

THE BEAT



Summer's not over yet, but it's already been hot... and I don't mean just the weather!

Along with partners across Nottinghamshire, I have brought some challenging issues to the forefront in recent months. In the process, I believe we have identified some new and better ways forward that will lead to greater protection for victims and increase our communities' confidence in Nottinghamshire Police.

Improving engagement with BME communities

It's important that everyone in all our diverse communities have trust and confidence in our police service. That's why I set the ball rolling to understand the root of negative perceptions of the police within the black and ethnic minority (BME) community and replace them with positive experiences.

This work began with a research project I commissioned on relations between Nottinghamshire Police and the county's BME community. Professor Cecile Wright from The University of Nottingham's School of Sociology and Social Policy led this research, and I am now studying her recommendations for improvement.

Professor Wright's findings – drawn from more than 500 BME residents who were asked for feedback – show that BME community members are twice more likely to become victims of crime than the rest of the population, with 'hate crime' being the crime they mostly experience. It was also found that more than one third of those who had been victims of crime did not report it to the police.

With this knowledge, we can now target future decisions towards building trust so that BME residents feel more confident in reporting crime to the police. Our new steering group will consider how to put the report's recommendations into practice and will review progress on a regular basis.

As well as highlighting areas where improvement is needed, this valuable report recognises the hard work already undertaken by the force to address any imbalances within the service as perceived by members of the BME community.

I know that Chief Constable Chris Eyre is committed to furthering the force's efforts to acknowledge and address these concerns, and we look forward to achieving the increased safety and confidence that is needed.

Other recommendations in the report include:

- a review of the force's Stop and Search strategy, weighing up its value as a crime detection measure against the negative impact on community relations
- more effective diversity training for all employees
- stopping voluntary searches, and information sessions to be held within the community so that they are aware of their rights
- more work to boost BME representation within the force.



Tackling alcohol misuse

Alcohol misuse that leads to crime, health issues and a drain on the public purse has plagued far too many innocent citizens in recent years. Tough problems... but I'm now hopeful that we can make residents feel safer by introducing some effective solutions.



Following my Alcohol Conference at the beginning of July, I began planning a number of meetings with criminal justice partners to establish a course of action. What is decided will then form part of my Alcohol Strategy.

At the conference, 120 delegates and experts from Nottinghamshire and beyond discussed intervention ideas already piloted in different parts of the country to reduce alcohol-related crime and ease pressure on NHS staff.

A clear message was the necessity to adopt a broad package of intervention measures rather than concentrate on a single solution. The future management of alcohol misuse in Nottinghamshire will be much more joined-up as a result of this conference. That means we will all be working towards the same objectives and make best use of our combined resources to achieve better results. A draft strategy and action will be ready for further consultation in September 2013.

Support for young witnesses

During a recent visit to Victim Support my Deputy, Chris Cutland, was very impressed with the work being done to support young witnesses of crime, with visits to the court, explanations of how it works and what will be expected of them. "Both staff and volunteers do all they can to ensure that court appearances are less threatening and scary to young people," she said.

"This support is so worthwhile," she added. "Explaining the system to young people and staying with them when in court is enormously valuable. It helps to put their fears at rest and, in turn, is likely to encourage more of their peers to come forward to give evidence."

The visit was originally set up so that we could get a greater understanding of the work that Victim Support does to provide appropriate support to both victims and witnesses. One size does not fit all, and different circumstances require different solutions.

It is particularly important that we really get to grips with the service required as within the next 18 months funding for Victim Support will come to the Police and Crime Commissioner and we are both determined to see the very best support provided to those unfortunate enough to be a victim of crime.

STOP! hate crime against people with disabilities



On Disability Awareness Day on 14 July I focused on unforgivable incidents of hate crime against people with disabilities.

In Nottinghamshire last year, we saw a drop in disability crime of almost 44 per cent with 23 offences recorded. That's a relatively low figure but even one incident is one too many. Abusing people who already have enough on their plate is particularly abhorrent, and I want to bring an end to this type of discrimination. If every victim of hate crime reports their experiences to the police we can get a true picture of what's happening, support those who are on the receiving end and bring the offenders to justice.

My walkabout in Hucknall



Taking to the streets of Hucknall on 16 July with PC Shaun Radford and PCSO Simon Gazzard gave me valuable 'talk-time' with local people and businesses.

