

# Annual Report 2019-20

Following the unexpected illness and sad passing of Mr Ron Hogg CBE in December last year, I have had the privilege of serving as Acting Police Crime and Victims commissioner for County Durham and Darlington. The COVID -19 crisis has further delayed the election and so I will continue in this role until such time as the new Commissioner is appointed.

Mr Hogg was an inspiring Commissioner who remained steadfast to the vision contained within his Police, Crime and Victims plan. Just before passing he was awarded the [CBE](#) and he was also the first recipient of the international [Sir Robert Peel Award for Excellence in Policing](#) for his commitment and support to drug policy reform. With some additions, relating to the unprecedented changes we have seen as a result of COVID-19, I intend to retain this commitment to the plan ensuring that "County Durham and Darlington are areas where all communities are safe, victims and vulnerable people feel supported, crime and reoffending are low, and people have confidence in policing and the criminal justice system".



Photo: Sir Robert Peel Award



Photo: Ron Hogg and Chief Constable Jo Farrell

Jo Farrell was appointed as [Chief Constable](#) in the summer of 2019 and I am pleased to confirm that you continue to be served by one of the best Police Forces in the country, maintaining the rating of '[outstanding](#)' for effectiveness and efficiency by HMICFRS Inspectors, for the fourth consecutive year in a row – the only Force to have achieved this accolade. I continue to hold the force to account and we work together to maintain high standards of delivery and leadership to the people of Co Durham and Darlington. The force contributes to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary and they have adapted well to the changing landscape which the Covid-19 Crisis has brought.

Within my remit as Acting Police Crime and Victims Commissioner I have set the force [budget](#) and after consultation with the public determined the [precept](#) (police element of Council Tax) earlier this year. The precept increased by £24 at a Band D to £205.24. This is around £13 below the national average. The majority of properties liable for council tax are in the lowest band, Band A, which has a police precept of £ 136.81. The £24 increase enabled the Force to maintain officer and PCSO numbers and also invest in technology. There is, however, ongoing cost pressures for the service in terms of managing demand and the need to become more efficient remains undiminished.

Despite the sadness and turbulence that 2019-20 brought there has been some excellent achievement, notably the continued commitment to our support for victims through the development and launch of resources for use by intermediaries, the opening of a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) building and piloting a more integrated approach to our victim service delivery. We have retained our commitment to problem solving policing and earlier this year Checkpoint [won the prestigious Goldstein award](#) which the community peer mentors were also nominated for.



Photo: The Goldstein Award

Within this report I will outline some of the highlights in relation to our work this year, however there is still much to be done to make County Durham and Darlington a safer place to live. A particular area of focus for me will be to ensure the public have an even greater voice in what I do as your Commissioner. I will do this by continuing to hold the force to account and ensuring effective partnership working across the area.

## Victims and the vulnerable feel supported

- Provided a range of [new and innovative materials](#) for use by intermediaries with vulnerable victims
- Reviewed the priorities and objectives of the regional Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group, to [tackle and prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence in all their forms](#).
- New SARC provision for our area and in partnership with NHS England and local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) we have been able to maintain the services of a child psychologist
- Jointly commissioned domestic abuse support services with both local authorities
- Extended the resources available to victims of Sexual Violence through the funding of additional Independent Sexual Violence Advisor provision.
- Commenced a pilot with partners to establish a more integrated approach to the delivery of support services to victims of crime

*"VCAS offered support and were always at the end of the phone to answer questions. I would not have gone through the court process without that support, the support I received was second to none."*

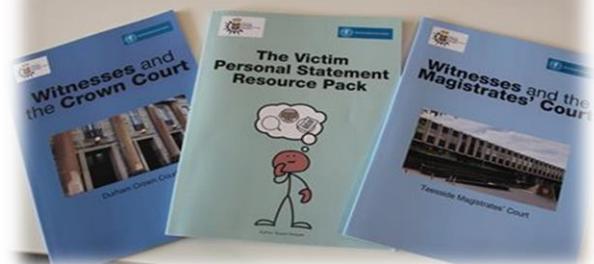


Photo: New resources for victims of crime

**Harbour:** *"I feel you gave me the strength to realise what I had been living with wasn't right and that I was strong enough to leave. I will be forever grateful for that and your support afterwards. I am feeling much stronger now. Not totally healed and I don't think I ever will be but I can live a happy and safe life with my child. Thank you ..... as I think if it hadn't been for you I may not have ever got out."*

