

Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan

April 2015 – June 2015

Objective One – Putting Victims First

We will further enhance the way we deploy officers, providing the most appropriate response to meet individual needs.

Overall satisfaction levels remain high, and the Force is placed first nationally for ease of contact (98.8%), follow-up (88.8%) and overall service (92.2%). The percentage of victims satisfied with the time of arrival is 92.9%¹.

As part of the on-going change project within the Communications department, which is seeking to implement a new operating model. Resolution without Deployment (RWD) has been introduced within Northumbria, which seeks to resolve incidents at the first point of contact. This will ensure a customer focused service whilst reducing demand.

Mental Health Triage has commenced in the north of the Force area and comprises of a dedicated team of police officers working alongside mental health nurses, who will assist with any incidents involving individuals thought to have mental health issues. One officer and one mental health nurse will be available on any given shift, operating between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 a.m., 7 days a week. The aim is to provide an enhanced service to those who need mental health treatment and avoid them being detained unnecessarily under the Mental Health Act (MHA).

We will participate in the Victims’ Hub, ‘Victims First’ by:

- **Identifying and assessing the specific needs of victims.**
- **Working closely with partners to ensure a proportionate response, including safeguarding, investigation and coordinating the information flow to victims, in line with our joint obligations under the Victims’ Code.**
- **In partnership, coordinate an integrated victim support service.**

Training and awareness sessions have been delivered to all operational staff regarding Victims’ First Northumbria (VFN) and the requirement for detailed needs assessments. In quarter one, 91% of needs assessments have been completed, of which 96% were completed to a satisfactory standard; resulting in an overall compliance rate of 87%.

We will ensure that crimes are recorded properly and that the matter is dealt with, where appropriate, in line with victim's wishes.

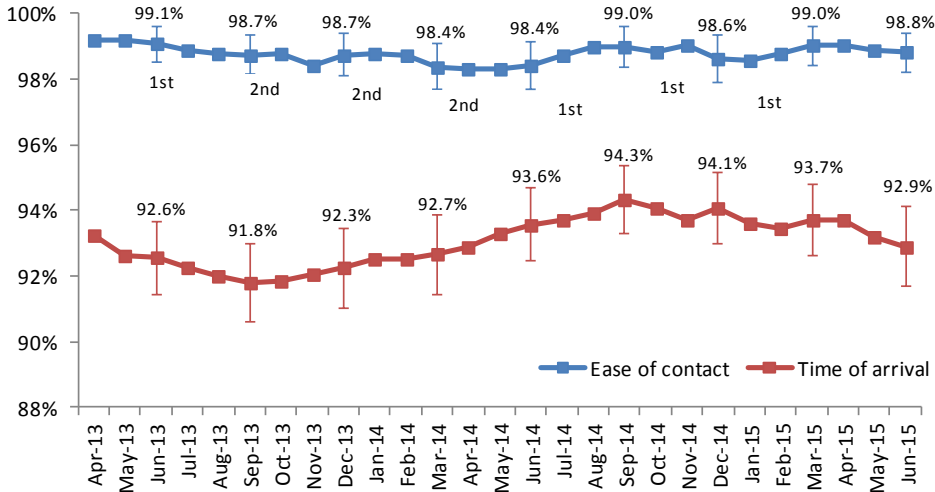
Compliance with the National Crime Recording Standards is 82% (+/- 1.2%). The Force Crime Registrar continues to oversee standards and key learning points are provided to Area Commands. There remains significant scrutiny at a local level to ensure standards. Work is also being undertaken to introduce crime recording within Communications Department to ensure crimes are recorded at the earliest opportunity, supported by a quality assurance and validation process.

Performance

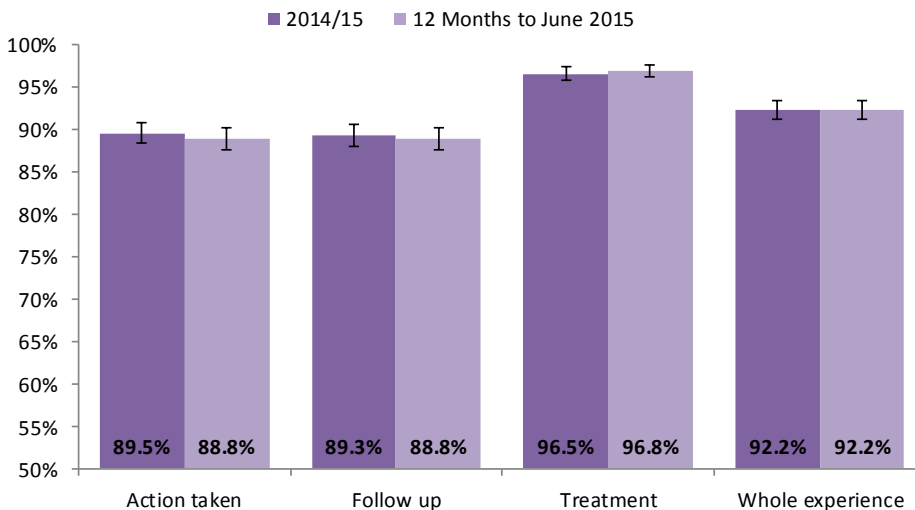
		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
1	Percentage of victims satisfied with ease of contact.	99.0% (+/-0.6%)	12 months to May 2015	98.8% (+/-0.6%)	12 months to Jun 2015	Placed 1 st nationally (12 months to March

