



SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

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

October 2026

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Ensure that all officers act in an ethical and professional manner, and a fair, impartial, and trusted by all.

Question 1:

How effectively has the force progressed its plans for implementing and embedding the College of Policing Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Ethical Policing?

The Code of Practice for Ethical Policing places responsibility on chief officers to create and sustain an ethical culture and I wanted to ensure that Northumbria Police is focused on embedding ethical standards throughout leadership, decision-making, workforce processes and organisational culture.

- Northumbria Police has focused leadership development on setting clear expectations for ethical behaviour, accountability, inclusion and professional conduct, recognising that leadership is central to shaping culture, workforce confidence and public trust.
- The College of Policing Leadership Standards are embedded across leadership levels and supported by mandatory leadership training. Northumbria Police has also developed a Senior Leadership Programme, and staff survey results indicate increased support from line managers.
- Ethical leadership is further supported through a mandatory Code of Ethics Learning Programme for all officers, staff and volunteers. The programme develops ethical decision-making, professional responsibility and understanding of the Code of Ethics, Code of Practice and Duty of Candour, helping individuals apply these principles in their daily roles.
- Northumbria Police Ethical reasoning is developed through scenario-based operational training, including Personal and Public Safety Training, use of the National Decision Model and structured debriefs. This helps officers and staff consider bias, proportionality, public perception and ethical implications in operational decisions such as stop and search, use of force and vulnerable victim encounters.
- The force promotes a speak-up culture from day one. The refreshed Upstander/Bystander Programme builds on the face-to-face workshop delivered across the workforce, supporting officers and staff to challenge inappropriate behaviour, discrimination, bullying, harassment and ethical misconduct.
- Northumbria Police has aligned the Code of Ethics Policing principles as the force policing values. The Code of Ethics is therefore fully aligned with leadership expectations, behavioural frameworks, performance processes and recognition arrangements, so that integrity, professionalism and public service are reinforced through routine management practice.
- Northumbria Police's Ethics Advisory

Board provides a formal route for ethical dilemmas, challenge and independent insight into decision-making.

- Within Northumbria, Ethical policing is supported by governance and assurance arrangements that build ethical consideration into decision making, policy development, organisational learning and the force's response to issues of culture, integrity and standards.
- These arrangements also provide routes to monitor and respond to issues of fairness, impartiality and disproportionality, drawing on workforce data, complaints, performance information, equality analysis and scrutiny activity.
- Building and evidencing public trust remains an ongoing endeavour. The force will need to continue assessing confidence through workforce, community and performance feedback mechanisms, ensuring that learning is visible, acted upon and used to strengthen fair, impartial and trusted policing.

Northumbria Police have further work required to evidence organisational impact and demonstrate measurable cultural outcomes, although strong foundations have been established. .

I am satisfied that Northumbria Police's arrangements provide a credible basis for assurance that ethical and professional standards are embedded across the force and I will continue to seek updates on their progression.

Susan Dungworth

Police and Crime Plan commitment: Answer and respond to 999 and 101 calls as effectively as possible ensuring that threat, harm and risk inform prioritisation.

Question 2:

Can the Chief Constable reassure us that Northumbria Police are taking steps that will lead to a consistent and marked improvement in 101 call handling times?

Following raised concerns around 101 call handling times, I wanted reassurance that Northumbria Police are taking steps that will lead to a consistent and marked improvement in 101 call handling times.

Northumbria Police recognise the impact that waiting times can have on public confidence, work is ongoing to better understand the factors contributing to the rise and identify opportunities to reduce avoidable demand and improve demand management. Northumbria Police will take this learning to support future service design, operational readiness and workforce planning, helping to ensure significant increases in emergency demand.

There have been several contributory factors, including increased demand which impacted overall handling capacity and contributed to a reduction in 101 performances. The implementation of Niche records management system has increased the complexity and duration of non-emergency contacts. Significant growth in digital demand across multiple channels of public contact, these additional routes into the service have been created before sufficient demand has been diverted away from traditional channels, and the need to protect 999 performances during periods of surge demand. Together, these factors have reduced available capacity and contributed to longer waiting times.

Northumbria Police have a comprehensive improvement programme being delivered to improve 101 performances.

- In the short term, performance oversight and operational resilience have been strengthened to respond to higher than anticipated summer demand. Alongside enhanced management of performance, attendance and productivity, continuous improvement activity has focused on streamlining processes, reducing handling times and increasing capacity.
- The introduction of a new 101 demand deflection service and the pilot of NOVA, an AI-enabled solution designed to support faster handling times, improve decision-making and enhance the customer journey.
- To strengthen digital capability, including social media automation, enhanced system integration and technology that reduces manual handling and creates additional capacity within the service.
- The development of Virtual Call Agent capability, improved customer relationship management, expanded self-service options and modernised digital engagement channels.

PRIORITY 1: ENGAGED AND RESPONSIVE POLICE FORCE

- The new Cobalt Communications Centre will create a single communications hub and will provide a modern operating environment that supports enhanced supervision, improved training, upgraded technology and closer integration across the contact function.

Northumbria Police will continue to monitor demand, performance, benefits and resourcing through dedicated programme governance to ensure the right investment is being made in both people and technology.

I am pleased to see that Northumbria Police are implementing extensive governance arrangements to oversee the communications transformation activity, and I will continue to monitor this progression as we move forward to ensure that 101 call handling sees a marked improvement.

Susan Dungworth

”





**SAFER STREETS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**



**SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**