



ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

SAFE **STRONG** & CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES



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Introduction from the Police and Crime Commissioner



As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I am proud to present this annual report, reflecting on a year of significant progress my office has made in delivering safer, stronger and more confident communities.

From the outset, my commitment has been clear; to listen to residents, act on their concerns and to ensure that policing and community safety services deliver for everyone in Cleveland. Over the past year, my team has taken important steps forward in turning that commitment into action.

Meaningful progress has been made against my Police and Crime Plan, including the launch of a 10-year domestic abuse perpetration strategy, recognising that long-term sustainable change is essential to break cycles of harm and protect victims.

The leadership of Cleveland Police has also been strengthened through the recruitment of a Chief Constable Victoria Fuller, ensuring the force is well placed to meet both current and emerging challenges.

Investment has been a key priority. I have directed additional funding into vital support services for victims and communities and secured resources for targeted hotspot patrols to tackle crime where it happens most.

I have also launched a dedicated Knife Crime Action Plan, focusing on prevention, enforcement and education to reduce serious violence and ensure the next generation make safe choices.

Encouragingly, these efforts are contributing to real results. We have seen a reduction in stalking and burglary, alongside a significant uplift in neighbourhood policing, with 63 additional staff helping to provide a more visible and responsive presence in our communities.

We have also strengthened our approach to tackling violence, including work to improve safety for women and girls and to address domestic abuse. Alongside this, we have worked closely with partners to prevent offending and reoffending, recognising that long-term success requires collaboration across our services.

While this progress is welcome, I remain clear that there is still more to do. Too many people still feel unsafe or unheard and I remain determined to ensure that Cleveland is a place where everyone can live, work and thrive without fear.

Building public confidence, supporting victims and continuing to drive down crime will remain at the heart of my work.

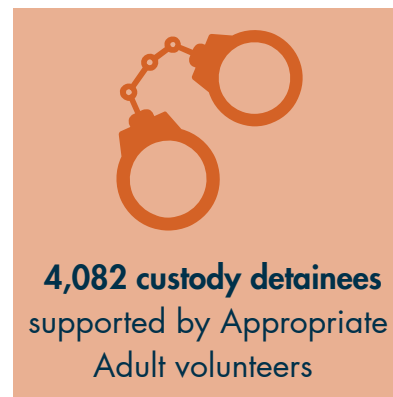
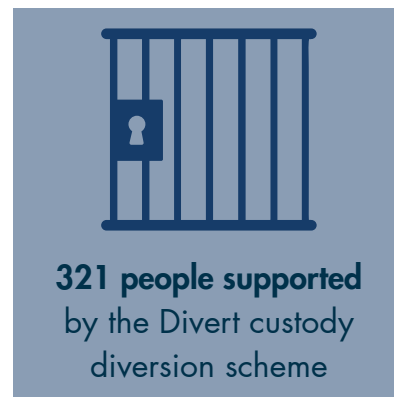
I'd like to thank our police officers, staff, volunteers and partners for their continued dedication and our communities for their ongoing engagement with us. Together, we will continue to drive forward improvements and deliver the safer future that the people of Cleveland deserve.



Matt Storey
Police and Crime Commissioner

Building safer communities together

A year of progress, partnership and delivery





PRIORITY 1: Reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and harm

Cleveland will be a safer place to live, work and visit, with less crime, violence and antisocial behaviour.

How we're measuring success

The Police and Crime Commissioner monitors progress against this priority by examining crime figures and measures of public confidence. Cleveland continues to have the highest recorded crime rate in England and Wales, per head of population.

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 there were 2,190 more crimes recorded than in the same period in 2024-25 – an increase of 3%.

There were reductions in reported theft (-2.2%), residential burglary (-13.9%) and vehicle crime (-12.7%), although robbery reports saw a large increase over the same period (36.4%).



Twelve thousand hours of additional patrols in crime hotspots

Thousands of high visibility patrols have taken place following the launch of Project Salus in July 2025.

Project Salus is a partnership project, involving antisocial behaviour (ASB) patrols conducted by council enforcement officers and serious violence patrols conducted by Cleveland Police.

A total of 12,891 hours of hotspot patrols were undertaken across 36 locations in Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland during 2025/26.

This included 7,294 hours by local council enforcement officers and 5,596 hours by Cleveland Police officers and PCSOs.

In addition to the above, engagement took place with 552 residents and 348 businesses.

Enforcement action was also undertaken, such as the issuing of fixed penalty notices and section 46 warnings relating to improper waste disposal.

Other problem-solving activities include:

- ▶ Upgraded CCTV
- ▶ Night clinic and street marshals
- ▶ Campaign on CCTV, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and safety in the Night Time Economy (NTE)



Impact

As of 31st March 2026, 60% of the wards who received additional patrols experienced reductions in ASB.

Many of the areas identified as hotspots in the pilot during 2024-25 have seen sustained reductions for a second year.

The areas with the most significant reductions in ASB are:

- ▼ Ropner (Stockton) - 34.21%
- ▼ Berwick Hills (Middlesbrough) - 33.3%
- ▼ Foggy Furze (Hartlepool) - 36.14%
- ▼ Longlands (Middlesbrough) - 34.48%

The funding for this programme came to an end on 31 March 2026 and has not been extended by the Government.

However, areas still suffering from high levels of violent crime will receive targeted patrols and interventions through the new Knife Crime Concentration Fund.



At least one nuisance bike seized every day by Cleveland Police

The use of illegal off-road bikes is one of the most common issues raised with the Commissioner during his community engagement work.

A resident said:

"The biggest issue in terms of anti-social behaviour is off-road bikes. Not only do they put other drivers in harm's way but pedestrians too, as they often ride on paths and have no concern for the safety of others. There needs to be a bigger focus on getting off road bikes off the road (CCTV, drones, more patrols in high-risk areas). I think a huge part is just police visibility."



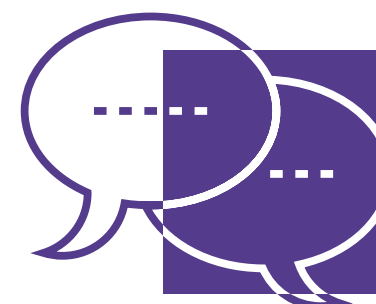
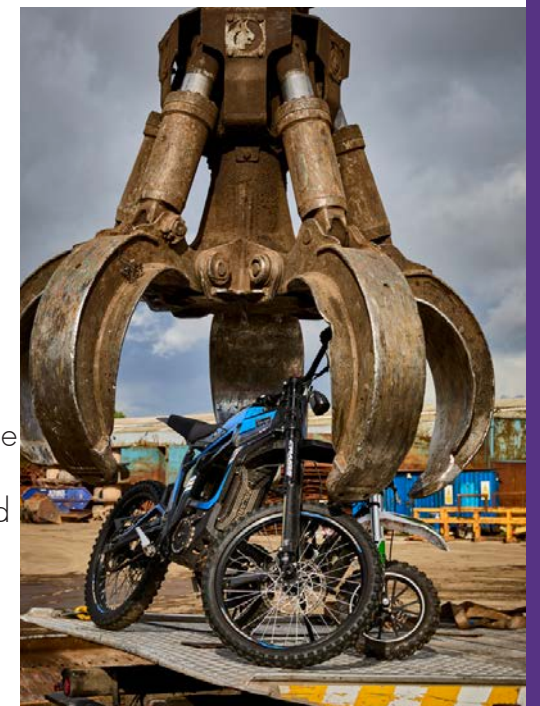
As a result, we launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of the laws relating to off-road bikes, e-scooters and e-bikes.

Results of the campaign included:

- Facebook - 23,858 views, 12,428 reach
- LinkedIn - 691 impressions

During 2025/26, Cleveland Police seized 690 motorbikes, e-bikes and quadbikes involved in criminal use. It is now the force's standard practice to crush any bikes that cannot lawfully be recovered with the appropriate insurance, tax and MOT paperwork.

In September 2025, Matt joined senior police officers at a crushing facility in Hartlepool, where several seized bikes were destroyed. Once crushed, parts from vehicles are sorted and recycled.



Matt said:

"These bikes cause so much distress and annoyance to our communities. It was very satisfying to see them destroyed, knowing they will never be used on our streets again."



Partnership established with businesses and retailers

In October 2025, the OPCC hosted a Cleveland-wide Business and Retail Crime Summit, bringing together around 60 businesses and criminal justice representatives to address the growing challenges of retail and business crime.

The summit included workshops to hear and understand the concerns of attendees, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss how businesses and the police can work better together.

Attendees told the PCC:

- ▶ Retailers had experienced an increase in the frequency and severity of crime
- ▶ Police attendance was said to be slow or absent - re-inforcing views that retail crime is not a police priority
- ▶ Intelligence systems were fragmented, with inconsistent information sharing, and a lack of a coordinated multi-agency approach
- ▶ Workers feel increasingly vulnerable and unsupported, due to verbal abuse, violence and targeted attacks

As a result of this feedback, the PCC established the Cleveland Retail Crime forum, bringing businesses together on a regular basis to respond to the shared challenges they face and develop ways to eliminate them.

Did you know?

30% of drivers who have died in a road traffic accident have tested positive for drugs (Department for Transport, 2024).

44% of drug drivers are reoffenders (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety 'PACTS', 2021).



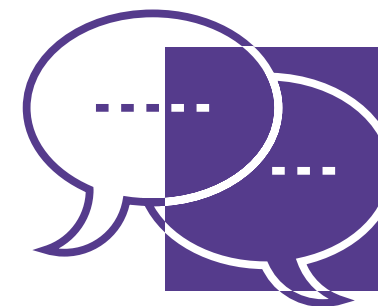
Drug drivers receive education to change their behaviour

A ground-breaking scheme to educate people convicted of drug-driving has seen 70 drivers complete the course since it began.

Launched in 2023, the Cleveland area was selected by the Department for Transport as a testing site for an educational drug-driving course – the first in the England and Wales.

Current UK legislation offers educational courses for drink-driving and for driving without due care and attention. There is no such course for those found to be driving under the influence of drugs.

Of the participants surveyed, 85 per cent said that it changed what they think about drug driving.



A participant on the course said:

"I thoroughly enjoyed this course and really hope that it is rolled out for people to attend not just after they lose their licence but before. All of our group agreed that education is key and this course has the ability to arm people with facts to enable informed choice."



