



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Working together to reduce Domestic and Sexual Abuse in Northumbria

Ensuring that the criminal justice system responds to the needs of victims as well as offenders is vital and nowhere more so than those crimes, such as rape and sexual assault, that are known to have a devastating and long-term impact on the people involved.

For this reason, the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy that I developed during my early months in office included the creation of both a Rape Scrutiny Panel and a Court Observers Panel.

Tasked with reviewing the way that sexual offences are handled by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts, these panels are staffed by local volunteers who have been recruited from a wide variety of backgrounds and given the training they need to perform this important role.