						2015)
2	Percentage of victims satisfied with the time of arrival.	93.7% (+/-1.1%)	12 months to May 2015	92.9% (+/- 1.2%)	12 months to June 2015	No National Comparison available

Satisfaction of victims of burglary, violent and vehicle crime (CVF)



Satisfaction of victims of burglary, violent and vehicle crime (CVF)



	Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note	
3	Percentage of needs assessment completed to a satisfactory standard of contact.	Not previously reported	87% (+/- 2.5%)	April to June 2015	Target 90%	
4	Compliance with National Crime Recording Standards.	87% (+/- 0.5%)	Sept '14 to March '15	82% (+/- 1.2%)	April to May 2015	No National Comparison available

Objective Two – Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

We will complete an assessment to determine the most appropriate response to meet the individual needs of victims of ASB and work with partners to resolve longer term local issues.

Satisfaction with attendance at incidents has reduced since March 2014 (although this reduction is not a statistical reduction). Satisfaction for the 12 months to June 2015 is 93.2%. The introduction

of increased scheduling appointments alongside RWD will offer more availability to callers and reduce the waiting times for an officer. This will ensure a customer focused service whilst reducing demand.

A new ASB satisfaction survey has been introduced, whereby victims will be re-contacted to establish whether the problem has been resolved. Initial results will be available in August 2015.

Considerable activity continues with partners at a local level, to tackle ASB issues. For example:

- Southern Area Command are working with the Youth Offending Service on the 'Strengthening Communities' Project (Sunderland), which focuses on young people coming to notice through ASB.
- In Central Area Command, each sector works with their respective local authority partners, within a joint tasking group forum, to draw upon relevant agencies and departments to address specific ASB issues. Each group has the autonomy to establish Stand Alone Problem Solving (SAP) groups to address those longer term issues from a multi-agency perspective, where appropriate.
- In Northern Area Command, elements of Operation Blackberry have been modified to tackle issues at Metro Stations and the Coast, which involve the consumption of alcohol. Between Wallsend and Shiremoor, youth workers are travelling on Nexus transport, in order to signpost and divert individuals to existing provisions in the area.

We will identify vulnerable victims and assess their specific needs, ensuring an appropriate response.

All ASB incidents are reviewed by the appropriate Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and a further risk assessment is carried out to ensure that no vulnerability issues are missed. Any vulnerable victims of ASB identified have a comprehensive harm plan formulated with an allocated officer.

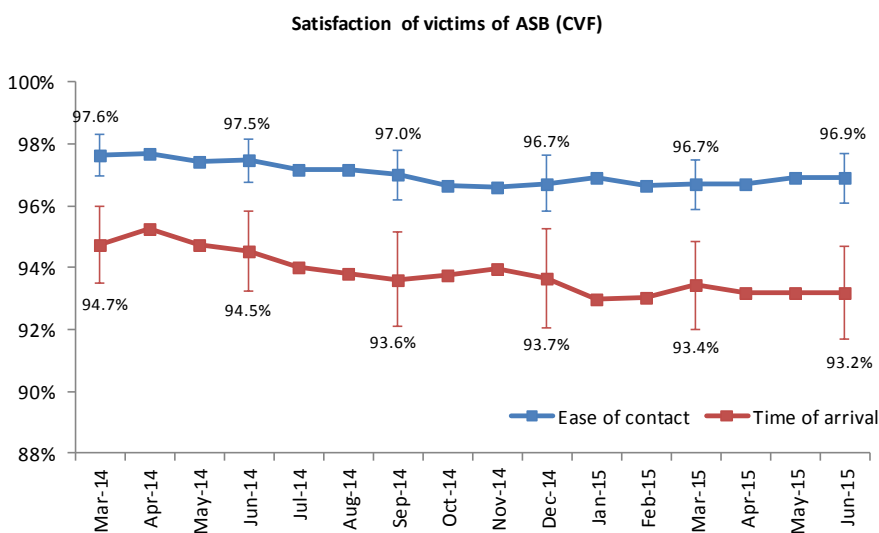
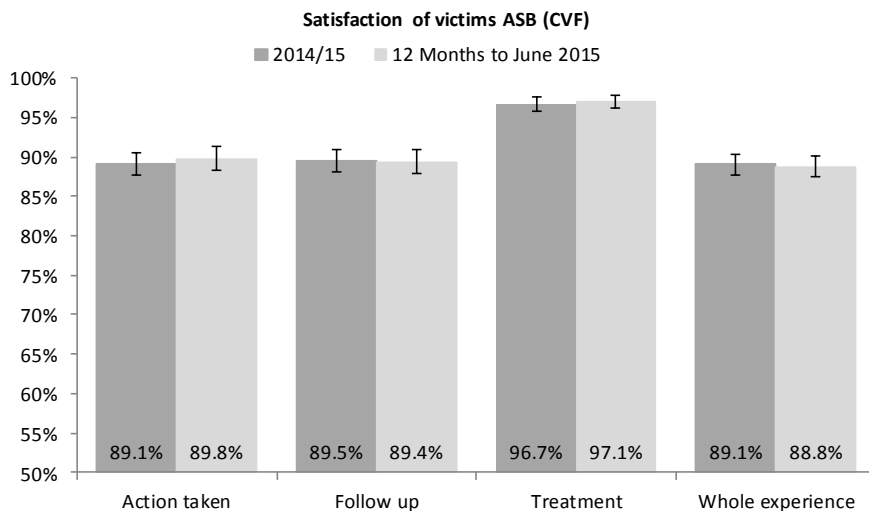
We will ensure that new ASB powers are embedded and understood and are being used fairly and proportionately.

