

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY

Summary

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY



Alternative formats (including large print and easy read) of this strategy are available upon request.

Please contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria on **0191 221 9800** or email enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk and we will be more than happy to provide additional copies, translations into other languages and alternative formats.



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



**Introduction
from the Police
and Crime
Commissioners**

As the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) for Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland, our vision is of a strong and confident north east region in which all our citizens are safe and feel safe.

We are strongly committed to equality and human rights and we came together to develop this strategy because we are clear that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a serious breach of human rights and both a continuing cause of women's inequality with men and a historic consequence of that inequality. Nor can our vision be realised if half of our population is at risk.

Each of us has consulted the public in order to frame our Police and Crime Plans and so we are aware that VAWG is an issue of great concern to the people of the North East. The figures for domestic violence alone show that here, last year, 25,656 female victims complained to police. This is undoubtedly the tip of the iceberg since most people do not report. This situation is wholly unacceptable and we today take on the challenge of making a positive difference to the lives of women and girls in our region, working with the partner agencies who have helped us to draw together this strategy and to whom we express our gratitude and our continuing commitment.



Vera Baird
PCC for Northumbria

Barry Coppinger
PCC for Cleveland

Ron Hogg
PCC for Durham

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse (DSVA) has a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls. We aim to make access to help more readily available and to improve the responses of the authorities when a disclosure is made. We will strengthen the work done by police and the criminal justice system and support work to change the behaviour of perpetrators. We will tackle the culture which makes VAWG acceptable.

PRIORITY ONE	PRIORITY TWO	PRIORITY THREE
We will promote a strategy for employers - “Domestic and Sexual Abuse and the Workplace” to make sure that anyone affected can find confidential support at work and be helped to safety.	We will encourage the establishment of trained Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions in as many employment, public and private arenas as possible so that there is safe access to confidential help and support in a wide range of locations.	We will develop a plan to promote the value of early interventions in schools and strengthen learning amongst young people about healthy relationships.
PRIORITY FOUR	PRIORITY FIVE	PRIORITY SIX
We will have a series of promotional campaigns aimed at preventing violence against women and girls and also changing the culture at all levels of wider society.	We intend to pilot a domestic violence Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to serve two local authority areas in the region with the aim of encouraging public services and the voluntary and community sector to work together more closely for wraparound support for victims.	We will pilot WWIN workers accompanying response officers on calls to DVSA and trial a Domestic and Sexual Violence Support Worker to advise police on safe action plans.
PRIORITY SEVEN	PRIORITY EIGHT	PRIORITY NINE
We will drive forward the new protocol for Victimless Prosecutions signed by the Chief Crown Prosecutor and the three regional Chief Constables and evaluate the impact of body worn cameras on prosecutions.	We will promote early intervention work with perpetrators and encourage housing associations to consider providing perpetrator accommodation, in the interests of safeguarding women and children to stay securely in their homes.	We will work with partners around a variety of alcohol and drug intervention and treatment programmes and rehabilitation schemes in our policing areas and expect that this work will often overlap with how we tackle VAWG.
PRIORITY TEN	PRIORITY ELEVEN	PRIORITY TWELVE
We will continue to expand our safeguarding training for personnel working in the night-time economy so as to keep vulnerable people safer and will develop Safe Havens where they are needed across the region.	We will establish a Sexual Violence Strategic Forum with a dedicated co-ordinator in Northumbria building on the work of Strategic Forums in the other two parts of the region, which have contributed to increasing complaint and prosecution levels.	We will establish a Police Rape Scrutiny Panel in each police area to scrutinise case files which have failed to attain the requisite evidential level for prosecution or where a prosecution has failed and look for lessons to learn.
PRIORITY THIRTEEN	We will pilot Court Observers Panels to scrutinise rape and sexual abuse trials at Newcastle and Teesside Crown Courts with a view to collating and publishing observations of how these cases are tried.	

Human trafficking and sex work

Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone’s vulnerability. Our primary concern in this strategy is with trafficking for sexual exploitation, which includes sex work, escort work and pornography. Regardless of whatever brings women into sex work it is apparent that they are vulnerable victims. We will work to ensure that the appropriate support and guidance is available to help women exit this way of life.

PRIORITY FOURTEEN	PRIORITY FIFTEEN
We will seek to assess in more detail the extent of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the north east by operating a police helpline for three months to encourage reporting, in particular, where necessary, anonymous reporting and by promoting the helpline with a campaign to raise public awareness of trafficking in particular of domestic trafficking.	We will obtain and make available good practice guidance about exiting to all services that may have contact with women involved in sex work, including police, community organisations and safeguarding teams and we will work with groups such as Changing Lives to expand support work with sex workers across the region.

Forced marriage and so-called honour crimes

At present forced marriage in this country is not a criminal offence but there are civil remedies available to someone who is under threat of becoming a victim and the law is about to change.

So-called honour crimes are where a family or community is punishing the person for conduct which they believe has undermined the ‘correct’ code of behaviour. Violent criminality has no justification.

PRIORITY SIXTEEN	PRIORITY SEVENTEEN	PRIORITY EIGHTEEN
We will help organisations supporting potential victims of forced marriage to gain a better understanding of how to protect them as the law changes and will focus in particular on agencies supporting those with learning disabilities, who can be particularly vulnerable to forced marriage.	We will continue to provide a 24 hour crisis helpline for honour based violence and forced marriage and will make sure that training for DSVA Champions includes awareness of intervening to prevent and tackle these evils.	We will actively promote the ‘Freedom App’, a free phone app which looks like a game and so is not easily detectable but can help young people to understand and make contact with supportive organisations in cases of forced marriage.

Female genital mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this. To date there has not been a prosecution in the UK. Babies, children and young girls suspected of going to be cut or presenting with FGM should be considered as potential victims of crime and referred to support services and the police as appropriate.

PRIORITY NINETEEN

We will raise awareness, in particular with health professionals and across communities and schools, about the illegality of FGM. Police will investigate and prosecute where evidence is available.

Harassment and stalking

The impact of stalking can vary widely depending on the victim's characteristics, past experience, current circumstances, and relationship with the stalker. It is important for key agencies to understand that the way they manage the situation or episode can influence the overall impact on the victim.

PRIORITY TWENTY

We will undertake a marketing campaign across all three forces to encourage victims to report stalking and support national lobbying to strengthen implementation of the stalking law.

Monitoring the Strategy

We will regularly monitor the strategy and delivery plan to help us assess how we are progressing towards achievement of our priorities and identify any new and emerging issues that we must address in any future review of the strategy.

We will also integrate a range of scrutiny mechanisms into the various strands of work so that we can learn as we go, improving implementation on an ongoing basis.

“ We welcome the involvement of local people in the scrutiny of our work and will integrate this in the form of local PCC advisory arrangements and the Police and Crime Panel. ”

Contact details

Helplines for your area

Always dial **999** if you are in immediate danger. For advice or support go to:

Northumbria

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Tyneside and Northumberland Rape Crisis Centres - **0800 035 2794**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

Durham

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington and Co Durham) - **01325 369933**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

Cleveland

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Eva Rape Crisis Service (Redcar and Cleveland) - **01642 835079**

ARCH (Rape Crisis Centre Teesside – Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool) - **01642 822335**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

For general victim support for domestic and sexual violence and abuse and any other crime call North East Victim Support on **0845 277 0977**.

Police and Crime Commissioner Contact Details

Northumbria

enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk
0191 221 9800
www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

Durham

enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk
03000 264 629
www.durham-pcc.gov.uk

Cleveland

pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk
01642 301 623
www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk