

THE BEAT



Winter is fast-approaching and so too is my first anniversary as Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire.

As we look back on the first full year of this role, it is pleasing to see the progress that has been made thanks to greater partnership working and a more holistic approach to problem-solving. Behind all of the action and decisions we have taken in the last year is a drive to forge stronger relationships with the communities we serve. Our residents have spoken and their input and experiences is helping to shape the way we move forward.

Community walkabouts in priority areas

Listening to our communities is essential for this job but so too is getting first-hand insight into the issues and concerns they raise. As such, my deputy, Chris Cutland, and I have embarked on a series of walkabouts continuing over the next couple of months to meet residents and discuss local problems.



The visits will take place in the City and County priority areas so that we can gain a better understanding of the police and partnership working taking place to address issues which are blighting the lives of those who live there. **St Ann's, Aspley, Arboretum, Bulwell, Newark, Worksop, Mansfield and Sutton** are some of the neighbourhoods we will visit and I look forward to meeting local representatives to hear more about how we might help resolve local problems.

Resources will, of course, also help. That's why I'm delighted that the first of 150 experienced police officers backed by 60 new PCSOs are now hitting the ground.

Bingham Safety Fair



It was a pleasure to formally open the first Bingham Safety Fair which brought together a multitude of crime reduction organisations to provide free advice and information to the public.

Knowledge is power when it comes to protecting yourself and your property from criminals and this innovative event was a great way of reinforcing the message that we all have a part to play in making our country crime-free and this starts with taking our own personal security seriously. Those visiting the event were given advice from experts in personal and property safety, online security and victim support and I talked to many attendees about their views on community safety.

Play your part and help to reduce crime



Crime in Nottinghamshire is currently following a national trend which has seen a slight increase in comparison to last year. The increase (+3.2%) has slowed since the start of the year but remains a concern and we are already working hard to address this fluctuation.

Latest data suggests that 23 out of the 43 forces nationally recorded an increase in crime between April and August 2014, which indicates Nottinghamshire is not alone in this issue. However, we need to understand why this is specifically happening within our county and I'm working hard with the Chief Constable to identify possible causes and solutions.

One way of addressing the rise is smarter working with our partners as well as commissioning services from crime reduction organisations so that we tackle criminality from every angle. Clearly, reduced funding continues to be an issue for us and all forces nationally however with more effective working patterns and good co-operation between partners, we all believe the situation can be reversed.

Burglary is one area we are working hard to address in light of recent statistics. Of all offences, burglary can be most harmful to people's fear of crime and their feelings of safety. The Force is doing its utmost to target this crime and increase detections so that the perpetrators are removed from our streets and our communities feel less vulnerable. However, a recent review of burglary has highlighted that most cases have occurred when people have left their property unsecured. By removing the opportunity, we can have all have a positive effect on crime rates and protect ourselves from becoming a victim. The dark nights have already arrived so now is an ideal time to become security conscious and make life harder for opportunists. Don't make life easy for them!

One of the positive developments highlighted in the recent performance update relates to satisfaction levels among victims of crime. More than 87% of victims of crime are completely, very or fairly satisfied with the service they have received from Nottinghamshire Police which is just 2.7% away from the Police and Crime Plan target of 90%.



Working closer with our BME communities



October marked the first meeting of our BME working group to progress plans to enhance the relationship between Nottinghamshire Police and members of the black and minority ethnic community. This working group was established in response to the findings of the detailed research project I commissioned in the summer to analyse any perceived tensions that exist between police and the BME community and understand their experiences of policing. The study looked at controversial issues such as stop and search and under representation in the workforce to explore negative perceptions of the police and identify ways of moving forward. Plans are now in place through the working group to implement 36 recommendations from the report as part of my drive to promote equality and build a service that reflects the needs of all Nottinghamshire residents.

Community organisations benefit from funding to tackle crime

More than £350,000 of funding has now been allocated to community groups and organisations whose activities will help to reduce the cycle of crime and break patterns of offending. It is the first time the Community Safety Partnership Fund has been allocated to Nottinghamshire-based projects – previously this money came from central Government – and I'm pleased to have been able to support a broad range of initiatives that are both preventative and reactive and will help people turn around their lives and make our county safer.

Initial recipients include Bassetlaw Street Pastors which successfully applied for £5,000 to help provide a night-time economy pastor service providing advice and support to vulnerable people and Hetty's Criminal Justice Family Interventions which has received £25,000 to deliver preventative family intervention workshops focused on the impact of prisoners' drug and alcohol use on family members.

As part of my commitment to improve services and support for victims of domestic violence, we've agreed a number of funding applications to strengthen our response to this issue. This includes more than £22,000 worth of funding for Women's Aid Integrated Services for its Teen Relationships Domestic Violence pilot project. This initiative will deliver advice and help for teenage girls aged 13-17 who are experiencing relationship abuse.