## People have confidence in the police and criminal justice system



Photo: New recruits contributing to the national uplift programme

- Monitored the recruitment process in the force in line with the national uplift
- Contributed to 'Do it well, do it better' training across the force
- Monitored high satisfaction levels regarding the public's experience of interactions with the force
- Introduction of better technological innovations supporting Court processes
- Provided additional support to those victims having to attend the court
- Endorsed the force's Confidence Academy which looks to build the trust and the relationship between our communities and their police force

## Reoffending is reduced and rehabilitation is improved

- Refreshed the integrated approach to managing those individuals who commit the most offences in our area.
- Developed a [whole system approach](#) to the work with those females who offend following a successful conference
- The Checkpoint scheme was named winner of the Goldstein award.
- first force in the country to use [alcohol interlocks](#) on a voluntary basis for repeat offenders
- Actively supported the changes to probation and the role of the PCVC within the commissioning of local delivery pathways

*"It made me a lot more aware of the situation that I had found myself in and the severity of this; it aided me into taking the steps I needed to take, alongside feeling supported and motivated – it has given me a new lease of life and I can't thank Checkpoint and my Navigator enough!"*

*"Taking part was very healing – the process of being listened to and cared for really helped my recovery. I recommend Restorative Justice – I would tell people of the difference it could make to their recovery."*

## Communities are safe and crime is reduced



Photo: Dianne Spark, UTASS, Steve White Acting PCVC, Insp. Ed Turner at the launch of the Rural Statement



Photo: Naloxone kit used to train officers

- Refreshed the [Rural Policing Statement](#) with the focus of partnership being the local people
- Continued the [Hate Hurts](#) campaign in order to [tackle and prevent hate crime](#), with Schools joining the campaign
- Match funded Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology, in partnership with the Weardale Area Action Partnership.
- Increased the number of officers trained to administer naloxone and secured sustainable funding for through Public health
- Actively supported the review by Durham County Council into the delivery of their anti-social behaviour services.
- Continued to jointly fund the 700 club in Darlington
- Supported the [Community Speed Watch Vehicle](#)
- Continued to apply a problem solving approach to reducing demand on front line policing through the [Community Peer Mentors Scheme](#) and [Restorative Hub](#) Mediation Service

During this coming year I will adhere to the Police, Crime and Victims' plan established by Mr Ron Hog, giving top priority to the needs of victims and working in partnership to continue the delivery of the primary objectives.

My priorities I have for the upcoming year are to:

- Improve the way in which I engage with yourselves in our local communities by listening and proactively engaging in order to support delivery of the priorities, this includes the use of innovative technology, such as the [ELUCD](#) Survey pilot;
- Provide a bespoke service for all victims of crime which they can feel confident in and supported by;
- Procure a regional service for the management of our Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services;
- Challenge all hate crime effectively through partnership working and through the Independent Advisory Group;
- Continue to support the force in their recruitment strategy in line with the uplift;
- Embed a new and improved internal accountability framework in order to provide a more strenuous and challenging type of accountability, so you, the public, can be confident in your police force;
- Support a review of the forces estates strategy, ensuring it is sustainable;
- Continue to develop my commissioning process to ensure that funding is used in partnership where appropriate and meets the needs of the local communities;
- Focus the [Local Criminal Justice partnership](#) around recovery: ensuring that as a partnership we manage the backlog of cases in the courts but also learning from different ways of working during the COVID-19 crisis;
- Continue working with both the Durham and Darlington community safety partnerships to ensure anti-social behaviour is managed in partnership and the vulnerable are supported;
- As a board member of the Police ICT Company look to improve our scrutiny network around ICT.

*"VCAS gave support during the trial, kept me updated and provided continual support throughout... I was at the point of doing some damage to myself and I really thought about suicide -through the support from VCAS I was able to overcome this."*

*"I recommend Restorative Justice – I would tell people of the difference it could make to their recovery. RJ helped me to close a door. It's given me a great insight and helped me to see things in a different way"*

*"VCAS made me feel as though I was not to blame, I was really made to feel at ease and more reassured."*

*"Durham Constabulary aren't only there to criminalise me, but to rehabilitate me. Checkpoint picked me up, shook me off, and taught me new life skills. I'm doing really well now. I'm on a data/telecoms engineering course doing my first exams and I've been clean for ages now (bar the script) so I'd like to say thanks for your help cos without it I may not have gotten to this point."*

*"I took the plunge is accepting support. As we talked I thought here we go again with false promises how wrong was. I have been with Mental Help since 2007 still to this day they are no help. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart what amazing people you are for listening for keeping in contact, you are an amazing and I'm blessed for once in my life I know someone is at the end of the telephone."*  
*Client of Community Peer Mentor Scheme*