New ASB powers, including Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs), Community Protection Orders (CPOs) and Dispersal Notices, continue to be used to good effect across all Area Commands, for issues relating to crime and disorder, ASB and public order offences. For example:

- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and Closure Notices are currently being progressed in Wallsend, to tackle issues with legal highs.
- In Southern Area Command, Dispersal Notices have been issued to tackle youth ASB and alcohol-related disorder. Joint home visits have been conducted with Gentoo and Council ASB teams, and Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's) put in place.
- In order to tackle the issue of legal highs in Central Area Command, the Crime Prevention Unit are collating list of key problematic premises across Newcastle with a view to prioritising the ones causing the greatest impact on crime, ASB and the community. Once identified, closure orders will be assessed and positive action taken, in conjunction with Newcastle County Council.

Performance

		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
1	Percentage of ASB victims satisfied with attendance at incidents.	93.4% (+/- 1.4%)	12 months to May 2015	93.2% (+/- 1.5%)	12 months to June 2015	No National Comparison available
2	Percentage of victims satisfied with the overall response to the ASB problem.	Not previously reported		Data available August 2015	N/A	No National Comparison available



Objective Three – Domestic and Sexual Abuse (D&SA)

We will deliver the policing aspects of Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. We will also work with partners managing perpetrators through the criminal justice process, and further develop domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

The Force has been successful in three Police Innovation Fund bids relating domestic and sexual abuse. These include:

- Project Sanctuary – This consists of two intelligence-led multi-agency Operational Hubs to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Vulnerability and Modern Day Slavery. One will operate in the north of the force area, and the other, the south.
- Domestic Abuse: Identifying, Tackling and Safeguarding (Serial Victims) – This funding will assist with data analysis to identify serial victims and provide them with support and access to specialist agencies via dedicated domestic violence workers. This will be integrated into the existing work of Gateshead Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetrators (Enhanced) – This will aim to identify and target the most harmful perpetrators through analysis of recency, frequency and gravity of offending via a multi-agency tasking and co-ordination (MATAC) process. Identified perpetrators will be referred into the MATAC process where key partners will agree a bespoke set of

interventions using a domestic abuse 'toolkit'. Information is published on the Force intranet about the 4 current voluntary Perpetrator Programmes.

Specific activity being undertaken in support of the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy includes:

- The introduction of monthly Criminal Justice performance meetings, with a clear focus on improving domestic violence conviction rates.
- The development of an early intervention/safeguarding guide to assist frontline professionals in recognising the signs which could indicate a child, young person or their family may be vulnerable and in-need of help.
- The continuation of Live Domestic Violence Patrols across the Force on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings which involve joint patrols with partner agencies and officers utilising Body Worn Video cameras.
- The delivery of CSE training to all taxi licenced holders within South Tyneside by the LA and police.
- Domestic Abuse perpetrator electronic monitoring units are in development and suitable candidates are being identified. In preparation relevant staff have been trained and awareness briefings delivered to all front-line staff.

We will build on the learning from Operation Sanctuary, work with partners to identify individuals at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, and develop joint safeguarding protocols for those identified.

A series of safeguarding Operations including Sanctuary, Shelter and Jupiter continue to run throughout the Force area, to protect victims or potential victims of serious sexual offences. These are being carried out in conjunction with partners to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to those involved.

Following the successful Innovation Fund Bid, Project Sanctuary will create a structured Force-wide operating model to investigate, target and disrupt CSE, Vulnerability and Modern Day Slavery.