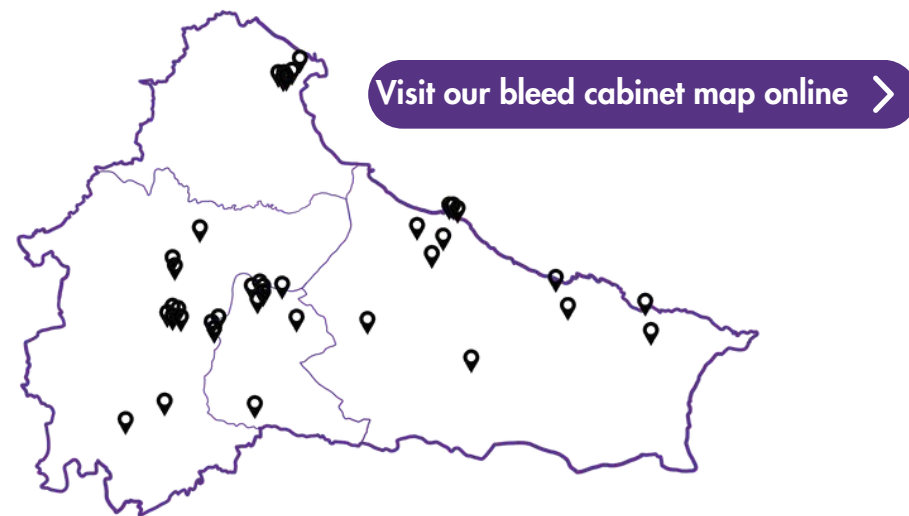


45 life-saving bleed cabinets installed across Cleveland

Since an initial pilot in Redcar in 2023, the scheme to install life-saving bleed cabinets across the Cleveland area has gone from strength-to-strength.

The cabinets each hold several pieces of equipment and instructions on how to control heavy bleeding sustained through serious injuries, for example, from car accidents, falls, dog bites and knife wounds.

Part of the Town Centre Violence Reduction Plan, there are now 45 cabinets installed in shopping centres, retail parks and sporting venues like the Riverside Stadium. Staff members have been given expert training from St John Ambulance on how to administer life-saving treatment in an emergency.



Businesses accredited as safe spaces

In January 2025, the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) launched a free accreditation scheme that trains staff in retail, hospitality and transport to act as safe spaces for customers.

The Businesses Against Abuse (BAA) initiative is designed to tackle violence against women and girls, child exploitation and knife crime.

Professionals carried out the following training help identify, report and safeguard victims:

- ▶ **ARCH and Eva Women's aid** delivered a session on violence against women and girls to recognise abuse, support victims and signpost to help
- ▶ **Ivison Trust** delivered a session on child exploitation to identify exploitation and respond safely
- ▶ **St John Ambulance** delivered a session on knife crime to demonstrate how to use a bleed kit correctly in a life-saving emergency

More than 60 local businesses completed the training, including Middleton Grange Shopping Centre in Hartlepool, which is now fully BAA accredited.

BUSINESSES AGAINST ABUSE



Middleton Grange Shopping Centre manager said:

"Knowing that our staff can now identify predatory behaviour, respond appropriately, and potentially provide life-saving first aid gives us tremendous confidence in our ability to safeguard our community."



Launch of Cleveland-wide Knife Crime Action Plan

In May 2025, CURV launched a Cleveland-wide plan to protect young people from being drawn into serious violence and knife enabled crime.

It was created after Cleveland's first multi-agency Knife Crime Summit held in March 2025 and a dedicated workshop with voluntary community sector organisations in April 2025. It has four main strands:

- ▶ **Prevention** – Educating and engaging young people early and offering positive alternatives to violence
- ▶ **Early Intervention** – Giving immediate support to young people and adults at key moments to help them avoid involvement in knife crime
- ▶ **Community Action** – Empowering the community to actively participate in reducing knife crime and support a safer Cleveland
- ▶ **Building tomorrow** – Providing people with long-term skills and opportunities, while developing sustainable solutions



£80,000 invested in projects to drive down youth-related knife crime

A total of £80,000 in funding was awarded through the CURV Knife Crime Fund, a key part of the Knife Crime Plan.

Organisations had to deliver against at least one of the following aims:

- ▶ **Raising awareness** – of the consequences of carrying or using a knife
- ▶ **Empowering young people** – to make safer, more informed choices
- ▶ **Equipping young people** – with the knowledge and confidence to act if they know someone is carrying a knife
- ▶ **Supporting parents and families** – to strengthen relationships, improve communication, and increase awareness of the risks associated with knife crime

The following schemes were successful:



St John Ambulance

£14,242.25 to deliver Young Responders Street First Aid workshops to young people and families. Sessions teach lifesaving skills, promote mental wellbeing, and encourage safer choices.

ARC Stockton

£12,350 to deliver a dynamic, trauma-informed schools initiative. It uses live, interactive performance and creative workshops to raise awareness of knife crime.



**education
training
collective**

Education Training Collective

£7,440 to deliver a college-based knife crime education programme involving guest speakers and VR technology. The programme allows students to explore decision-making and consequences of using a knife.



Billingham Boxing Academy

£17,120 to continue to deliver their Cleveland-wide knife crime prevention programme. This involves trained local coaches running trauma-informed sessions twice a week. They include physical activity, real life scenarios, interactive learning - plus hot meals for any vulnerable young participants.



MFC Foundation

£14,000 to deliver a targeted knife crime education programme in a number of schools in high-risk areas, focusing on raising awareness through interactive workshops.



Budo for Change

£13,560 to deliver combat sports classes, school-based workshops, holiday sessions, community events, and mentoring for vulnerable people. Topics include discipline, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and goal setting.

The projects achieved these results:

9,865 young people (24 and under) reached

1,061 adults (25+) reached

221 professionals trained



Youth-designed anti-knife crime animation created

In early 2025, CURV unveiled a "squad of superheroes" as part of a project to steer children away from knife crime and serious violence.

Hundreds of pupils aged 9-11 were challenged to design superhero characters who promote safe choices, build confidence and resist peer pressure to carry knives.

After careful consideration, Police and Crime Commissioner Matt Storey selected six characters who best captured the project's message.

The finished animation - brought to life by Silver Lining Animation - debuted during CURV's Youth Safety Summit at the Riverside Stadium.

The animation will now be used as an educational tool in schools and shared on community platforms. It aims to start conversations about the dangers of knife crime and the importance of making positive choices.

For the children with winning designs, their schools each received £500 from the PCC to spend on resources to promote positive choices.

[Watch the full animation here](#)





Major awareness campaign launched to tackle hate crime

In October 2025, the PCC launched a hate crime awareness campaign on behalf of the Cleveland Strategic Hate Crime Partnership.

Hate Ends Here is aimed at increasing public understanding of hate-related crime and includes three key messages aimed at victims, perpetrators and witnesses so they can:

- **Recognise** – help people understand what hate crime is
- **Report** – highlight the ways people can report hate crime
- **Recover** – signpost victims and witnesses to appropriate support services

The campaign brought together local authorities, community organisations, police and other stakeholders to deliver public messaging through social media graphics and posters.



10-year Hate Crime Strategy launched

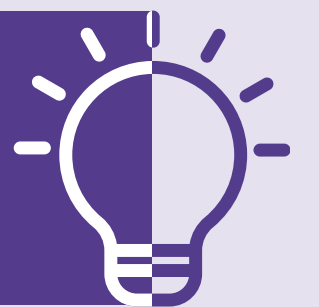
Further work through the Cleveland Strategic Hate Crime Partnership, which the PCC chairs, saw the creation of a new strategy to stamp out hate and build safer communities.

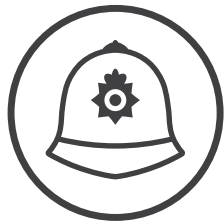
The key outcomes include:

- People understand what hate crime is, how to report it and how to access support
- Hateful attitudes and behaviours are challenged
- Victims of hate crime and hate incidents have access to appropriate support
- Reports of hate crime are robustly investigated
- Hate crime perpetrators receive an appropriate sanction

Vision of the Hate Crime Strategy

"For all adults and children in Cleveland to be able to live free from hatred and hostility motivated by prejudice."





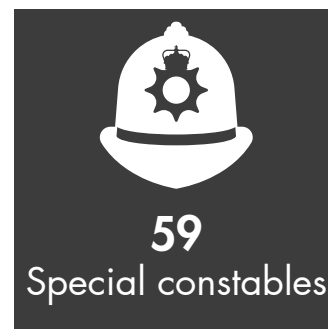
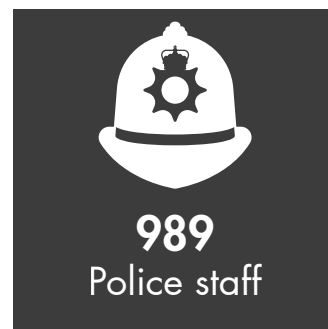
PRIORITY 2: Deliver more visible and effective policing

Police understand local concerns and provide a visible and proactive response.

How we're measuring success

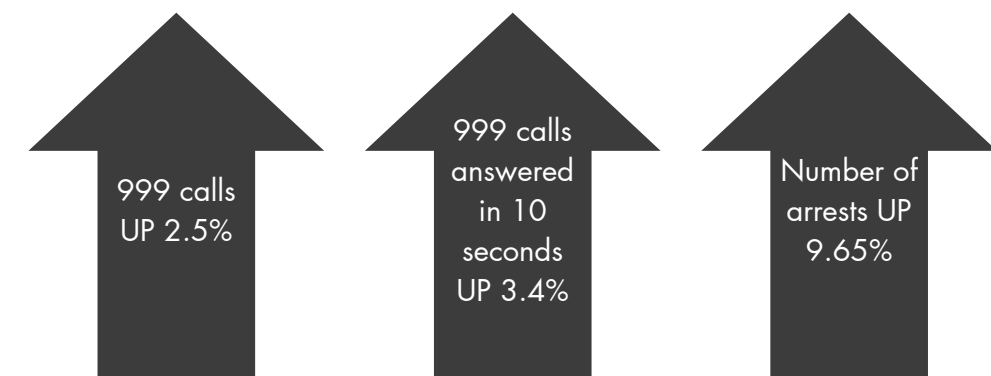
Despite ongoing recruitment, the number of police officers in Cleveland remains below 2010 levels. Matt continues to lobby the Government for additional investment to increase the number of policing resources across Cleveland.

