

HMI Mike Cunningham's assessment of Northumbria Police – Transcript

Hello. I'm Mike Cunningham and I'm Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Northumbria Police. I am one of five inspectors, and our role is to inspect police forces on behalf of the public. Each year we produce an annual assessment of how each force is performing.

I am satisfied with most aspects of Northumbria Police's performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime, but there are some areas that need to be improved in order to provide a consistently good service.

The force is effective in preventing crime and the service provided to victims is reliable. The standards of investigation are generally high and there are good arrangements in place to tackle serious and organised crime. I welcome the strong focus on managing offenders to reduce offending.

Overall, the force provides a good response to safeguarding missing children and victims of domestic abuse, and it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. The force has effective arrangements in place with partner agencies to keep vulnerable people safe. The force has a strong commitment to protect vulnerable victims with training supporting this approach along with clear and consistently-applied processes to identify repeat and vulnerable victims to ensure an appropriate and timely response.

I was reassured that the force achieved its saving requirements for the spending review period while continuing to protect local policing. It has set a balanced budget for 2015/16 and has solid financial plans for the future.

I am concerned that the force does not comply with the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme. At the time of our inspection, there were a number of concerns about the force's efforts to instil a culture which promoted innovation and a willingness to challenge. I welcome the ethos of being 'proud to protect' the communities served by Northumbria Police, that is being advocated by the new chief constable.

I will be particularly interested to see how the force works to improve the wellbeing of the workforce. I'll also be interested to see how the force improves its use and recording of stop and search.