Performance

		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
1	Reduce the attrition rate from report to conviction (shown as a report to conviction rate).					
	Rape	10%	2014/15	11%	Year to date	National rate 7% (April to May 2015)
	Sexual Offences (excluding rape offences)	21%	2014/15	18%	Year to date	National rate 11% (April to May 2015)
	Domestic Violence	34%	2014/15	31%	Year to date	CPS monitor Charge to Conviction police monitor Complaint to Conviction National comparisons not applicable
2	Increase the conviction rate for domestic abuse to 75% of cases charged.	66%	2014/15	68%	April to May 2015	National rate 74% (April to May 2015)
3	Number of referrals into domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.	N/A	N/A	4	April to June 2015	1 each to Sunderland BIG Programme, South Tyneside DA Perpetrators Programme and Newcastle DV Protection Project.

Objective Four – Preventing Crime

We will prevent crime through the implementation of a Preventing Crime Strategy, responding to crime trends and actively deploying and tasking resources.

Area Command's hold monthly Tasking and Coordination Groups (TCG) and Neighbourhood Priorities meetings, where priorities and tasking, based upon current crime trends and analysis, are agreed and appropriate resources allocated. Current priorities include burglary dwelling, ASB and hate crime.

Burglary Suppression Groups are also held throughout the Force area, bringing together the police, Probation and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to devise and deploy tactics to disrupt prolific burglars and build confidence in the community.

Victim vulnerability is assessed and Neighbourhood Policing Teams' (NPT) and support provided whenever required. Super Cocooning and further crime prevention advice is conducted by NPTs around all burglary offences.

A month of action took place to suppress crime activity within Jesmond and Heaton and Byker and Walker.

We will encourage the increased reporting of under reported crimes, such as Female Genital Mutilation, Child Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Hate Crime.

Monthly meetings are held between Crime Department and Area Commands to discuss Organised Crime Group (OCG) activity locally and force-wide. These discussions encompass emerging issues around CSE and Human Trafficking as well as serious and organised criminality. Disruption activity is focused around intelligence and specialist roles utilised.

Work is underway to develop a Female Genital Mutilation Strategy and local action plan.

Community Engagement Officers (CEOs) and NPT officers have received awareness briefings to ensure an improved understanding of FGM, CSE, Human Trafficking and Hate Crime; in a bid to encourage increased reporting.

Activity is taking place to disrupt and target offenders ensuring investigative opportunities as detailed below.

- a) 40 bail packages with police or court bail conditions actively monitored for compliance.
- b) 90 active disruption packages with individuals, who are suspected or have been arrested for CSE, (increase of 4 in this period).
- c) 199 vehicles actively monitored via PNC and the forces information system (IS), (increase of 3 in this period).
- d) 253 subjects actively monitored (IS) and UKBA, (increase of 9 in this period).
- e) 38 taxi driver licences suspended.
- f) Further information sharing with UKBA identified an outstanding subject who was detained for removal from UK.

We will closely monitor crime trends and patterns and prioritise resources to address those crimes that cause the greatest harm and concern to communities and will reduce the number of burglary dwelling offences.

All Area Command's hold a monthly Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) and Neighbourhood Priorities meeting where priorities and tasking based upon current crime trends and analysis will be agreed and appropriate resources allocated.

Operation Flux took place in July 2015 and included action to target known offenders, execute search warrants at addresses of suspected handlers and deliver crime prevention and reassurance messages through NPT and media.

We will identify repeat victims and reduce the likelihood of further victimisation, focus on those crimes that have a significant impact on the victim.

Performance

		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
1	Reduce the number of burglary dwelling offences.	+7%, +36 crimes	As at 3 June 2015	+6%, +47 crimes	As at 6 July 2015	Placed 1 st against most similar family group
Reducing the percentage of high or medium risk victims who have suffered a subsequent incident.						
2	Domestic Violence	48%	12 months to June 2014	47%	12 months to June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High or medium risk individuals at the start of the period or identified during the period. Subsequent event of any category between the initial risk assessment and the end of the period.
	Crime	29%		35%		
	Anti-social behaviour	22%		23%		
	Hate	43%		57%		
	Overall	44%		44%		

Objective Five – Community Confidence

We will ensure neighbourhood teams are accessible and based at convenient locations, supported by new technology to increase visibility.

Northumbria Police recently restructured their operating model, moving from six area commands to three. Following this restructure, local engagement strategies and practices have been reviewed to enhance current engagement and improve the identification of community needs and issues.

26 new NPT bases/sites are being developed, with six already complete. 14 sites are approved and scheduled for completion by September/October 2015, and six proposed sites remain subject to approval. All sites are scheduled for completion by end 2015.

Overall, 10 sites are shared with the fire service, six with local authorities, four with community organisations and six with private landlords.

Street to Strategic continues to be rolled out across the Force. The project allows officers and staff to directly access and update key information from within their communities.

