



**NORTHUMBRIA  
POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**



**KIM MCGUINNESS**

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome to my latest newsletter.

I'm pleased to start the New Year with an update from our latest recruitment drive, which plans to get more officers where you want them – on the streets.

The current recruitment campaign is the Force's biggest since 2010 and in its first three months saw more than 3,000 people register their interest and more than 1000 going on to apply.

Encouragingly, applications have been received from a diverse range of backgrounds, including ethnic minorities

and rural communities. I'm pleased that more than a third of applications were from women too.

There is also good news in that 78 new officers are currently in the process of training and a further 80 are due to start in March.

Of course, I'm pleased that we are starting to grow numbers again but after a decade of austerity, it's clear that replacing our 1,100 lost police officers will take time.

I just want you to know I'm doing everything within my power to make sure it happens and will keep you updated.



## KNIFE ANGEL BRINGS ANTI-VIOLENCE MESSAGE TO GATESHEAD

**This month we welcomed the powerful Knife Angel sculpture to the region.**

Made from more than 100,000 knives, it serves as a stark warning of the devastation that can be caused from acts of violence.

The sculpture, has been championed by inspiring families who have lost loved ones to knife crime and was brought to Gateshead thanks to campaigning and hard work by Samantha's Legacy. The Madgin family lost Samantha to knife crime and they want to use their own experience to prevent others from going through the same. I'm hugely thankful to them for making this happen.

The Knife Angel is on display outside the Sage Gateshead from January 30th until the end of February.

It is being accompanied with three weeks of educational activities for local schools and young people planned by Samantha's Legacy, which I have helped fund through my Violence Reduction Unit.

Northumbria is a safe place but we need to work together to keep it that way and the sculpture and the programme around it will help to get this message out.

# THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF MY VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

In my last newsletter I announced plans for my specialist Violence Reduction Unit with its clear mission to improve lives to prevent crime. I'm pleased to report that the unit is now in full swing, with the support of 30 organisations from through-out the force area and a range of positive interventions which are already doing great things.

This month we held an official launch event to bring partners together to help share thinking and shape plans for improving how we work together. It was a thought-provoking day and I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the unit so far. Together we can make a difference.



## THE POWER OF SPORT

I had the pleasure of visiting the fantastic Foundation of Light this month to see one of their 'Kicks' sessions in action at the impressive Beacon of Light.

The football based sessions, which I'm funding through my Violence Reduction Unit, are a leading example of early intervention work for young people.

The fantastic thing about 'Kicks' is that it harnesses the power of football and the power of sport. It uses the Sunderland brand

to bring young people in and gives them something to do.

Attendees also receive education around violence, drugs and exploitation in an informal yet effective setting.

It's initiatives like this and Newcastle United Foundation's YOLO project that give young people positive mentors and keeps them away from crime, anti-social behaviour, and difficult behaviour.



## A STRONG RESPONSE TO SIGNS OF COUNTY LINES

**Dawn raids in Berwick to target suspected drug-related offences linked to County Lines have made the headlines this month.**

'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.

This recent operation saw Northumbria Police team up with the North East Regional Special Operation Unit and as a result of this operation 14 people were arrested - well done to all involved.

I hope this provides reassurance that when we find signs of County Lines criminality within our region there will always be a strong, co-ordinated response to stamp it out.

We are also working really hard to prevent this type of exploitation happening in the first place by supporting those who are vulnerable and are often the easy targets for these heartless and cruel dealers.

## PREVENTING WHAT HAPPENED TO ALICE FROM HAPPENING AGAIN



**I'm thankful to Sue and Clive, parents of Alice Ruggles and founders of the Alice Ruggles Trust for visiting Northumbria the other week.**

Alice was brutally murdered by her stalker (and ex-partner) at her home in Gateshead in 2016. Sadly, her death brought to light the need for changes in the way police responded to stalking cases like hers.

Since then Northumbria Police have pioneered new ways of investigating stalking and coercive control, have improved

their use of technology and are better assessing risk.

Since her death, Sue and Clive have vowed to do all they can to stop more lives being taken by obsessive partners - they are truly inspirational.

I welcomed the opportunity to speak with them about ways we can work to prevent what happened to Alice and her family from happening to anyone else. I look forward to working with them closely in the future.

# Let's Talk...

**I'll be holding the following advice surgeries throughout February. Please phone 0191 221 9800 if you wish to make an appointment and I'll see you there.**

### **1st February -**

Surgery with Liz Twist MP, Birtley Library, Durham Road - 9.30am - 11am

### **8th February -**

Surgery with Nick Brown MP, Byker Community Centre (10am - 11am) and Jubilee Court - 11.15am - 12pm

### **14th February -**

Walkabout Surgery with Emma Lewell Buck MP in the Whiteleas area of South Shields 2.30pm - 4pm

### **18th February -**

Hexham Surgery. Etheldreda Room, Hexham Abbey - 10.30am till 12pm

### **28th February -**

Surgery with Chi Onwurah, Bewick Room, Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne - 1pm to 2pm.