

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

A regional multi agency working group of Police, CPS, Health and Education leads will ensure no opportunities are missed to spot and deal with FGM cases and safeguard potential victims.

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

Encouraging victims of stalking

In addition to training Northumbria Police to risk assess, offer advice and keep people safe we also use social media to educate adults and young people about the risks associated with stalking and harassment. In addition to training Northumbria Police to risk assess, offer advice and keep people safe we also use social media to educate adults and young people about the risks associated with stalking and harassment.

Monitoring the Strategy

“ We will continue to develop this strategy working alongside our partners to ensure that our approach to domestic and sexual violence is victim focused and our practice is dynamic. This will mean taking advantage of the opportunities provided by improved technology and changes in legislation and work to keep women and girls safe in Northumbria. ”

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY

Two years on



Message from Vera Baird, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Here is a snapshot of some of the work we have done in Northumbria in the two years since we launched our regional Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all partners who have supported this work and to congratulate my regional colleagues on what they have also achieved.

I hope that you will find what we have been doing on behalf of the women and girls is both interesting and exciting. In some instances we have been able to share good practice across England and Wales, hopefully blazing a small trail nationally.

Significant changes in the last two years include new legislation making coercive control an offence, the creation of a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM and we are working to maximise and use these to our best advantage.

We will now be turning to the future with a view to reviewing and refreshing the strategy and to fulfilling the promise we made that we would enhance the work we do to protect the next generation from suffering as this generation has done. It is important to women and girls and to all the agencies that support them that this strategy can evolve and improve to ever strengthen our work to end the evil of violence against women and girls.

Yours, Vera Baird QC



VERA BAIRD QC
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



RON HOGG
DURHAM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



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 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) acceptable.

PRIORITY ONE

Domestic and sexual abuse and the work place

46 private sector employers, including Ringtons Tea, G4S and Dickson's Family Pork Butchers and over 100 public sector employers have adopted a workplace policy making clear to their workforce that they will get support and help if they are suffering from domestic or sexual abuse.

PRIORITY TWO

Domestic and sexual abuse Champions network

We have 497 workplace domestic and sexual violence champions who bring the workplace policies to life by being trained to offer support and signposting for colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.

PRIORITY THREE

Educating young people about healthy relationships

Educational material on healthy relationships, sexual health and consent and child sex exploitation is now on offer to schools across Northumbria. Two Peer Educators work in schools and colleges talking to young people about healthy relationships and recruiting school based Domestic Violence Champions.

PRIORITY FOUR

Raising awareness and culture change

Our 'iceberg' domestic violence campaign uses a poster to show that domestic abuse is not just physical but includes emotional, psychological and sexual abuse to coerce and control, this should help others to understand and spot the signs. We have delivered our own coercive control training package to all police officers.

PRIORITY FIVE

DV Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

The Gateshead MASH pilot for vulnerable adults now includes a serial domestic abuse victims' hub supporting serial victims with complex needs. Operation Encompass works with schools to provide support to children in domestic abuse households and will be rolled out across Northumbria.

PRIORITY SIX

Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Project

Working in Newcastle, Sunderland and sometimes in Gateshead and Northumberland we deploy specialist domestic abuse workers, with police officers, to answer reports of domestic violence at priority times and weekends. Careful monitoring of demand patterns ensures that workers are available at the right times.

PRIORITY SEVEN

Victimless prosecutions

Northumbria Police now has more body worn cameras so that officers who respond domestic abuse calls can collect and present evidence to prosecute cases without the use of a victim testimony where victims choose not to engage in the criminal justice process.

PRIORITY EIGHT

Early intervention with perpetrators

We can help perpetrators of domestic abuse from across the whole of Northumbria address their behaviour. Partners are commissioned in all three area commands to deliver perpetrator programmes and to date we have 89 referrals.

PRIORITY NINE

Alcohol and drug intervention and treatment programmes

In cases where alcohol and drugs are used to mask the horrors of living in abusive relationships Northumbria Police work with partners to access and develop appropriate interventions and create risk management plans.

PRIORITY TEN

Keeping the night time economy safe

Everyone working in the night time economy should all have been trained to safeguard people who get vulnerable when out for the night. There is some wonderful evidence of this keeping people safe. All 12 regional local authorities have agreed that every taxi must have CCTV as part of licensing conditions. The vulnerability training is being taken on by many other Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales.

PRIORITY ELEVEN

Sexual violence strategic forum

Our sexual violence forum has now been set up and stakeholders agreed a focus of tackling sexual violence through cultural change; improving access to specialist services; and enhancing outcomes for all victims across Northumbria.

PRIORITY TWELVE

Rape Scrutiny Panel

11 volunteers have scrutinised 47 rape cases that failed to obtain the required level for prosecution. Reports of findings have been prepared and my team are in the process of feeding back lessons to be learnt.

PRIORITY THIRTEEN

Court Observers Panel

Volunteers have observed 18 adult rape trials at Newcastle Crown Court. Critical findings have been collated and discussed with Judges and CPS colleagues who have responded to help improve the court experience for victims and other members of the public. We are relaying the results to the Secretary of State who has expressed an interest in this field.

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

Human trafficking and sex work

We are working to raise awareness and improve support networks for direct and indirect victims of sexual exploitation. It was a privilege to speak with the new anti-slavery commissioner at an event organised by Cleveland PCC. Here Operation Sanctuary focuses on victim care and management, improved training and working better with safeguarding teams.

PRIORITY FIFTEEN

Supporting women involved in sex work

Operation Sanctuary and dedicated police liaison officers are working with Changing Lives to provide support to women and girls involved in sex work and promote safe exiting of sex work.

Forced Marriage and so-called honour crimes

Forced marriage is now a criminal offence in this country and forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison. This legislation along with civil remedies can help us to better support someone who is under threat of becoming a victim.

PRIORITY SIXTEEN

Providing support for potential victims of Forced Marriage

In addition to the training provided to front line officers we now have specialist organisations working to deliver the 'Freedom Programme' to women who may be subjected to this.

PRIORITY SEVENTEEN

Providing support for Honour Based Violence (HBV)

Victims are referred to specialist support organisations such as Angelou and Apna Ghar who have received funding from my Supporting Victims Fund.

PRIORITY EIGHTEEN

Protecting those at risk of Forced Marriage

We continually promote the work done by Northumbria police force and our commissioned partners to help support and protect women and girls who may be at risk of HBV and forced marriage.