We will reassure communities and address community tensions

Operations continue to be launched throughout the Force area to reassure communities and address community tensions. For example, Operation Church was established in response to the Tup Tup Palace Shootings and Operation Stoneycroft was established to investigate a high profile incident in Walker.

We will promote opportunities for the public to become involved in local policing through volunteering

Recruitment events continue to be held throughout the Force area to promote opportunities for the public to become involved in local policing.

At area command level, Special Constables and Cadets are used to support operational policing and local events.

We will work with partners to improve criminal justice related processes, ensuring a satisfactory outcome for victims of crime and increasing confidence in the criminal justice system

On the 15th June 2015 Northumbria Police introduced the agreed National Bail Standards, ensuring rigorous and transparent processes are in place when managing bail. As part of these standards:

- Officers must seek to finalise investigations during the first period of detention.
- Where bail is used, there must be an investigation plan and management regime in place and documented.
- Where the period of bail exceeds 28 days approval must be applied.

We will build on the success of the triage system, by introducing a complaints charter to improve the complaints process, reduce the number of appeals and increase satisfaction with how the complaint has been managed

Professional Standards Department ensures that regular engagement is undertaken with functional leads to improve how the organisation manages complaints/conduct and the service it provides to the public.

A rolling 4-week attachment of Inspectors has been implemented to improve awareness and understanding of the complaints process and to support quality assurance and proportionate investigations.

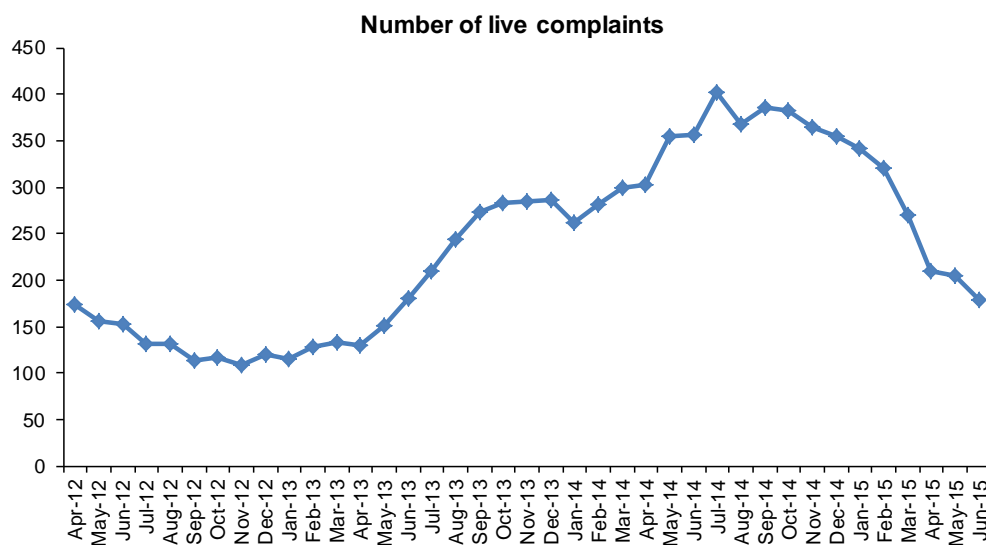
Northumbria’s internal and external websites have been refreshed to include updates on public hearing outcomes and meetings. Houghton le Spring Magistrate’s Court has recently been acquired and is a potential location to conduct discipline hearings where the public can attend.

A satisfaction survey for complainants has been agreed and will commence in July 2015.

Performance.

		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
1	Percentage of time neighbourhood officers spend outside a police station in their neighbourhood.	47%	2014/15	47%	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
Reduce the length of time taken through the criminal justice process, reducing the re-bail rate and length of time on bail.						
2	Re-bail rate.	41.6%	2014/15	36.2%	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
3	Percentage of bails concluded over 28 days.	75% over 28 days	2014/15	74% over 28 days	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
4	Increase the conviction rate at Magistrate’s Court to 85%.	79.2%	2014/15	81.4%	April to May 2015	No National Comparison available
5	Increase the percentage	68%	July 2014 to	68%	April to	No National

		Previous	Period	Current	Period	Comparative position or note
	of guilty pleas at first hearing to 70%.		March 2015		May 2015	Comparison available
	Ensure 100% of cases, the Investigating Officer makes contact with the complainant within 24 hours of registration of a complaint.	Not previously reported		100%	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
7	Reduce the number of days to finalise complaint, with 50% finalised within 50 days.	Not previously reported		79%	1 st April to 12 th May	No National Comparison available
8	Establish a baseline of satisfaction of complainants in order to increase the percentage that are satisfied with how the complaint has been managed.	Not previously reported		See future activity		No National Comparison available
9	Reduce the number of allegations that relate to incivility, impoliteness or intolerance.	27 per month	2014/15	21 per month	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
Reduce the percentage of appeals made and the percentage of those upheld						
	% of appeals made	18%	2014/15	16%	April to June 2015	No National Comparison available
	% of appeals upheld	25%	2014/15	26%	April to June 2015	
11	Number of live complaints being managed.	270	As at 31 March 2015	178	As at 30 June 2015	Number of complaints created prior to 1 st April 2015 has reduced to 101.