The figures below, show Cleveland Police's staffing levels at 28 February 2026:



Cleveland Police's control room is often the first point of contact for the public when they require police assistance. During 2025, Cleveland Police received 114,945 999 calls – 2,931 more calls than the previous year. Only 0.21% of these calls were abandoned. The force received 200,273 101 calls, a slight reduction on 2024.

Officers made more arrests during 2025 than the previous year, with 13,028 arrests made. This means 1,147 more people were arrested than during 2024.



Cleveland Police continues to exceed national averages for crimes resulting in a charge or a summons, where the criminal offence will be heard at court. However, not all cases are heard in court. The most common reason a case receives no further action is because a suspect has not been identified (37.7% of cases) or because a victim does not support police action (27.4%).





£2m investment in neighbourhood policing brings 60 additional staff
In June 2025, the PCC and Assistant Chief Constable Dave Sutherland launched the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

This saw Cleveland Police receive £2.4m in Government funding to recruit additional staff for neighbourhood policing, including:

- 20 police officers
- 31 PCSOs
- 12 special constables

The nationally driven investment in neighbourhood policing required each force to identify dedicated, contactable officers for every local policing area. Cleveland residents can find out who their local officer is on Cleveland Police's website.

Members of the public are now able to contact their local neighbourhood team online to find out where and when they can meet local officers.

The Guarantee has led to increased visibility in town centres, local policing priorities being agreed with local people, a commitment to updating the public on progress against tackling these priorities, and a clear plan to tackle ASB and retail crime.



New Chief Constable recruited to lead the force on to the next chapter
2025 brought a significant leadership transition within Cleveland Police. June saw Victoria Fuller appointed as the force's new Chief Constable following the retirement of former leader Mark Webster.

Formerly the force's Deputy Chief Constable, Victoria was appointed by the PCC following a rigorous recruitment exercise.

Chief Constable Fuller brings a wealth of experience and has a clear vision for Cleveland Police. Her leadership is instrumental in driving forward the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan to ensure Cleveland communities feel safe, strong and more confident.





Fight continues for fairer funding for Cleveland area

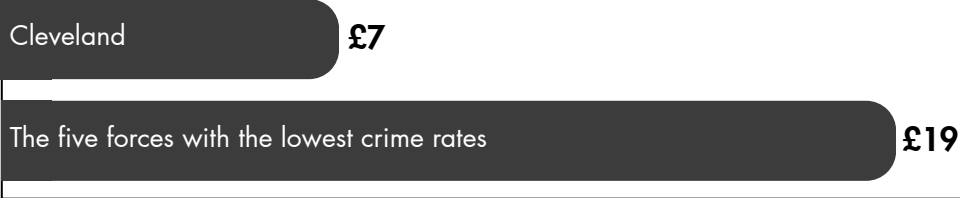
In April 2025, the PCC wrote a letter to the Treasury to launch his Fairer Funding, Safer Cleveland campaign.



The campaign highlights disparities between Cleveland’s significant demands and the outdated funding formula used to set levels of police and victim funding in England and Wales. It is backed by local victim services and members of parliament.

Funding provided by the Ministry of Justice for victim support is calculated on the population of the police force area, **not** on crime rates or demand on victim services.

This has led to the situation where the five forces in England and Wales with the lowest crime rates receive around £19 per crime for victim support services. Cleveland, with the highest crime rate in the country, receives just £7 per crime.



Funding for victim support services per crime 2022/23



Police wellbeing put under the microscope

Police officers and staff in Cleveland face significant demand, with many being directly involved in distressing and traumatising incidents.

Understandably, this can have a lasting impact on morale and wellbeing.

During 2025/26, Matt added police wellbeing to his scrutiny programme, to understand how Cleveland Police provide high-quality support to police officers, staff and volunteers.

The PCC was assured by the force’s wellbeing provision, which includes an in-house wellbeing team, an external 24/7 employee assistance programme, an annual staff survey and a Trauma Risk Incident Management (TRIM) programme.



Improved police accessibility and contact

It’s important that the public can easily contact the police when needed and the PCC expects that they receive an appropriate, proportionate response.

In 2025, Cleveland Police launched a new ‘live chat’ service on their website. It is available every day from 8am until 7pm for non-urgent matters, with a proposal to increase this to 24/7 coverage in the near future.

As part of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, residents can now directly contact their local officers and PCSOs through the Cleveland Police website. It is expected that they receive a 72-hour response to contact via this route.

The PCC is monitoring compliance with this target through his scrutiny programme.





PRIORITY 3: Improve safety for women and girls

Women and girls in Cleveland will feel safe and supported. Perpetrators will be held accountable.

How we're measuring success

In the year ending March 2026, the total number of recorded crimes relating to violence against women and girls (VAWG) was 16,047. Whilst this is a slight drop from the previous 12 months, it must be recognised that VAWG offences are significantly underreported and reductions are not a true reflection of the scale of offending. Arrests are made for VAWG-related offences in 30% of cases, a slight increase on last year.

More than 2,600 applications were made under the Clare's Law scheme to the year ending March 2026, an increase of 191 on the previous 12 months. The percentage of applications that resulted in a disclosure dropped slightly and currently stands at 34.1%



Since their introduction, more than 530 Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) have been secured by police. Around half of these are still active.



The PCC commissions several specialist services to support victims of sexual violence, domestic abuse and stalking to recover from their experiences. In total, almost 10,000 victims have been referred for this specialist care.





Systems established to embed 10-year domestic abuse strategy

Since its launch in April 2025, work on the Tees-wide Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy has focused on establishing structures and meetings that will allow key workstreams to be delivered.

The strategy has three key priorities:

- **Prevent** – By encouraging people to recognise, respond and refer concerns as early as possible
- **Protect** – By identifying perpetrators and holding abusive behaviour to account
- **Pursue** – By using protective measures to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators

A Partnership Board has been established to monitor progress against four key workstreams – each of which has a one-year action plan for 2026/27.



Multi-agency group established to examine responses to stalking

Did you know?

Approximately 90% of stalking cases link to existing domestic abuse.



Following a local roundtable held in November 2024, the OPCC has convened a new multi-agency working group on the whole-system response to stalking.

The group, which operates under the Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy, will ensure any response to stalking supports victims and holds perpetrators to account.

Since being established, the group has completed a system-wide analysis to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the current response to stalking cases. An action plan has been developed to drive this work forward.

Partners have worked collaboratively to ensure Cleveland is ready to bid to the Home Office Perpetration Fund from a strong evidence base. This will ensure that critical resources further strengthen local provision and intervention.





Over 100 professionals trained to spot stalking behaviour in teenagers

More than 100 children's practitioners took part in specialist training to help them identify stalking behaviours in adolescents and to support young people to recognise unhealthy relationships.



Two day-long events were held in March 2026, delivered by the Alice Ruggles Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundations Trust (TEWV). One of the sessions was hosted by Clive Ruggles, father of Alice Ruggles who was murdered by her stalker in Gateshead in 2016.

Funded by the PCC, the sessions raised awareness of the impact of stalking, how to identify the warning signs and how to respond effectively to safeguard young people.

Attendees reported significantly increased knowledge of adolescent stalking behaviour and improved confidence working with victims and perpetrators of stalking.



Sexual Harms Network established to bring system-wide change

Established in May 2025, the Sexual Harms Network brings together discussions, activities and future planning around sexual abuse, violence and exploitation across all age groups.

At present there are 85 strategic members engaged in the Network, who represent a range of sectors working to reduce sexual harm in Cleveland's communities. The collaborative space created by the Network allows members to seek support from partners and make connections to maximise service delivery.

Led by a Development Manager employed by Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency, a Sexual Harms Needs Assessment will be conducted and a strategy developed to ensure plans are place to make meaningful change.



How attendees plan to use their new knowledge on adolescent stalking:

"To consider the "double edged sword" for young people who come through for an offence - not overlooking that they might have been a victim of stalking or harassment."

"Approach assessments more curiously and in depth, considering core childhood needs and risk from others."

"Including the stalking concept in sex/relationships education."

"By being mindful of the stereotypes of what a stalker is."





Hundreds of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders secured

The Cleveland Police force area was selected as one of the pilot areas to implement a new civil order to provide enhanced protection to victims of domestic abuse.

The new Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) provides flexible, longer-term protection for victims. They are issued by the court to protect people affected by all forms of abuse, including non-physical abuse and coercive controlling behaviour.

They can be used to impose restrictions and conditions on a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Breaching a DAPO is a criminal offence and can result in five years imprisonment, a fine or both.

In the last year, 533 DAPOs were secured by Cleveland Police, with 299 currently still active against perpetrators.



Service commissioned to work with high-harm abusers

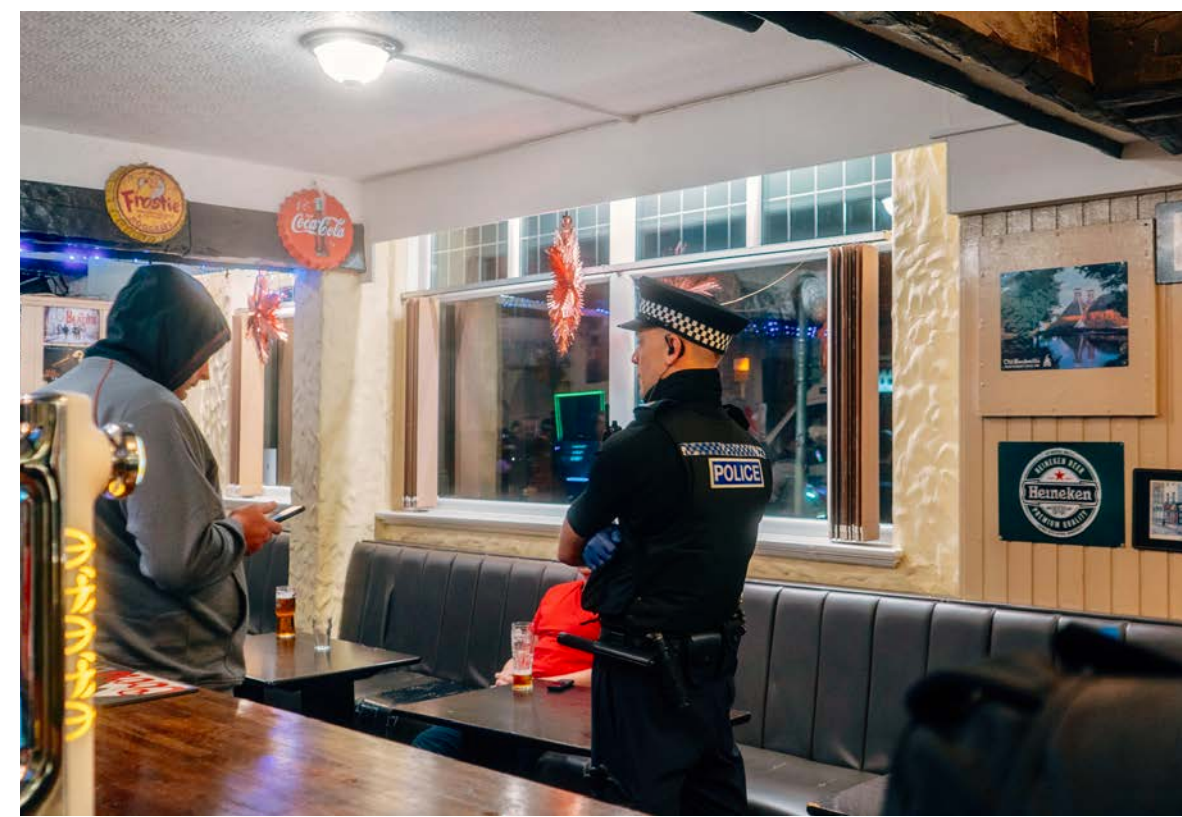
A nationally proven project, aimed at reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse, was introduced in Cleveland in December 2025.

