hate crime investigations, providing early intervention and feedback to officers and supervisors to improve quality.

- **Trauma informed victim support**

Insights from recent victim consultation and professional forums have been embedded into training and guidance, strengthening expectations around empathetic, timely, trauma informed contact throughout the victim journey.

Specialist training co-produced with third sector partners and community organisations reinforces understanding of cultural barriers and cumulative harm. Content is built into continuing professional development.

- **Accessibility and safe reporting**

Community Engagement Teams deliver partner training to improve identification, referral pathways and early engagement with vulnerable communities.

- **Operational intelligence**

Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) provide proactive scanning for emerging issues, repeat victimisation threats and risks linked to high profile events, enabling timely safeguarding and targeted tasking.

- **Ongoing improvement focus**

Improving consistency and timeliness of victim updates and case progression information remains an operational priority, with actions in train through local governance and the Hate Crime Board.

Race Action Plan

Northumbria Police is reviewing its progress against the national Police Race Action Plan, which aims to improve trust, fairness, representation and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The force is currently completing a national self-assessment called the Maturity Matrix, a full report of this is due later in the year.

While workforce diversity has increased modestly since 2020, Black representation within the force remains consistently low and continues to be significantly underrepresented compared to community demographics. The review highlights that stop and search disparities have slightly increased for Black and minority ethnic communities, and Black individuals who are arrested remain less likely to be charged and more likely to receive no further action than their White counterparts. Although some of the data is limited by small sample sizes, these findings indicate that further work is required to understand and address disparities across policing services.

PRIORITY 5: HATE CRIME AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Positive progress has been made in areas such as hate crime investigations, victim satisfaction, workforce inclusion initiatives and community engagement. However, the force acknowledges that engagement with Black communities specifically has been limited and that more strategic, evidence-based approaches are needed to strengthen trust, confidence and legitimacy.

The assessment also found that Race Action Plan activity is occurring across the organisation but is not always clearly connected or measured against outcomes. Future priorities include improving communication, increasing engagement with Black communities, strengthening race-focused scrutiny, enhancing training on anti-racism and bias, improving data quality, and ensuring a stronger focus on measurable outcomes rather than activity alone. These priorities will inform the refresh of Northumbria Police's local Race Action Plan following completion of the national Maturity Matrix assessment.

I am confident that Northumbria Police's recognition of the significant impact hate crime has on victims is improving across the force. The Chief Constable and I recognise that there are more improvements to be made in respect of keeping victims of hate crime updated, thereby demonstrating Northumbria Police's commitment to victim care and treating hate crime as a priority.





**SAFER STREETS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



**SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**