Comparison of crime between 1 Apr 2015 to 15 Jul 2015 and 2014-15

Force Wide

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15
Total crime	23,796	21,060	+2,736 + 13%
Violence against the person	4,908	3,969	+ 939 + 24%
Robbery	149	143	+ 6 + 4%
Sexual offences	753	605	+ 148 + 24%
Vehicle crime	1,534	1,519	+ 15 + 1%
Criminal damage	4,888	4,244	+ 644 + 15%
Burglary dwelling	917	855	+ 62 + 7%
Burglary OTD	1,365	1,342	+ 23 + 2%
Shoplifting	2,979	2,746	+ 233 + 9%
Theft from the person	275	218	+ 57 + 26%
Other theft and handling	3,410	2,742	+ 668 + 24%

Area Commands

Sunderland

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15
Total crime	4,778	4,363	+ 415 + 10%
Violence against the person	983	778	+ 205 + 26%
Robbery	20	23	- 3 - 14%
Sexual offences	141	113	+ 28 + 25%
Vehicle crime	287	368	- 81 - 22%
Criminal damage	1,035	942	+ 93 + 10%
Burglary dwelling	178	179	- 1 - 0%
Burglary OTD	252	301	- 49 - 16%
Shoplifting	547	548	- 1 - 0%
Theft from the person	44	24	+ 20 + 85%
Other theft and handling	786	519	+ 267 + 52%

South Tyneside

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15	
Total crime	2,296	2,050	+ 246	+ 12%
Violence against the person	568	431	+ 137	+ 32%
Robbery	14	13	+ 1	+ 7%
Sexual offences	69	54	+ 15	+ 27%
Vehicle crime	107	93	+ 14	+ 15%
Criminal damage	524	477	+ 47	+ 10%
Burglary dwelling	69	63	+ 6	+ 9%
Burglary OTD	92	105	- 13	- 12%
Shoplifting	282	244	+ 38	+ 15%
Theft from the person	15	9	+ 6	+ 62%
Other theft and handling	288	278	+ 10	+ 3%

Gateshead

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15	
Total crime	3,238	2,716	+ 522	+ 19%
Violence against the person	626	491	+ 135	+ 28%
Robbery	32	24	+ 8	+ 35%
Sexual offences	106	78	+ 28	+ 36%
Vehicle crime	279	262	+ 17	+ 6%
Criminal damage	708	543	+ 165	+ 30%
Burglary dwelling	122	116	+ 6	+ 5%
Burglary OTD	257	220	+ 37	+ 17%
Shoplifting	333	291	+ 42	+ 15%
Theft from the person	17	15	+ 2	+ 13%
Other theft and handling	456	361	+ 95	+ 26%

North Tyneside

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15	
Total crime	2,465	2,384	+ 81	+ 3%
Violence against the person	540	507	+ 33	+ 6%
Robbery	16	14	+ 2	+ 13%
Sexual offences	71	65	+ 6	+ 8%
Vehicle crime	139	142	- 3	- 2%
Criminal damage	516	470	+ 46	+ 10%
Burglary dwelling	82	95	- 13	- 14%
Burglary OTD	95	129	- 34	- 27%
Shoplifting	326	338	- 12	- 4%
Theft from the person	15	15	+ 0	+ 2%
Other theft and handling	346	301	+ 45	+ 15%

Newcastle

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15	
Total crime	7,174	6,391	+ 783	+ 12%
Violence against the person	1,460	1,193	+ 267	+ 22%
Robbery	54	61	- 7	- 11%
Sexual offences	242	201	+ 41	+ 21%
Vehicle crime	409	371	+ 38	+ 10%
Criminal damage	1,228	1,111	+ 117	+ 11%
Burglary dwelling	324	269	+ 55	+ 21%
Burglary OTD	326	294	+ 32	+ 11%
Shoplifting	1,117	1,020	+ 97	+ 9%
Theft from the person	154	145	+ 9	+ 6%
Other theft and handling	941	823	+ 118	+ 14%

Northumberland

	2015-16 1.4.– 15.7	2014-15 1.4.– 15.7	Change compared to 2014-15	
Total crime	3,845	3,157	+ 688	+ 22%
Violence against the person	731	570	+ 161	+ 28%
Robbery	13	9	+ 4	+ 50%
Sexual offences	124	94	+ 30	+ 32%
Vehicle crime	313	282	+ 31	+ 11%
Criminal damage	877	701	+ 176	+ 25%
Burglary dwelling	142	134	+ 8	+ 6%
Burglary OTD	343	293	+ 50	+ 17%
Shoplifting	374	304	+ 70	+ 23%
Theft from the person	30	10	+ 20	+205%
Other theft and handling	593	460	+ 133	+ 29%

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Inspections

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) independently assesses police forces and policing across activity from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against terrorism – in the public interest.

