



**NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**



KIM MCGUINNESS

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to my September newsletter.

I have spent much of the last few weeks getting out and about, visiting local communities and chatting to residents to hear what they think Northumbria Police are doing well and what can be improved. It's clear that our police officers, PCSOs and staff are held in high regard by the majority of local residents. There is great work happening across the force area and I want to see this built upon and improved.

Northumbria is your force and I'm here to make sure you and your community have a voice when it comes to setting out priorities. In this month's addition of my newsletter, I will look at how my office and Northumbria police are setting up a new specialist unit focused on tackling violent crime, and introduce the volunteers bringing their digital skills to the world of online crime fighting.

TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME



When I was elected earlier this year I promised to tackle violent crime at its roots, and today I'm proud to say I have secured £1.6m from the Home Office to fund a Violence Reduction Unit, a powerful new tool in tackling the causes of violent crime.

This VRU starts from the basic principle that if Government funds our public services properly we can prevent violent crime and bring down violent crime rates. We know from cities such as Glasgow and Chicago that if we take a public health approach to crime, from looking at adverse early-life experiences or harmful social influences such as drugs and alcohol, we can stop it in its tracks.

My team will bring together the police, local government, health, community leaders and others to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes and I'll be updating you on its progress in the coming weeks and months.

Making these changes will take time, which is why I was disappointed to find that this vital funding is only available until March 2020. If we want to create lasting positive change we need a properly funded police force. I hope the Prime Minister is listening to Police and Crime Commissioners across the country and our call for long term funding.

PUTTING POLICE OFFICERS

BACK ON THE STREETS

We've all heard about the government's plan for 20,000 new police officers, but in reality this won't even replace the numbers of officers lost due to government cuts since 2010. Of course, I welcome any initiative that will put extra police officers on our streets and I want to get our officers recruited now so we have already started the recruitment process. We want to recruit locally so our officers in Northumbria are passionate about serving and protecting our area and reflect our diverse communities. Disappointingly the government still has not confirmed how many officers they will fund in Northumbria, when this funding will come and whether we will be able to recruit to replace the 1,100 we've lost since 2010.

I've written to the Home Secretary about this to ask her to urgently confirm the government's commitment and to remind her that this funding is crucial not just this year but every year! We cannot allow the future costs to fall to hard working council tax payers, that is why I want to see a fair and transparent funding formula put in place that recognises the diverse needs of Northumbria Police force area.



CYBER CRIME CHAMPIONS

I'm proud to support a fantastic initiative that sees cyber and technology professionals volunteer their time to tackle cybercrime.

The team, is made up of graduates, professionals and retirees who give their expertise to the Force to help in the fight against online crime. Their expertise has proved to be invaluable. It was great to meet the team and to find out more about the work they are doing. Cyber-crime and cyber enabled crime is growing and changing fast in nature one of my election commitments was to tackle this. By working with experts such as these we can use policing skills and the talents of our volunteers to do all we can to bring perpetrators of cyber-crime before the courts.



COMMISSIONER'S COMMUNITY FUND

I was delighted to visit two Wearside groups who were awarded funding from my Community Fund to tackle hate crime and support mental health services.

Sunderland Bangladesh Centre received a £2,000 grant to support their ongoing work in the local community tackling hate crime.

Washington Mind was awarded £1,972 to provide female mental health group sessions and support early intervention. It was great to see how these two groups are making a real difference on Wearside.

We know that in Sunderland and Washington, and across our region, people look out for their neighbours and these two projects build on that neighbourhood spirit by tackling hate crime, reducing anti-social behaviour and making sure residents feel safer and more secure.

My Community Fund awards grants to neighbourhoods and communities across Wearside, Tyneside and Northumberland who run activities or projects that support tackling hate crime, reducing anti-social behaviour and increasing community confidence. If you think you'd like to work with me on supporting your neighbourhood, please get in touch.



RURAL ISSUES MATTER

I want our police officers to do all they can to support those who live and work in our rural communities.

As part of that, I recently joined Northumbria's rural and wildlife crime officer, Lee Davison (who you may have seen on the BBC programme Our Cops in the North). Lee showed me the issues that officers are dealing with and how Northumbria Police engages with the local community to tackle rural specific crime such as, poaching and theft of farm vehicles.

Last month, over 40 officers and 35 volunteers supported Operation Checkpoint which brings together rural communities and police to provide information and local intelligence. This initiative resulted in two arrests and 35 vehicles stop checked- a great result and something we'll continue. This sends out a clear message to criminals that crime targeting our rural areas will not be tolerated and we will work with neighbouring forces and partners to clamp down on this type of offending. From my visits to rural Northumberland, we do need more officers trained in wildlife crime issues and this is something I am pursuing with the Chief Constable.



ZERO TOLERANCE TO HATE CRIME

Northumbria is known as a welcoming, friendly place and I am committed to keeping it that way. In Northumbria, hate crime and discrimination is not acceptable and we have zero tolerance.

This month, I've spent time with Citizens UK and a range of community groups and heard about their heart breaking experiences, particularly the experiences of Muslim women. Together, we participated in the justice commission's hate crime review- we need the police and the courts to have the power to act in all incidents of hate crime and for disability, gender and religion to take equal precedence. We are all focused on ensuring communities feel heard and have the confidence to report any incidents of hate crime. It is totally unacceptable to abuse somebody because of who they are. I will continue to work to influence national thinking in relation to hate crime. I was also pleased to promote Northumbria's work with the national Police Policy Hate Crime Lead and to talk about what more can be done to prevent hate crime and protect victims.

If you are a victim of any sort of hate crime - report it to 101 or in an emergency dial 999.