In the town centre and surrounding areas, I listened to the concerns and views on policing of residents and businesses. Face-to-face encounters like these help to keep me in the loop and give me a clearer focus on any problems that I can take up on your behalf.

Reducing crime through restorative justice

I'm a big supporter of restorative justice as one of my highest priorities as Commissioner is supporting victims of crime. Evidence shows that bringing offenders face to face with their victims to see the harm they've caused and apologise for their actions can have a cathartic effect on victims and bring about positive change in the offender.

In May I met restorative justice leaders in Nottinghamshire to identify how the system can be enhanced to further reduce crime. The Restorative Justice Summit heard how closer working between the agencies involved in delivering this intervention could turn more offenders away from a life of crime.

As a result, plans were made to establish how organisations can move forward together to achieve higher quality restorative justice mediation. I am confident that this will lead to further success in the future. I have asked 'Remedi', who are national experts in Restorative Justice, to support my office and work with partner organisations to develop a strategy with clear quality standards to assist with the delivery of high quality Restorative Justice delivery. If you want to get involved with this work contact the Kevin Dennis, Chief Executive.

More challenging times ahead

A fresh wave of spending cuts announced by the Government for 2015/16 will eat further into Nottinghamshire Police's scarce resources and affect our capacity to tackle crime.

We won't have the exact figures until the autumn but it looks like we will have a gap of an additional £6m. That's on top of the forecasted £10.1m within our Medium Term Financial Plan and on top of the £42m we have had to find in the current Spending Review.

So far, thanks to the hard work of the force's employees, we've been able to protect performance despite the cuts. But it's important to be prepared, and we will be consulting widely with the public about their priorities to help us negotiate these reductions so that we can continue to meet their expectations.

New Victims' Code draws closer

Still with a firm eye on the needs of victims, Deputy Commissioner Chris Cutland also attended a London conference dedicated to 'Putting Victims First', which looked closely at the reforms contained within the Government's proposed Victims' Code.

It's early days yet as the finer details are still being worked out. "It hasn't been finalised but it's good to know that there are changes afoot," she said.

The plan is for there to be three categories: victims of serious crime, persistently-targeted victims and vulnerable victims. Overall, the new reforms seek to give victims clearer entitlements from criminal justice agencies and provide a service that's better tailored to individual need.

We will be watching the progress on this very closely.

- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will soon be commissioning work to support medium risk domestic violence cases. Chris explains: "The Grant and commissioning applications have now all been considered and decisions made. We'll have more details on this and the other commissioning decisions soon."





Mystery shoppers to help improve service quality



Public spirited volunteers will soon be acting as 'mystery shoppers' to help improve customer service in policing.

I'm delighted to be setting up this scheme as it enables local people to make a difference to the quality of service that the public receives.

Our mystery shoppers will act as customers of Nottinghamshire Police, undertaking agreed tasks to monitor the quality of customer service before reporting back on their experiences. Their information will help shape future services and enable me to make changes aimed at increasing the satisfaction and confidence of victims of crime in the services they receive. It's incredibly important that we treat victims in a way that makes them feel understood and confident that we will resolve the situation.

I have huge pride and gratitude for those in our county who give up their time in various ways to help Nottinghamshire Police the best service possible. Our communities deserve this and the Chief Constable and I are united in our commitment to its delivery.

Beating business crime together

Retailers in Nottinghamshire are being asked to become more involved in local crime partnerships to help reduce business crime.

When I spoke at Mansfield 2020's breakfast meeting on 27 June, I was able to tell business leaders that Nottinghamshire Police is seen as a leader in the field of fighting business-related crime. Our Deputy Chief Constable, Sue Fish, is Business Crime lead at the Association of Chief Police Officers, and Inspector

Richard Stones is director of the National Business Crime Forum which has its data sharing hub at Ashfield School.

I know there is still much to do, but one important step forward will be recording business crime under a single definition to enable accurate measurement of offending patterns. This is expected to happen soon in Nottinghamshire and we are also asking all police forces to undertake similar business crime tagging. Knowing the true scale of the problem will help us to fight it.

KEEP *ON* TALKING



I'm delighted that so many people contact me, with problems, compliments and comments. This is particularly important as I need to be able to listen to your views and learn from them and also know that you can keep up to date with what my Deputy, my team and I are doing.

Whatever I do, I am answerable to you, the electorate. You can contact me at any time to ask questions or put your views across.

You can visit:

www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk

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