They carry out force inspections and also produce reports on broad policing themes and specific subjects – from terrorism and serious organised crime to custody arrangements. All their reports can be found on their website www.hmic.gov.uk.

This section provides information about reports and inspection that are applicable to Northumbria Police and where applicable a brief overview of the findings and action taken.

1. Review of Northumbria Police Custody Joint Inspection Action Plan

A representative from the Joint Police Custody Inspection Team conducted a revisit in April 2015 to provide a health check on progress against the recommendations and to inform the assessment process for re-inspection. Positive feedback was received, recognising the Force's commitment to improvement and the progress made since the inspection.

2. Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime Follow-up

The Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime Follow-up report was published on 21 May 2015 by HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI), together with HMIC and HM Inspectorate of Probation.

In March 2013, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (CJJI) published 'Living in a different world: Joint review of disability hate crime', setting out how disability hate crime was dealt

with, and made seven recommendations to improve performance, including four recommendations for the police. This follow-up review aimed to assess progress against the recommendations. Six police forces were visited during the inspection, as well as 13 Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) areas and CPS Direct. Northumbria was visited over two days in September 2014. The report acknowledges the initiatives undertaken to improve the handling of disability hate crime; however, highlights that performance remains disappointing. The opportunity to provide new impetus has not been taken and insufficient progress has been made against the recommendations of the 'Living in a Different World' review.

The report recommends that criminal justice agencies must prioritise this area and provide an improved experience for all members of society. This area will remain a high priority for the criminal justice inspectorates.

Third party reporting centres in Northumbria were cited as good practice. The Force has already introduced a Hate Crime and Hate Incident Strategy and delivery plan, and more specifically, a Disability Hate Crime Action Plan.

In addition, Victims First Northumbria the independent victim referral service will coordinate the care of victims of crime, providing both emotional and practical support.

HMIC published three thematic reports in July 2015:

3. HMIC Thematic Report - In harm's way: the role of police in keeping children safe

This report provides a summary of findings from 21 inspections on the police response to child protection that have been conducted over the last two years.

In early 2014, HMIC began a national programme of child protection inspections. Since then, it has also undertaken a number of other inspections concerning vulnerable children. Eight forces were inspected and a further 13 reports relevant to child protection were analysed during the process. Northumbria were not one of the forces visited during this period. This final thematic report summarises the findings contained in the reports of all these inspections and considers the implications for future action.

The report identifies 12 key findings which focus on:

- The extent and demand of child protection.
- Leadership and management.
- The child's experience of the criminal justice system.
- Initial Response.
- Criminalising children for minor offences.
- Sharing information with other child protection agencies.
- Detention of children in police custody.
- Enquiries and investigations.
- Reducing the risk of harm.
- Listening to and communicating with children.
- Police information systems and data.
- Relationships between the police and other child protection agencies.

The report concludes that considerable resources are being spent on child protection processes that do not necessarily lead to help for a child, while core police duties – for example, to undertake enquiries and investigations – are not being pursued effectively.

Continuing to invest in processes without an analysis of their effectiveness is wasteful and – far more importantly - does not improve the lives of children at risk.

HMIC questions the capacity of agencies to continue to respond to abuse and neglect in the way they do at present, especially in the light of rising demand. Police forces are just beginning to tackle child sexual exploitation alongside the full range of child protection issues, at the same time as trying to address an increasing number of cases of abuse. It is only as forces delve deeper into these issues that the weight and scale of the task become evident.

Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must improve current practice, and manage the anticipated growth in the number of reports and referrals. These discussions need to be undertaken with partner agencies and must be informed by the views and experiences of children.

An assessment of the force position will be undertaken against the recommendations and an action plan prepared if appropriate, it is worth reassuring members that there are no areas within the recommendations that the force appears to be at risk.

4. HMIC Thematic Report - Online and on the edge: real risks in a virtual world

This thematic report sets out the findings from fieldwork in six forces looking at how police forces deal with children who are being exploited via the internet. Northumbria was visited in December 2014 when HMIC inspectors reviewed cases selected at random, and conducted interviews with police officers and staff. HMIC expects its findings, conclusions and recommendations to improve police standards in protecting children from online exploitation, and to increase efficiency and effectiveness of child protection investigations.

The report sets the scene, looking at the reasons and background to why children are sexually exploited online, and sets out HMIC's findings across the six forces visited, without specifying which force the findings relate to, on the police service's efforts to tackle online child sexual exploitation

HMIC found that senior police leaders are committed to protecting children, but there is a gap between the stated force priority and the reality of practice on the ground. Despite the commitment and dedication of many officers and staff, HMIC found that the police response to children who have been the victims of online sexual exploitation requires improvement. In cases where the police were dealing with an identified child or specific offender, opportunities to investigate further offences or identify risks to other victims arising in the same case, were not always followed up.