The Drive Project will work with high-risk, high-harm perpetrators to tackle the underlying causes of abuse, change behaviour and stop harm at source.

The Drive Project delivers intensive one-to-one case management to challenge and change perpetrator behaviour.

Measures may also include work to address drug misuse and alcohol dependency or to find alternative accommodation to prevent distressing the victim or their children.

The scheme will start to receive referrals from July 2026.





Conference held to highlight the 'The Silent Emergency' facing women

In November 2025, the PCC supported the Cleveland Women's Network's 'One in Three' conference.

The event brought together local specialist charities who work tirelessly to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Together with survivors, policy makers, and advocates, they discussed the stark reality that 22% of recorded crime in Cleveland relates to violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Despite the significant challenges, attendees heard how Government funding has not kept pace with the increasing demand facing police and victim support services.

An Action Plan has now been produced to create individual accountability for partners to ensure more victims are protected.



Additional funding secured for sexual violence counselling

The PCC secured over £90,000 in NHS England funding to support local charity Arch Teesside to increase its capacity to deliver counselling for victim-survivors of sexual violence.

The investment will provide extra counselling sessions for victim-survivors up to March 2027, in a bid to help reduce waiting times for those seeking support.

Demand for sexual violence services like those provided by Arch has increased significantly over the last few years. Cleveland has the highest rate of sexual offences in England and Wales, and delays in court proceedings mean victim-survivors may require specialist support for longer periods.



Lisa Russell, ARCH Teesside Clinical Lead, said:

"This past year has tested our services in ways we could never have imagined.

"This support doesn't just keep our doors open, it gives us the stability to reach even more survivors across Teesside, offering them the safety, compassion and understanding they desperately need and truly deserve."





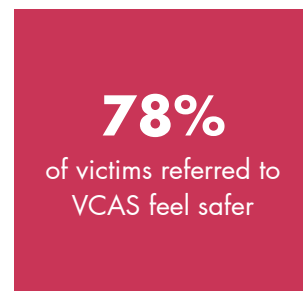
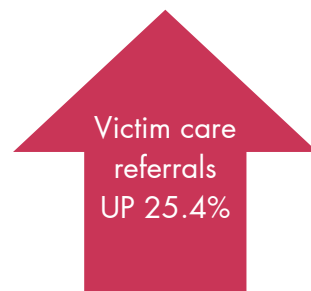
PRIORITY 4: Ensure the right support for victims and vulnerable people

Victims and vulnerable people feel supported and listened to, with access to high-quality services at the right time.

How we're measuring success

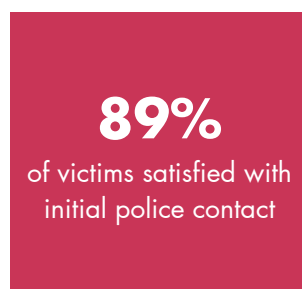
Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) is the flagship victim referral service operating in the Cleveland Police force area. It provides free, confidential support for victims and witnesses of crimes, following self-referrals or referrals from the police or other agencies.

In the year to March 2026, VCAS received referrals for 593 victims of crime, with significant increases in referrals for victims of antisocial behaviour or harassment (+61%) and assault (+32%).



Cleveland Police has a duty under the Victims Code of Practice to provide timely updates to victims, to identify when victims need an enhanced service and to refer them for onward support.

There has been a slight drop in victim satisfaction with the overall police experience (-2.2%), with fewer victims feeling satisfied with police follow-up and police actions taken.



Extra grants to enhance support for victims and vulnerable people

In July 2025, charities across Cleveland were invited to bid for up to £15,000 to run projects to help vulnerable victims and under-represented groups.

The Protect and Support Fund was created to enhance support for specific target groups. Projects aim to help them recover from the after-effects of incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB).

Projects must:

- ▶ Enhance support and protection for vulnerable victims
- ▶ Reach and support underrepresented groups

Following assessment, a total of £182,167 was allocated to 13 local organisations.



Eva Women's Aid

£7,500 – For the delivery of specialist groupwork programmes, supporting women who are victim-survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence.

Age UK Teesside

£15,000 – Delivery of a short-term befriending service for female victims of domestic abuse aged 50+ living in the Middlesbrough area.



Hart Gables

£12,384 – Delivery of targeted support for victims of LGBTQ+ hate, expanding existing work with underrepresented LGBTQ+ communities.

Open Door North East

£14,868 – Delivery of 'Safe Steps: Preparing Clients for Safety and Life in the UK' programme. The initiative includes targeted safety and support workshops for asylum seekers and refugees living in Home Office accommodation.



Daisy Chain Project Teesside

£15,000 – Support for the Stronger Voices project to protect and support autistic and neurodivergent young people (aged 14–25) who are disproportionately at risk of becoming vulnerable victims of crime, exploitation, and serious harm.

Creative Minds and Purple Rose

£15,000 – Delivery of 20 sessions to Black, Asian and Global Majority (BAGM) women with a focus on safety and support including how to report to access services.



Catalyst Stockton

£15,000 – Support for a new, dedicated Community Connector based at The Wellbeing Hub in Stockton-on-Tees. This is to ensure victims of crime, abuse, and trauma are compassionately signposted to appropriate services.

Brake

£9,100 – Provision of specialist support for road traffic victims.



Arch Teesside

£15,000 – Funding for a new navigator role. It will provide trauma-informed support to survivors of sexual violence who are awaiting access to counselling or ISVA services.

TransformersHPL

£9,500 – A series of community workshops and events to raise awareness and help communities recognise domestic abuse incidents which may go unnoticed or unreported under the guise of culture.



Refugee Futures

£14,855 – Funding will be used to reach and support under-represented groups. It will do this by working with people seeking asylum and refugees in Stockton, building community knowledge and confidence in local support services.

Deaf Empowering Network

£13,820 – Support for a one-day, multi-agency awareness and engagement event. It will bring together emergency services, domestic abuse support agencies, safeguarding partners, and national Video Remote Service (VRS) providers to demonstrate how their services can support deaf people.



My Sisters Place

£13,740 – Development of a secure, multilingual online chat service. It will provide victims of domestic abuse in Cleveland with fast, safe, and discreet access to support.



More than 50 community members recruited to spot exploitation

A brand new scheme for 2025, the Community Guardians programme trains trusted people in communities, such as hairdressers and shopworkers, to identify and respond to child exploitation.

The PCC worked with the Tees Harm Outside the Home Partnership to commission national exploitation experts, the Ivison Trust, to deliver the scheme in Cleveland.

Volunteers will be given the training to recognise when young people are being exploited, as well as being equipped with the tools to report their concerns to responsible authorities.

Since the scheme launched in October 2025, 56 people have completed their training to be Community Guardians, with five pieces of information referred to appropriate bodies.



A community guardian participant said:

"Since my training, I have set up a group in the community to incorporate the use of ring door bells and CCTV to keep young people safe."



Stand up against child exploitation in Cleveland:

Become a Community Guardian



New Hate Crime Charter launched in commitment to victims

In partnership with Cleveland Police, the OPCC jointly produced a Hate Crime Charter.

The charter was developed using feedback from victims of hate crime and the Cleveland Strategic Hate Crime Partnership. It sets out the force's promise to ensure all reports of hate crime are taken seriously.

The document covers three main areas:

- ▶ What is considered a hate crime
- ▶ How to report incidents of hate crime
- ▶ What to expect once a report of a hate crime has been made

The PCC will monitor how well the force deliver against the Charter, through engagement with the Hate Crime Partnership and diverse groups.

[Access the charter here](#)





Advocates reclaim more than a million pounds for victims of fraud

It has been another successful year for the Financial Fraud Advocate scheme, which helps victims of fraud to recover their financial loss and prevent repeat victimisation.



Delivered by Safer Communities, the specially trained advocates have secured more than £1m in refunds for victims of fraud since the project's launch in January 2025.

They have handled more than 100 cases during this time, supporting people to recover from incidents like investment fraud, romance fraud and rogue traders.

70% of victims supported by the advocates are over the age of 55.

85-year-old Joan Holdaway was supported by the advocates. She lost £1,000 to fraudsters, who repeatedly called her promoting a bogus investment scheme.

Ms Holdaway said: "I don't think you ever get over it, really. I think it stays with you and you wonder about anybody that you don't know; are they who they say they are? It's really dreadful."

Joan was supported by the advocates to reclaim the full amount she lost and is seeking onward support for the psychological impact of the crime.



Nine-point charter developed to define rights of ASB victims

Organisations across Cleveland have signed up to a new charter to set minimum standards of service for victims of antisocial behaviour.

Led by the Commissioner, Cleveland ASB Charter has been developed with local organisations including local authorities, police and housing associations.

It defines what victims can expect when they report ASB to the police and other agencies, what response they should receive and how they can access support.