As part of the application process, organisations must demonstrate previous success to receive a share of the funding and also support the key aims of my Police and Crime Plan. This scrutiny process will continue in the future to monitor the effectiveness of each project and to ensure we are receiving value for money for the public.



Facing up to Offending

Restorative justice is a theme I'm very keen to expand in Nottinghamshire, partly because of the positive outcome it can have on offending but also because of the benefits it provides to victims.

We've already undertaken our own work in the county and I'm delighted to now be jointly hosting a national conference called Facing up to Offending on 3rd December at Nottinghamshire Golf Club in Cotgrave.

This will bring together a multitude of criminal justice agencies and experts to examine the effectiveness of a national review into the benefits of restorative justice which involved Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation), Her Majesty's Crown



Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSP) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). Both the Chief Constable and I will also be speaking.

Anyone with an interest in restorative justice can register for the event on the No Offence! website
www.no-offence.org

We held our own Restorative Justice Summit earlier this year to explore how closer working between local justice agencies could achieve higher quality RJ. The national conference will explore the opportunities RJ has to make savings and improve outcomes on a regional basis if used in the right way. It is also aims to turn the findings of the review into a practical strategy and will showcase examples of good practice from across the county to help local areas develop a more successful RJ system.

Commissioner trials new tag - all in the name of crime reduction

With so much to do, I'm never too far away from my criminal justice colleagues but they certainly knew how to pinpoint me in August when I agreed to trial a locational GPS tag for a week. I was fitted with the new device to highlight Nottinghamshire Police's official launch of the technology which enables officers to keep track of offenders who have been released into the community at all times.



Early trials in the county are very encouraging and have already demonstrated that tagging leads to fewer crimes which equates to fewer victims and a reduced cost to the taxpayer. It is hoped that the use of tags will help keep offenders on the straight and narrow when they rejoin the community and help them to establish law-abiding patterns to keep them crime-free in the long-term.

Twenty tags were ordered for use by the force at a cost of £45,200 following positive feedback by officers involved in the successful pilot. The tags are being provided by G4S and the process of being fitted with one is currently voluntary.

I for one have been keen to experience for myself what it's like wearing a tag and I came away with the impression that it is a very clever and effective piece of kit. It certainly wasn't easy and I don't think I really got used to it by the end of the week but it does allow offenders to stay within the community and prove to police they have turned a corner or not, whatever the case may be.

New volunteers promise to serve Nottinghamshire's communities



This month we've welcomed the arrival of 72 new police cadets to help deliver crime reduction in Nottinghamshire.

The new recruits, all aged 16, were sworn into their roles at County Hall where they declared their allegiance to the force and pledged to serve the community and act as ambassadors for Nottinghamshire Police.

Deputy Commissioner Chris Cutland attended the event to welcome the cadets and express her gratitude at the personal commitment they had offered to make Nottinghamshire safer. She talked about the way they were challenging negative, stereotypical perceptions of young people and really making a difference to their local communities.

Speaking after the event she said: "It's great that so many young people in the county are prepared to give their time so freely to protect people and I am delighted the Force is investing in local support which will be for the benefit of everybody."

I'm particularly keen to bolster the Force's pool of volunteers to help get to the heart of local issues and encourage the public to take responsibility for safety in their area.

The cadets officially joined the Force last month and will attend a total of 39 weekly sessions to develop an understanding of various operational departments and learn skills. They will volunteer four hours per month to assist the police in attending public events and deliver crime prevention activities.

Research to help improve services to domestic abuse victims

One of the pledges I made when taking on this role is to improve services and support for repeat victims of domestic violence, a goal that features heavily within my first Police and Crime Plan.

Over the past couple of months, we've taken some important steps to realising these aims by commissioning a domestic violence research project which will help us to understand the complex issues behind abuse and how we can manage and respond to the issues to offer more support to victims.

The project offers us an opportunity to look at the issues surrounding domestic violence in unprecedented detail so that we can develop better systems to protect people and deliver the right help. The bid for the academic research was successfully won by a collection of academics working together at the Department of Criminology, University of Leicester. Deputy Commissioner Chris Cutland, who is former chief executive of Women's Aid Nottingham, is leading the ground-breaking work and will make a series of recommendations to improve support services and cost effectiveness following the outcome of the research project.

The project, which is in keeping with my plan to protect, support and respond to victims, witnesses and vulnerably people, got underway on October 1 and the final report will be presented by August 2015. It will include a review of support work across medium repeat cases, the referrals process, setting up victim focus groups and interviewing individuals, service providers and partners to identify successful pathways to sustainable recovery. It will also involve identifying gaps in the provision of services and explore why there is under-reporting of abuse to the police.



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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