

Police and Crime Commissioner for Darlington Durham

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**Sir Thomas Winsor**

**Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of the Constabulary**

**6th Floor, Globe House**

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**London**

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**Police and Crime Commissioner: Joy Allen**

**Monitoring Officer: Stephen White**

 **11 October 2021**

 Dear Sir Tom,

This letter constitutes the response to HMICFRS’s Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales from myself, Joy Allen, Durham Police and Crime Commissioner.

**What have been the most significant problems experienced by the service in England and Wales in 2021, and how well has it responded to them;**

The service has policed the pandemic and has also policed protests and whilst they have done a good job, there are always lessons to learn and this links into wider democratic accountability in relation to Police and Crime Commissioners. The strains placed on partner agencies as a result of the pandemic have had a knock-on impact into policing, which again requires an enhanced level of joined up working and an enhanced role for PCCs in terms of ensuring that service delivery is maximised given the inter relatedness of the broader police mission.

Demand continues to change during 2021 and this has required the service to change and oversight and governance needs to remain flexible to be effective, at a local level this has worked well.

**What do you consider the service does especially well, and in what respects should it improve;**

The service remains generally resilient in terms of demand management and it should be congratulated given the continued challenges it faces be it high harm, cyber/digital or day to day response policing challenges. The police officer uplift is welcome, but it will inevitably take time for these additional officers to become fully competent in order to deliver the nationally agreed policing outcomes. There also continues to be pinch points in relation to recruiting to certain roles e.g., detectives, data scientists and cyber specialists. Again, this will take time and may delay the achievement of outcomes. On the back of this there needs to be continued emphasis on welfare and wellbeing of officers and staff.

**What should the service be doing now to ensure it can provide the best possible service to the public in the year ahead;**

The Police Uplift Programme has developed a significant body of evidence in terms of good practice regarding attraction, recruitment, retention, and broader organisational development, and it is important that forces use this where possible in order to improve service delivery. This would go some way to increasing efficiency and productivity across the service which should be regarded as a positive step forward. Work in these areas now, will pay dividends in future.

Moving forward it will be crucial for the service to be more effective in their engagement with the public across the spectrum of harm and under the spotlight of social media. This has become a shared challenge when considering the intensity of public scrutiny over both minor and serious incidents across England and Wales, which in turn, have detrimental impacts upon police legitimacy.

**How well do you think the service is adapting to changing crime trends and patterns?**

Generally,there are sound systems in place for Police governance via local PCCs, which are underpinned by thorough performance management arrangements and good levels of data quality. These need to remain in place and be periodically refreshed to ensure that forces continue to have the right people in the right place at the right time. The pandemic has given forces the opportunity to review how they operate, consider different methods of working and invest in technology. This can lead to significant cultural change which can better place forces to respond to changing crime trends.

I hope this response provides useful input into the Annual Assessment of Policing 2021.

Yours sincerely,



**Joy Allen**

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Darlington and Durham**

*The Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham is an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation*