The Cleveland ASB Charter consists of nine core commitments to victims:

- You will be treated with dignity and respect
- You will be able to understand and be understood
- The details of the incident will be recorded without justifiable delay
- A referral to support services will be offered with any support tailored to meet your needs
- You will be given information about any investigation or prosecution
- You will be given the opportunity to make a Victim Impact Statement
- You will be given information about the outcome of the case and appeal
- You can make a complaint about your needs not being met
- You can ask for an Antisocial Behaviour Case Review

The Cleveland organisations that have signed up to the charter include:

- Cleveland Police
- North Star Housing
- Accent Group
- Thirteen Housing
- Beyond Housing
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Redcar and Cleveland Council





Extension for successful football diversionary programme

Last year, the PCC agreed to expand a successful project aimed at creating opportunities for young people at risk of antisocial behaviour.

As part of its new contract, Premier League Kicks, run by Middlesbrough Football Club (MFC) Foundation, will expand sessions in the borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

The PL Kicks programme is an initiative that uses football and the brand of a professional football club to engage eight to 18-year-olds. It does this in areas with high levels of youth antisocial behaviour and violence.

The programme offers open access, free of charge sessions. They include coaching in a range of sports, including football, together with workshops on targeted issues such as knife crime.

The latest round of PCC funding, which comes to £24,000 per year, secures football training sessions for four years to 2029.

In the last 12 months, the sessions have reached 2,242 young people.

A participant was referred by their social worker to Premier League Kicks. They were experiencing multiple challenges including school refusal, low confidence, emotional regulation and relationship breakdown with parent.

The young person took part in one-to-one mentoring and local Premier League Kicks sessions. Since engaging on the programme, the young person has increased their confidence. Communication skills and emotion regulation have also developed.

They said: "My sessions have helped me gain both confidence on and off the pitch. Staff have helped me develop strategies and techniques to control my anger."



New prevention panel pilot rolled out

Between October 2025 and March 2026, 27 vulnerable young people were referred to support services through a Young Futures' Prevention Partnership Panel.

The PCC secured a share of £200,000 Home Office funding to support the government's wider 'Safer Streets' mission to reduce serious harm, tackle crime at its roots, and restore public confidence in policing.

Delivered by CURV, the pilot project enhances and supports the work of the Hartlepool Inclusion Panel (HIP).

It works to boost existing support services that prevent young people aged 10-17 from turning to a life of crime, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and serious violence.

By working in close partnership with Cleveland Police, Hartlepool Borough Council, the Youth Justice Service and other key partners, the panel ensures appropriate intervention and services to improve opportunities for young people across Cleveland.

Focused on early intervention, the panel supports children before they become involved in crime, targeting those who may be overlooked by existing services or do not reach the threshold of current statutory services.

CURV was one of 20 pathfinder areas chosen nationally to lead the Young Futures' Prevention Partnership Panel pilot last year. Its role in the trial shaped how the programme has been developed.

A further £200,000 has now been secured to continue the work for 12 months from April 2026.



Listening to victims to drive improvements and design services

Matt regularly engages directly with victims and survivors of crime, to ensure that their voices remain at the heart of policy, commissioning and project development.

Throughout 2025-26, the PCC or his team attended focus groups to meet victim-survivors supported by our commissioned services.

Victims of retail crime	Attendees described significant emotional, operational, and financial impacts - alongside concerns about police capacity, ineffective deterrents, and insufficient employer support. Calls for stronger action, better protection measures, and more coordinated responses.
Victims of hate crime	Victims stressed the significant impact hate crime had on them, leaving them frightened, isolated and frustrated. Many felt schools, employers, housing associations and other organisations did not support them appropriately. Mixed experiences with police.
Victims of fraud	All victims described common feelings of shame, embarrassment, and self-blame for being scammed. When signposted to the fraud advocate service, the group described feeling a sense of relief. Some victims were able to recover part/all of their lost funds with this support.
Victims of sexual violence	Victim-survivors of sexual violence were consulted to inform the recommissioning of the Cleveland Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service. All attendees felt the ISVA service was crucial to their recovery, thanks to consistent communication, person-centred care and practical support through the justice system.



Understanding the needs of under-represented victims of crime

Between January and March 2026, the PCC funded a project to understand the barriers facing under-represented or marginalised communities, who may be affected by crime.

The Tees Valley Infrastructure Partnership were commissioned to work with voluntary community organisations (VCOs) who already have established and trusted relationships with individuals or groups.

It was recognised that the VCOs were best placed to support with this project, as they have extensive knowledge and expertise in working with marginalised communities.

This engagement work included, but was not limited to, the following groups:

- ▶ Black and minority ethnic (BME)
- ▶ Disabled, including deaf, and neurodiverse people
- ▶ LGBTQ+
- ▶ Older people (50+)
- ▶ Young people
- ▶ People experiencing homelessness

The project was led by Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA), who tailored their engagement to ensure they reduced barriers to participation and included a diverse range of participants.

Activity included focus groups, digital surveys, face-to-face discussions, events and conversations with community leaders.

A report of this research, including recommendations for commissioners, was produced. The report includes advice on how to engage with people with lived experience, how they should be supported and how they can assist to co-design or co-produce services. It will be published during 2026.



PRIORITY 5: Building trust and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system

People have more confidence in the police and wider justice system.

How we're measuring success

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) measures public satisfaction with policing and can be broken down into specific force areas. Overall confidence in Cleveland Police increased by 4.6 percentage points to the year ending March 2026, but remains below the national average of 66.9%.

All confidence measures for Cleveland Police listed below improved over the reporting period. The force exceeded national measures for people who say police treat people fairly and how well police understand local concerns. However, Cleveland Police continues to have some of the lowest confidence levels in the country.



There has been no significant change in the timeliness of cases being handled by police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the court system. The average length of time for police to charge an offender for a victim-based crime is 40 days nationally, making Cleveland's 17-day average much quicker.

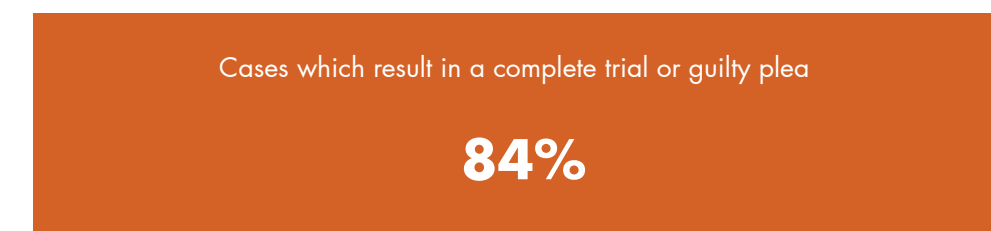
Cleveland also has shorter waiting times for cases to come to completion at court, with a 146-day average wait, in comparison to the national average of 161 days. These are still significant delays for court proceedings, which can have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of victims.



During 2025, 28% of investigations in Cleveland were closed as the victim did not support police action. This is slightly above the national average of 26%, but no change on 2024.

For the last two years, there has been a successful outcome in 11% of victim-based cases in Cleveland, which is slightly lower than the national average of 12%.

A greater percentage of cases in Cleveland result in a complete trial or guilty plea, than occur nationally.





PCC continues to engage with communities, organisations and businesses

The PCC has continued to deliver his Shape Your Safety community engagement programme, which is an opportunity for him to learn more about public priorities and concerns about policing, community safety and crime.

The programme has six key strands, identifying groups that the PCC seeks to engage with when developing new solutions to keep Cleveland safe:

- Public
- Partners and stakeholders
- Lived experience
- Young people
- Under-represented groups
- Policing insight

Across the reporting period, the OPCC team was involved in 283 engagements and the Commissioner personally attended 92% of them.

More than 1,600 people took part in the OPCC’s surveys and consultations, in addition to the hundreds of people engaged with in face-to-face activities, meetings and events.



Highlights

A summary of some of our engagement highlights can be found below.

Precept consultation	Our annual survey on the police budget and council tax contributions to policing. Of the 1,223 respondents that completed the survey, 56% were willing to pay at least £18 a year more (based on a Band D property). Antisocial behaviour was identified by 40% of respondents as their most pressing issue.
Victim support survey	We undertook a survey to understand the type of support people expect if they become a victim of crime or antisocial behaviour (ASB). It was completed by 329 members of the public and 62 staff from the police or other agencies. Feedback will be used to inform the commissioning of victim services beyond March 2027.
Victim focus groups	The PCC attended focus groups with victims affected by hate crime, sexual violence, retail crime and fraud.
Offender engagement	There was a renewed focus this year on engaging with people already within the criminal justice system. This included the PCC visiting people in prison, on probation and doing unpaid work.
Young voices on knife crime	During February and March, the OPCC hosted five youth events to understand the views of young people on reporting to police and tackling knife crime. A specific focus was given to engage with young people outside of mainstream education.
Retail crime summit	The PCC hosted an event to listen to retailers and businesses about how they were being affected by crime. Concerns were raised about increasing frequency of retail crime, poor police response, fragmented information sharing and wellbeing impact on shopworkers.

Access full reports on our consultation activity here >

What you told us

Feedback from across all engagement work can be summarised as below:

- Concerns about drug crime, shoplifting and antisocial behaviour, including the criminal use of bikes.
- Perceived lack of police visibility and action. Calls for improved engagement and contact options.
- Frustration at criminal justice outcomes, including poor sentences at court.
- Impact of crime on retailers and businesses, including abuse against shopworkers.
- Worries about using public spaces, including town centres and public transport due to visible homelessness and substance misuse.
- Lack of confidence to report hate crime. Issues include language barriers and fear of repercussions.
- Call for improvements to the physical environment, including better lighting, more CCTV and improved traffic calming measures.

What we did

"Stop ASB in my community."	We have developed the ASB Charter, which sets out what victims should expect from police and other agencies. We've also worked with the police on their new ASB Action Plan and will hold them to account for its delivery.
"Keep listening to young people."	This year, we hosted another series of youth events to ensure views are captured. A report will be sent to senior leaders to influence change.
"Make the night-time economy safer."	The PCC and Middlesbrough Mayor Chris Cooke joined police on a walkabout around the town centre in the early hours of the morning.
"Stop retail theft and assault."	The PCC hosted a Retail Crime Summit to listen to the needs of businesses. As a result of this event, a more permanent forum has been established to continue information-sharing and positive practice.
"Raise awareness of hate crime"	The OPCC developed an awareness raising campaign called Hate Ends Here to educate victims, witnesses and perpetrators. We also commissioned an animation to help sign-post victims to specialist support.