All the forces inspected experienced varying delays in investigations. High-tech crime units undertaking forensic work in forces experienced backlogs in the analysis of media devices such as mobile phones and computers and it was not uncommon to see delays of up to 12 months. HMIC also found that offenders who are potentially a risk to children are released on bail from police stations for prolonged periods of time pending the results of analysis. These delays increase the risk to children.

There is a requirement to obtain evidence from a range of media devices and it is vitally important that the police service reduces delays and clears existing backlogs.

HMIC found examples where the police administered cautions to offenders for online child sexual exploitation. This is a cause for concern, particularly in the absence of effective supervision and scrutiny arrangements within the force.

The forces inspected made a considerable effort to provide advice and guidance on internet safety, primarily aimed at parents and carers through community engagement activity. However, more could be done to warn children about the consequences of risky online behaviour by communicating these messages using the same websites and social media channels that are used by children.

HMIC also found some examples of good practice where officers responded promptly, secured evidence in a manner which was sensitive to the needs of the child concerned, safeguarded that child, and sought to identify and safeguard other children at risk. The investigations were well supervised and delays were kept to a minimum. Children and families were kept informed and decisions were made in the best interests of the child.

Dealing with child sexual exploitation in a virtual world requires a different style of policing from the conventional methods of the past. Forces need to understand the nature and potential scale of the online exploitation of children to ensure that more is done to protect them from harm and bring perpetrators to justice. New approaches must now be considered to reflect this contemporary demand on policing services if there is to be a step-change in practice on the frontline.

Northumbria was particularly highlighted in three instances:

- the availability of technology within Northumbria to extract data from mobile phones for use by frontline officers.
- the sponsorship of Chelsea's Choice – a play about a 12-year old girl aimed at promoting safe internet use and identifying risky behaviour and raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and grooming; and
- Operation Sanctuary, which provides a focus for dealing with child sexual exploitation,

The report contains 13 recommendations which include supporting staff, actions to improve investigations and safeguarding, implementation of a good practice regime, communicating with children so that they are better able to protect themselves online, and ensuring that decisions to use out of court disposals in relation to online child sexual exploitation are systematically scrutinised.

An assessment of the Northumbria Force position will be undertaken and an action plan prepared as appropriate.

5. HMCI Thematic Report - Building the picture: an inspection of police information management:

To provide an overview of the “Building the picture - An inspection of police information management” report published on 2nd July 2015. The purpose of this inspection was to follow up on the findings from the Savile Review in 'Mistakes Were Made' and to discharge HMIC's responsibilities to monitor compliance with the Management of Police Information Code of Practice.

The HMIC Savile review report, published on 12 March 2013, identified significant issues with police information management in five forces including classification, restriction, provision and the sharing of intelligence in respect of six records relating to identifying paedophilic activity and sexual offences against children. This is despite some progress since the Bichard Inquiry and the advent of the Police National Database.

The objectives of the inspection activities were to establish if:

- force strategies, policies and procedures for information management adhere to the principles of the management of police information [and the Authorised Professional Practice] doctrine, and are proportionate to risk and fit for purpose;
- information and intelligence are captured, recorded, evaluated, acted upon, audited and retained by the police (including safeguarding interventions) in an effective way;
- the use of the Police National Database is effective and efficient;
- HMIC can identify inspection criteria that can be introduced into other future inspections. (This would allow regular and frequent monitoring of information management in forces to discharge HMIC's legal obligation, without the need for further specific inspection activity).

The four forces involved in the Savile review and two forces involved in the Bichard Inquiry were inspected. Independently, the national Information Management Business Area commissioned the College of Policing to devise a national questionnaire which was circulated to all forces. The responses were collated to ascertain the current national information management picture, post-Savile. This formed the basis for the broad review of force capability and further forces were identified for inspection from the questionnaire analysis. In total, 13 forces were inspected (Northumbria was not part of the inspection programme).

The report finds that greater rigour in the implementation of management information policies is required so that all forces are brought up to the standards of the best. In order to achieve that aim, the inspection report makes ten recommendations, some of which are directed at chief constables and focus on efficient and effective information management policies and practice:

- complying with Authorised Professional practice.
- considering all available information in an efficient way so that the continuing levels of risk that individuals pose to communities are properly assessed and, where necessary, information is re-categorised and linked:
- adequately identify and prioritise the records of those who pose the greatest risk, in order that they are properly monitored, and appropriate, timely action is taken.
- make sure that their force information records are reviewed at the end of the review period set for each information grouping, and records created when decisions are made to retain information beyond the applicable period of retention

An assessment of the Force position will be undertaken and an action plan prepared as appropriate.