Young people have their say on tackling knife crime

Following the success of a series of events with college pupils in 2024-25, the Shape Your Safety: Young Voices programme returned for 2025/26. This year, the events focused on solutions to prevent young people from becoming involved in knife crime.

The events were designed to amplify the voices of those who are often overlooked, especially young people outside mainstream education who may be living with additional vulnerabilities, complex personal circumstances or involvement with the criminal justice system.

The OPCC visited the following provisions:

- The Horizon School, Hartlepool
- Outwood Alternative Provision, Eston
- King's Trust with Stockton Riverside College
- King's Trust with Redcar and Cleveland College

The half-day sessions were delivered by the PCC and a co-facilitator from Cleveland Police. They had four main elements:

- Learn the statistics around knife crime with a quiz
- An interactive "Would You Report?" exercise to discuss crime reporting options
- A discussion around why knife crime happens, using a local case study
- Work with a local doodle artist to develop solutions to tackle knife crime

The team also hosted a session at Bede College, where A-Level students worked in groups during lesson time to develop solutions to knife crime. The top five ideas were presented to the PCC and other senior stakeholders, before the best idea was selected.

The winning idea – taking a public health approach to violence - was presented at the Youth Safety Summit in March 2025.

A full report on this work is being developed and will be published in May 2026.





Complaints team maintains Customer Excellence Accreditation

Since 2022, a team within the OPCC has handled initial complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction about Cleveland Police and its officers.

During 2025/26, the Resolution Team dealt with 2,199 complaints and 80 reviews.

They successfully maintained the ‘Compliance Plus’ rating through the Customer Excellence Accreditation for the third year running.

The team provide a swift response to complainants and refer more complex complaints to the force. This year 68% of all police complaints were resolved by the team.

The team continue to demonstrate strong performance promptly logging and contacting complainants to provide explanations to the concerns raised.

Public Complaints	Cleveland	Nationally
Average Time to finalise complaints	16 days	22 days
Average time to provide an outcome for a complaint review	6 days	57 days



Scheme launched to monitor wellbeing of police dogs

In 2025/26, the OPCC successfully recruited a group of Independent Animal Welfare Volunteers for its Animal Welfare Scheme.

Volunteers are members of the public with no direct involvement in policing, selected for their commitment to animal welfare and their ability to provide impartial oversight.

The scheme provides independent scrutiny of the care, treatment and overall welfare of police dogs. Volunteers ensure all procedures remain ethical, humane and transparent, in line with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Independent Animal Welfare Volunteers now actively monitor and report on the conditions in which police dogs are housed, trained and transported. Their role is central to strengthening public understanding of, and confidence in, the standards of care provided to police dogs.

The scheme covers all individuals who interact with police dogs, including handlers and trainers, and applies to all environments police dogs encounter - such as dog units, kennels and police vehicles.

During visits, volunteers assess training practices, accommodation and transport arrangements to ensure compliance with recognised animal welfare standards.

Volunteers conduct visits in pairs and are accompanied by a dog handler or a member of the Force’s Dog Support Unit to ensure safe and effective access to all relevant areas.

Since the launch, three formal welfare visits have been completed. These visits are an important milestone, demonstrating that the scheme is now operational and actively monitoring welfare standards.





PCC puts force under the spotlight on public priorities

On behalf of the residents of Cleveland, the PCC has continued to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of an efficient and effective police service.

In addition to weekly meetings between the Chief Constable and the PCC, the force is also held accountable during monthly scrutiny meetings. The meetings cover a specific topic or area of policing, during which senior police officers answer questions set by the PCC.

Following the meeting, the PCC will provide a level of assurance on this topic:

- **Green:** Assured
- **Yellow:** Partly assured
- **Red:** Not assured

Meeting date	Topic	Assurance level
May 2025	PEEL Assessment	Assured
June 2025	Neighbourhood Policing	Partly Assured
July 2025	Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)	Assured
September 2025	Tackling Offending and Re-Offending - Out of Court Resolutions	Not Assured
October 2025	Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders	Assured
November 2025	Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the Angiolini Inquiry	Assured
December 2025	Serious Violence, including drug-related offences	Assured
January 2025	Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP)	Assured
February 2025	Anti-Social Behaviour	Assured
March 2025	Police Trust and Confidence	Partly Assured
March 2025	Right Care Right Person - An Update	Partly Assured

Detailed notes on the questions set by the PCC and the response provided by Cleveland Police are published on the OPCC website.

[See scrutiny meeting notes here](#) ➤



PCC calls for urgent review of electronic tagging of offenders

In April 2025, Channel 4 broadcast a Dispatches report, Britain's Criminal Tagging Scandal: Undercover, which focused heavily on the electronic tagging of offenders in Cleveland.

The programme highlighted serious failings in the electronic monitoring of offenders, including operations management, technology reliability, equipment backlogs, ineffective contract arrangements and lack of response to breach notifications.

The Commissioner wrote a letter to the Home Secretary to raise his concerns, in his capacity as PCC and the Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board. He highlighted the risks posed by the poor delivery of the tagging contract and sought assurances on how the Ministry of Justice will rectify the shortcomings.



Matt said:

"Time and again, we see high-value contracts awarded to low-cost bidders with histories of underperformance – even fraud – ultimately placing further strain on the very communities these services are meant to protect."

"I urge Government departments to end the practice of awarding contracts for essential public services to private companies that prioritise profit over the quality of service."

Matt will continue to seek assurances from local partners on the delivery of the tagging programme, to ensure efforts are being made to improve the service delivered.



Police ethics champion awarded for voluntary service

The Independent Ethics Committee is a group of volunteers who help Cleveland Police maintain high standards of ethical conduct to improve public trust and confidence in policing.

The Committee acts as a critical friend, by considering a range of ethical dilemmas facing the force.

During the last financial year the Committee considered the following issues:

- ▶ The use of social media platform X
- ▶ Releasing the ethnicity of suspects to media
- ▶ Home visits during police officer recruitment
- ▶ The use of Section 60 stop and search powers

The Chair of the Committee, Dave Smith, won a prestigious Lord Ferrers Award in November 2025 for his contribution to police volunteering.

He was nominated by the OPCC for his commitment to police ethics and his chairmanship of the Ethics Committee, which he has undertaken for the last decade.



Information leaflet developed to debunk myths around migration

The Commissioners for Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria shared a concern around misinformation circulating about migration, asylum seekers and refugees.

They agreed to work with the North East Migration Partnership on a leaflet and information sheet to directly address common myths about people who arrive in the UK. The documents provide evidence-based facts on issues ranging from welfare, employment, crime and housing.

In 2024, hate crime in Cleveland increased by 17 per cent, with a specific spike after the violent disorder that took place during the summer.

Key facts from the leaflet include:

- ▶ There is no evidence to suggest that migrants increase crime.
- ▶ The UK ranked 17th in Europe for asylum applications per capita in 2021.
- ▶ Migrants contribute an estimated £341,000 more to public finances than they take from them during their lifetime.
- ▶ Asylum seekers are less likely to claim benefits than UK-born individuals.

[Access the myth buster documents here](#) ➔





Independent visitors keep watchful eye over police custody conditions

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are community volunteers who make unannounced visits to police stations, to check on the welfare and rights of people detained in police custody.



It has been a busy year for Cleveland's volunteers! In addition to the 32 visits they undertook, they have recently completed new online training provided by the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA) and were visited by the PCC at Middlesbrough Custody Suite.

Feedback highlighted by ICVs includes:

- Availability of blankets during busy periods
- Graffiti and paint conditions
- Wear and tear of pillows
- Cells reported as clean and tidy on many occasions
- Custody supplies checked and in order

Cleveland's ICV scheme is among the most highly rated in the country. After achieving a Silver grading against the ICVA Quality Assurance Framework in 2024, the scheme was re-graded as Gold during 2025.



Police leaders sign up to pledge to eradicate racism in the North East

The PCC and Chief Constable Victoria Fuller have both signed up to the North East Anti-Racism Coalition's 'Become the Bridge' pledge, which challenges racism in all its forms.

Become the Bridge is open to businesses, public sector bodies and voluntary organisations across the North East. The pledge commits organisations to look at their own systems and practices to root out racism. Practical actions could include developing an anti-racism action plan and reporting on progress.

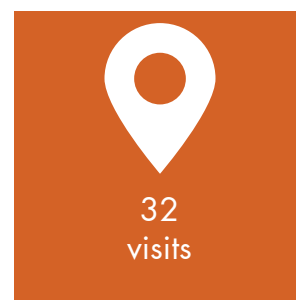
Cleveland Police is the first force in the region to sign up.



Matt said:

"Sadly, recent events have reinforced that racism continues to be a problem for people in our region. Since it was established in 2024, I have been an active supporter of the North East Anti-Racism Coalition and what it seeks to achieve."

"By signing up to this pledge, I commit to being amongst the many organisations in the region that seek to make it a place where everyone can belong and feel safe."





PRIORITY 6: Tackle offending and re-offending

There is a reduction in offending in Cleveland. Projects will seek to address the root causes of crime.

How we're measuring success

Over the 12 months to June 2024, the overall re-offending rate in Cleveland was up by 3.1% - an increase mirrored for adult specific re-offending.

Divert, the custody diversion scheme for first-time offenders or low-level incidents, is designed to provide support to address the underlying causes of crime. This, in turn, should help participants to turn away from offending and seek positive choices. To the year ending March 2026, referrals to Divert were down by a quarter.



In the year to March 2026, 119 young people entered the criminal justice system in Cleveland for the first time – an additional 29 young people compared to the previous year.

Almost 50% of young offenders in Cleveland go on to re-offend, a significantly higher figure than the national average of 32.1%.

The Youth Triage scheme, delivered by the region's three youth justice services, provides support to prevent young people from re-offending. They received 260 referrals during 2025, an increase of 6.1%.



Increased use of out of court resolutions

In September 2025, the PCC hosted a scrutiny session with Cleveland Police about their use of out of court resolutions (OoCRs.) An OoCR is a mechanism used by police to handle low-level, often first-time, offences without traditional court prosecution.

This session was a re-visit of a previous scrutiny meeting on OoCRs in September 2024. Due to the lack of progress between the two meetings, Matt did not feel that Cleveland Police had demonstrated any meaningful impact on OoCR rates. As a result, he was "not assured".

Since the PCC's assessment, significant efforts have been made by Cleveland Police to increase the use of OoCRs. More than 600 additional crimes were handled using an OoCR in the year ending March 2026, an increase of 43.8%

Out of Court Resolutions	March 2025	March 2026	Volume Change	% Change
Number of OoCR crime outcomes	1,428	2,053	625	43.7%

There was also a significant increase in referrals for restorative justice (RJ) interventions. RJ is a voluntary process which brings victims of crime and offenders together – directly or indirectly – to discuss the impact of an offence, hold the offender to account and repair the harm caused.

This has not resulted in an increase in RJ interventions, as per the table below.

Restorative Justice referrals and interventions delivered	March 2025	March 2026	Volume Change	% Change
Number of RJ referrals	108	315	207	191.7%
Number of RJ interventions delivered	440	339	-101	-23.0%



Community Remedy scheme re-launched to give victims choice

Community Remedy is a process that aims to give victims of low-level crime and antisocial behaviour the opportunity to have a say in how the person responsible for their crime is dealt with by the police.

Following a public consultation conducted by the OPCC, a list of options for victims was finalised, as follows:

- ▶ Restorative Justice
- ▶ Immediate apology at the scene
- ▶ Acceptable Behaviour Contract
- ▶ Referral to a local rehabilitative, educational or diversionary activity
- ▶ Personal or community reparation

The chosen option should be reasonable and proportionate to the offence, and the police officer or PCSO handling the case will use the feedback to make a final decision on the most appropriate outcome.

Dealing with a case out of court doesn't mean that the offender is escaping punishment. The offender is still sanctioned lawfully, and this will show up on a DBS check.



Learning from people already in the criminal justice system

This year, the PCC made an additional effort to engage with people already in the criminal justice system. The purpose was to inform Matt's role as the Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB,) which brings together criminal justice agencies to make improvements and tackle issues.

It also helps to shape the OPCC's efforts to reduce offending and re-offending by identifying missed opportunities when diversion interventions may have been used.

During the financial year, the PCC:

- ▶ Joined young offenders at the South Tees Youth Justice Service allotment
- ▶ Took part in a beach clean in Hartlepool, alongside people on unpaid work
- ▶ Conducted three prison visits, including at HMP Holme House, HMP Kirklevington Grange and HMP Wetherby
- ▶ Visited an Approved Premises, where people on probation are released into the community



Key feedback from participants included:

- ▶ Value of youth offending services and monitoring systems such as curfews to prevent re-offending and support positive change
- ▶ Preference for unpaid work over prison sentences, as making reparations is more effective than being punished or 'told off'
- ▶ Concerns about employment after offending, as many employers will not consider employing people with offending backgrounds
- ▶ Poor experience with hostels and homeless shelters, which may increase vulnerability rather than preventing it





PCC assured by police efforts to monitor violent offenders

In October 2025, the PCC conducted a scrutiny probe into how Cleveland Police manage sexual and violent offenders in the community, to minimise risk and safeguard victims or potential victims.

This was of particular concern to Matt, due to the increasing number of Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) in the community. He also wanted to ensure he is meeting his priority to reduce victimisation and harm.

Matt asked questions about:

- ▶ The structures in place to identify, assess and manage the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders
- ▶ Protective measures to safeguard victims and potential victims
- ▶ Current staffing levels in the Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) Unit and timeliness of visits to high-risk offenders
- ▶ Use of innovation to reduce re-offending

The PCC was assured by senior officers about the various structures and mechanisms for identifying risks, collaborating with partner organisations and monitoring the behaviour of offenders.

This includes the use of technology-driven innovations, such as electronic tagging, 'discovery kits' to locate undisclosed digital devices and voice analytics to identify deceptive responses during interview and assessments.



Ground-breaking youth rehabilitation programme in prison

A total of 13 'high-risk' young people aged 18-24 completed a six-week peer-led rehabilitation initiative with the HMP Holme House estate funded by the PCC.

The Get Real programme is designed to help young males in prison re-build broken relationships with family, loved ones, peers and staff.

Participants learned how to establish, nurture and maintain positive relationships to support career and learning opportunities both in prison and on release.

Five members of staff were also trained in trauma-informed practice sharing and collaborative case-management discussions.





Success of custody navigators scheme continues

The CURV partnership funds four custody navigators to support people involved in – or at risk of – serious violence when they were detained in police custody and once they are released into the community.

Navigators work with young people during a 'reachable, teachable' moment in their lives, helping them with issues such as substance misuse, housing, education and employment.



In 2025/26 custody navigators:

- ▶ Engaged with 476 young people aged under 24
- ▶ Engaged with 230 young people aged over 25
- ▶ Trained over 60 professionals
- ▶ Provided on-site support post-arrest, including holistic assessments, safety planning and referrals
- ▶ Provided ongoing support in the community after release, helping young people stay engaged with services for a period of 8-12 weeks, access wider support, and reduce the likelihood of further harm or involvement in serious violence.



The latest South Tees Youth Justice Service inspection report stated:

"The custody navigators provided valuable trauma-informed support to children in the custody suite. We were told of instances where custody navigators had been instrumental in working with children's services and parents and carers to secure appropriate accommodation for the child when they were released from police custody."



A&E Navigator scheme re-launched

During 2025, a specialist navigator role was re-established in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department of James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough.

The A&E navigator provides support to young people aged between 10 and 24 who attend hospital as a victim or perpetrator of serious violence.

The scheme mirrors the custody-based navigator model and now operates under the safeguarding management structure within the hospital.

The navigator is based across the urgent treatment centre (UTC) and children and young people's emergency department (CYPED) but can provide support across all departments.

The aim of the navigator role is to provide interventions and appropriate referrals to help young patients develop skills and engage in activities to build skills, self-esteem and make more positive life choices.

Impact of A&E navigator in 2025/26:

- ▶ 39 young people aged under 24 supported
- ▶ 316 professionals trained





Targeted support to help reduce serious violence

Focused Deterrence is an approach used to prevent serious violence by focusing on the small number of people and places, where harm is greatest.

The Youth Endowment Fund's (YEF) description of Focused Deterrence:

"A strategy that combines communicating the consequences of violence with support for developing positive routes away from it."

Locally, the Focused Deterrence approach specifically targets young people aged 10–18 who are most at risk of becoming involved in serious violence.

Through the work of CURV's Knife Crime Action Plan, the delivery of Focused Deterrence has been commissioned through Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Youth Service (RCBCYS).

RCBCYS facilitate fortnightly partnership meetings with key partners including police and housing providers to give 12 weeks of targeted 1-2-1 support to help divert young people away from crime.



Roll out of education navigator pilot

A total of £19,999 was given to pilot the role of education navigator to support vulnerable young people and prevent serious violence.

The navigator works with pupils most at risk of exclusion and harm through structured 1-2-1 support.

The aim of the role is to encourage young people to remain engaged in education while strengthening links between schools, families and community services.

The work focuses on early intervention and prevention, helping to reduce school exclusions, improve attendance and engagement, and address risk factors linked to serious violence.

A total of 10 pupils were supported by the education navigator between January and March 2026 through Horizons Specialist Academy Trust (HSAT).

Of the 70% of pupils, who continued to engage with the navigator:

- ▶ 100% demonstrated improved emotional awareness
- ▶ 86% demonstrated improved behaviour reflection
- ▶ 71% demonstrated increased use of coping strategies
- ▶ 20% showed notable positive shift in attitude to school



Meeting the Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out the Home Secretary's view of current national threats and the national policing capabilities needed to counter them.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) considered the SPR when developing his Police and Crime Plan. These threats are:

- ▶ Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- ▶ Terrorism
- ▶ Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)
- ▶ National Cyber Incidents
- ▶ Child Sexual Abuse
- ▶ Public Disorder
- ▶ Civil Emergencies

The Chief Constable is responsible for having due regard to both the Police and Crime Plan and the SPR when exercising her functions. The PCC holds the Chief Constable accountable for doing so.

At national and regional level, PCCs and their respective Chief Constables collaborate across several specialist areas of policing, to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to meet SPR obligations.

In Cleveland, formal collaborations are in place to tackle serious and organised crime, counter terrorism and deliver specialist capabilities including police air support and firearms training.

Violence against women and Girls (VAWG)

VAWG remains a significant issue in Cleveland, making up almost a quarter of all recorded crime. Cleveland Police is committed to tackling this harm and recognises its close links to domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and exploitation. The force is strengthening its response through better training for officers, taking a victim-centred approach, and carrying out a two-year improvement programme under Operation Soteria. This enhances the way rape cases are investigated and prosecuted. Cleveland Police work closely with partners across the region to provide a co-ordinated response. It is taking part in national pilots such as Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to improve safeguarding. VAWG is a key priority in the Chief Constable's Strategic Plan and remains central to the force's commitment to protecting vulnerable people.

Terrorism

Cleveland Police work closely with Counter Terrorism Policing North-East (CTPNE) to help keep people safe, drawing on strong regional expertise and dedicated local officers who contribute to the national CONTEST strategy across Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. Prevent remains a key focus, with the aim of safeguarding people from being drawn into terrorism. This is supported locally through strong multi-agency partnerships, a Prevent Champions Network and a Strategic Prevent Lead within the Force.

Serious and Organised Crime

As well as using the expertise of the North East Regional Organised Crime Unit (NEROCU) and the National Crime Agency (NCA), Cleveland Police has its own continued focus on delivering improvements aligned to HMICFRS' expectations.



National Cyber Incidents

Demand continues to increase both in terms of volume and complexity. The force recognises that protection of ICT infrastructure is a strategic risk.

Child Sexual Abuse

A comprehensive problem profile has been completed for Child Sexual Exploitation. Reasonable staffing levels, skills' requirements and gaps have been identified and mapped against the detective accreditation pathway. Clearly defined detective pathways are now in place. The force acknowledges the level of hidden harm and accumulative risk associated with missing children. It also monitors and analyses data to determine trends and reduce the risk to vulnerable children. It has a key focus on prevention work as well as multi-agency planning and collaboration.

Public Disorder

An Annual Public Order and Public Safety Strategic Risk Assessment (POPS SRA) is undertaken. The overall assessment of capacity is 'good'. Given recent changes to legislation, the force now has capacity for protest removal and takes a proactive approach to tackling football-related disorder with positive results. The force continues to support regional and mutual aid requests and a planned increase in capacity has now taken place. The Special Constabulary play a role in handling public disorder, where appropriate.

Civil Emergencies

Capability and capacity gaps have been identified through the Force Management Statement (FMS) process. They have been assessed as minor. The force's Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) sits within the Specialist Operations Command. EPU staff members have appropriate accreditation, allowing them to deal with major incidents and civil contingencies.

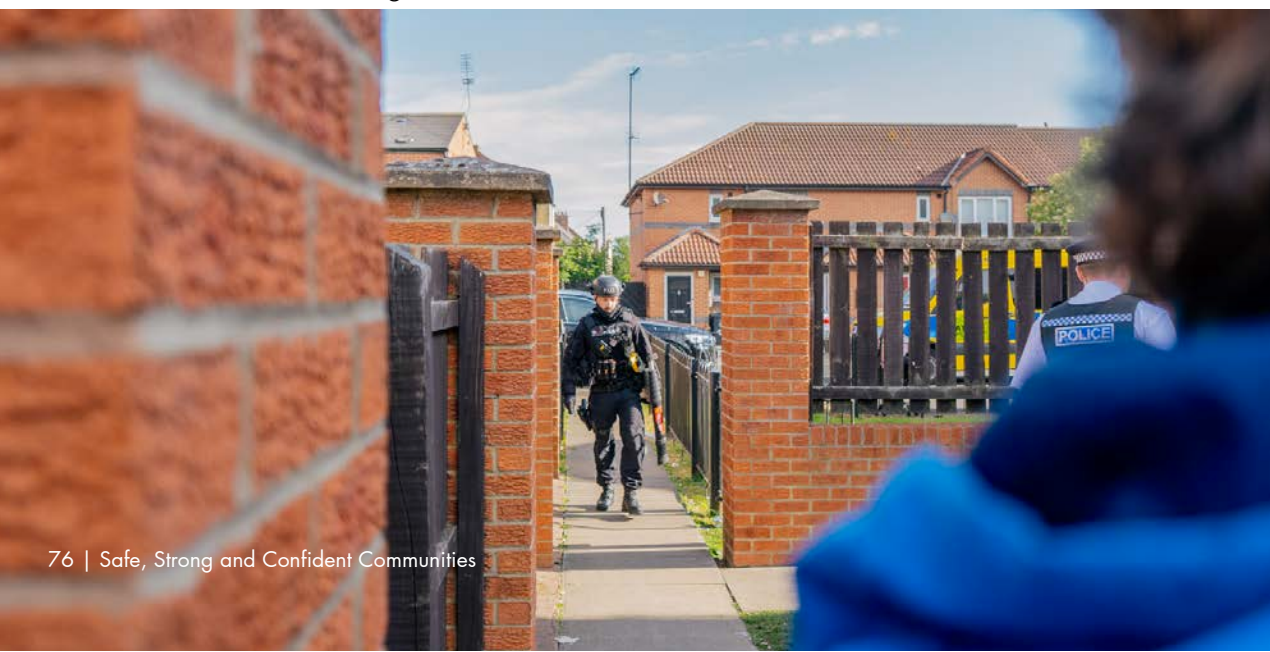
Scrutiny of the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR).

To meet his statutory responsibilities, the PCC holds an annual scrutiny meeting with a specific focus on the SPR requirements.

At the Scrutiny Meeting held on 29 July 2025, the PCC received evidence regarding Cleveland Police's capability and preparedness to meet its obligations under the SPR. This scrutiny provided an opportunity to:

- ▶ Hold the Chief Constable to account for the effective delivery of policing functions linked to the SPR
- ▶ Seek assurances that the force has appropriate, proportionate, and effective responses in place for each of the identified national threats
- ▶ Inform the development of the Police and Crime Plan and Annual Report by ensuring both documents give due regard to SPR threat areas

Following consideration of the evidence, the PCC recognised that the Force has a culture of continuous improvement. This is crucial for enhancing policing capabilities and adapting to evolving threats and challenges.



Police reform and the future of police governance

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been elected by the public in England and Wales since 2012, when they were introduced to replace police authorities. The role was established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to give the public a single, elected representative to be their voice in local policing.

Abolition of PCCs

On 13 November 2025, the Policing Minister announced the role of PCC will be abolished across England and Wales. The change will happen at the end of the next electoral cycle in May 2028, when the current PCC's term of office expires.

Where possible, the PCC role will be absorbed by elected mayors. In areas not covered by a regional mayor, Policing and Crime Boards will be established. They will be made up of local government leaders.

Policing Reform White Paper

In January 2026, the Government published the policing reform White Paper, titled "From Local to National: A New Model for Policing".

The scope of these reforms includes the creation of a National Police Service by merging the National Crime Agency, College of Policing, and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). It will be led by a National Police Commissioner to tackle counter-terrorism and serious organised crime.

The paper also sets out plans to review the number of forces operating in England and Wales, with a view to reduce the number from 43 to 12. Other reforms include stronger national standards, restoring neighbourhood policing and overhauling performance measures.

Police force structure reform

In March 2026, it was announced that former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Lord Bernard Hogan-Howe, would lead an independent review on how to restructure policing.

The review will identify the optimum number of forces and their geographic areas. It will also consider how the new forces are governed and held accountable.

The role of Cleveland PCC and OPCC

In Cleveland, the PCC and OPCC remain engaged in local and national conversations about how police reform could be implemented.

The OPCC will support transition to the new model identified for the Cleveland Police force area, as well as any possible future police force merger.

Financial information

PCCs hold primary responsibility for the finances of their local police force, setting the overall budget, determining the local Council Tax precept and commissioning services to support victims and reduce crime.

Funding available to the PCC

For 2025-26, the PCC received a total income of £210.3m for policing and community safety in Cleveland. Just over half of this funding was provided through Government Core Funding, with 25% of funding from local Council Tax.

Funding breakdown 2025/26	£	%
Government Core funding	£121m	57.6%
Police element of council tax (precept)	£53.2m	25.3%
Government specific grants	£29.1m	13.8%
Other income	£6.9m	3.3%
Total funding	£210.3m	100.0%

As stated elsewhere in this report, the PCC has been outspoken about the disparity in police funding across England and Wales.

In February 2026, Cleveland Police and Crime Panel approved the PCCs proposal to increase the council tax precept for policing by £15 per annum for a Band D property – the equivalent to 4.72%.

Increases across the different property bands are set out below:

Property Band	2026/27	2025/26	Increase per Annum	Increase per Week
A	221.82	211.82	10.00	0.19
B	258.79	247.12	11.67	0.22
C	295.76	282.43	13.33	0.26
D	332.73	317.73	15.00	0.29
E	406.67	388.34	18.33	0.35
F	480.61	458.94	21.67	0.42
G	554.55	529.55	25.00	0.48
H	665.46	635.46	30.00	0.58

PCC spending

Of the £210.3m available to the PCC to spend, £193.5m (or 92%) was invested in Cleveland Police.

A further £5.2m was spent by Cleveland Police on capital expenditure. Capital expenditure is money spent to acquire, upgrade or maintain physical assets such as property, equipment or technology.

Spending 2025/26	£	%
Salary Costs	£155.3m	73.9%
Other non-salary employee costs	£2m	1.0%
Police Injury Pension Costs	£5m	2.4%
Premises costs	£4.4m	2.1%
Supplies and services	£24.4m	11.6%
Transport costs (including fuel)	£2.2m	1.0%
Cleveland Police Total	£193.5m	92.0%
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	£1.3m	0.6%
Commissioned Services and Corporate Costs	£6.3m	3.0%
PFI Contracts and Asset Management Costs	£8.5m	4.1%
Total expenditure	£209.6m	99.7%
Budgeted transfers to earmarked reserves and Capital	£186,000	0.1%
Total expenditure and budgeted reserves transfers	£209.8m	99.8%
Surplus on the Provision of Services	£476,000	-0.2%

In 2025/26, the overall budget available to the PCC was underspent by £476,000 - 0.2% of the overall income received during the year.

Most of the underspend came from the PCC’s budgets, where there were savings on borrowing costs and lower spending on commissioned services. They were offset by a small overspend of £71,000 by Cleveland Police.

The 2025/26 underspend has been used to strengthen reserves. Reserves are a portion of the organisation’s funding set aside to strengthen financial stability, fund future projects or cover unexpected costs.

Using proceeds of crime for good

Over the last two years, £1.3m has been awarded to the PCC via the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA). Proceeds of crime is the term given to money or assets gained by criminals in the course of criminal activity. The authorities, including the police, have powers to seek to confiscate these assets.

Around £600,000 of the funding provided to the PCC has been used to fund officers and staff, who work in Cleveland Police’s Economic Crime Unit. This will further strengthen the force’s response to fraud and financial crimes.

The OPCC has also used funding to help support Financial Fraud Advocates employed by Safer Communities to help victims of fraud to recover their lost money.

In 2026/27, POCA funds will be used to recruit two additional financial confiscators and a fraud safeguarding advocate.

Commissioning services

The PCC has a responsibility to commission services to support victims, reduce re-offending and prevent crime.

During 2025/26, the OPCC spent over £5.3m on services to benefit local communities.

The PCC invested funds in the below projects/services:

Project Name	2025/26 Spend
Cleveland Anti-Slavery Network	£5,000
Harbour Support Services - Domestic Abuse	£393,000
Crimestoppers	£24,000
Cleveland Drive Project - Domestic Abuse	£21,000
Strategic Commissioning Fund - Staff training, promotion of victim support services and lived experience research	£39,000
Cleveland Divert	£199,000
Local Safeguarding Childrens Board	£131,000
Tees Safeguarding Adults Board	£40,000
Youth Justice Services	£48,000
Youth Commission - Youth Engagement	£12,000
Community Safety Fund	£4,000
Domestic Abuse Workforce Development	£30,000
My Sisters Place - Domestic Abuse	£212,000
Teesside SARC - Sexual Violence	£143,000
Safer Communities - Victim Support	£501,000
The Halo Project - By and for VAWG Service	£27,000
Barnardos - Complex Exploitation Team (CET) Worker	£6,000
Safer Communities - Restorative Justice Service	£105,000
A Way Out - VAWG	£30,000
ISVA Service - Sexual Violence	£326,000
Teesside Mind - Appropriate Adult Service	£70,000
Eva Women's Aid - Domestic Abuse Support	£67,000
Suzy Lamplugh Trust - Stalking support	£105,000
Cleveland Sexual Harms Network and Counselling	£79,000
Total Commissioned Services	£2,635,000
Violence Reduction Programme	£1,311,000
Hotspot Patrols	£1,371,000
Total OPCC Services	£5,317,000





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