



the co-operative party



**REBUILDING POLICING
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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Introduction



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Policing and crime have a significant impact on society, communities and victims. Crime has the potential to harm the lives of all involved – including both victims and perpetrators. Crime can have a significant impact on the socioeconomic well-being of an area and community – trapping people in difficult situations and reducing living standards. For victims, being the target of crime can have life-changing impacts, which could severely affect quality of life.

Over the last 12 years, police funding has remained stagnant, with a 0.1% increase in real terms between the financial years ending March 2011 and March 2022, following a record low in funding in 2013/14.¹ This is despite rising crime rates with just over 6.3 million crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2021/22, the highest figure recorded since 2002/03. Despite recent recruitment, police officer numbers have dropped to a three-decade-low across the country.

More of the burden is falling on local approaches, with the decline in central government funding, the police precept now accounts for around 34% of the funding Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England

and Wales directly receive and is paid directly by local taxpayers.

It is essential to have a policing and crime system which people can trust and rely on – helping to reduce and prevent crime wherever it is found. Unfortunately, in recent years the policing system has been hit by a series of controversies which have weakened public trust and engagement with the police.²

The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving officer of the Metropolitan Police and the subsequent Baroness Louise Casey review into the problems with the Metropolitan Police marked a decisive moment for public trust in the police. It is clear we must introduce new ways of policing, which implement greater participation, accountability and public involvement in order to help rebuild trust in these institutions.

The Co-operative Party believes co-operative approaches to policing and crime can be at the heart of rebuilding our police service, achieving crime reduction and delivering justice. Co-operative approaches aim to strengthen community involvement and decision-making in policing and justice, promoting the voice

¹Home Office (2021) *Police funding for England and Wales 2015 to 2022*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-2015-to-2022/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-2015-to-2022>

²UK Parliament (2023) *Trust in the police*. Available at: <https://post.parliament.uk/research-briefings/post-pn-0693/>

of victims, young people and other marginalised groups. Innovative approaches and schemes include participatory budgeting, public health initiatives on violent crime and restorative justice – all with the goal of strengthening community engagement and building trust in justice institutions.

Labour & Co-operative Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been working to deliver innovative solutions to policing and crime since the initial introduction and election of PCCs in 2012. The Co-operative Party now has seven PCCs across the UK – with representatives in England and Wales, and two Metro Mayors with direct responsibility for policing. This paper highlights good practice by Labour & Co-operative PCCs on crime and justice, and will provide further recommendations on how we can embed these practices in policing and justice across the UK.

Making Britain's streets safe is one of Labour's key missions for the next general election. The next Police and Crime Commissioner and Mayoral elections will take place in 2024. These mark an important opportunity for advancing co-operative solutions in policing authorities across the country.

“CO-OPERATIVE APPROACHES AIM TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING IN POLICING AND JUSTICE, PROMOTING THE VOICE OF VICTIMS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER MARGINALISED GROUPS.

Our Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)



The current Labour & Co-operative PCCs are:

- **Emily Spurrell**
Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Alan Billings**
South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Alun Michael**
South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Jeff Cuthbert**
Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Kim McGuinness**
Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Andrew Dunbobbin**
North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- **Joy Allen**
Durham Police and Crime Commissioner

Also, two Labour & Co-operative Metro Mayors currently have merged the police and crime commissioner role into the mayoral role:

- **Andy Burnham**
Mayor of Greater Manchester
- **Tracy Brabin**
Mayor of West Yorkshire

Our PCCs have been taking action on a wide range of different crimes, with different areas of the country often dealing with different challenges. Throughout this, Labour & Co-operative PCCs have looked to build partnerships, restore trust amongst communities and reduce reoffending which blights communities and lives. This section looks at the work undertaken by Labour & Co-operative PCCs in several key areas: violence against women and girls, modern slavery, promoting victims' voice and sustainable policing.

Their work and successes

Modern Slavery

The scourge of modern slavery remains too prevalent in the UK, with 12,000 cases reported in 2021 and an estimated 130,000 people likely to be trapped in modern slavery in the UK.³ Of the 12,000 reported cases, approximately 43% relate to children. The scale of the problem has prompted action from police authorities across the country, with Labour & Co-operative PCCs playing an important leadership role.

In Merseyside, PCC Emily Spurrell has established a Modern Slavery Network, which aims to raise awareness of modern slavery and support police in the prosecution of perpetrators. The Merseyside Modern Slavery Network meets regularly and is in the process of producing a strategy for eliminating modern slavery in the Merseyside region.⁴

In 2023, the seven Labour & Co-operative PCCs produced a joint letter which called on the Home Secretary to fill the vacancy for an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, which had been vacant for over a year. The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner scrutinises the Government's work and legislation on

modern slavery, being a crucial advocate for victims and their rights. The Labour & Co-operative PCCs have raised awareness of the vital role the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner plays and the Government's failure to meet its statutory duty in appointing a Commissioner.



Above: In February 2023, all seven Co-operative Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales wrote to the Homes Secretary to call on her to fulfil her obligation to appoint the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

Labour & Co-operative PCCs and councillors have also supported the Co-operative Party's Modern Slavery Charter, which commits local authorities to eliminating modern slavery from both their operations and those in their supply chain. This helps encourage authorities to go above and beyond compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which provides additional protections and provisions to tackle modern slavery.

³Anti-Slavery International (2023) Slavery in the UK. Available at: https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/slavery-uk/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMI3LfGsbSd_wIVCO3tCh2IXgNBAAAYAAAEgKo3vD_BwE

⁴Emily Spurrell (2021) Merseyside Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025.

Violence against women & girls

Domestic and sexual abuse are some of the most harmful crimes, which can lead to serious injury, long-term illness or death. With a crime that predominantly affects women and girls, achieving a safer society for them is of paramount importance – so that all can lead lives free from fear and abuse.

There has been a significant increase in the reporting of sexual offences, with an estimated 5.9 million victims aged 16 to 74 years experiencing sexual assault since the age of 16. Meaning approximately 14 in 100 adults have been affected.⁵

Therefore, initiatives to tackle domestic abuse towards women have been a priority for Labour & Co-operative PCCs. In Northumbria, Kim McGuinness has developed a Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions scheme, which aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace so they can recognise victims and intervene to help them. Northumbria Police are also in the process of developing a Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy, which aims to reduce incidents, change attitudes, improve prevention and rehabilitate offenders.

Joy Allen, PCC for Durham has been another leader in confronting violence against women and girls. Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence has been a priority

in their police and crime plan, with over £1m being budgeted to tackle the issue, including investment in Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs). ISVAs provide support throughout the criminal justice process, assisting with victim wellbeing, counselling and court proceedings as an advocate on behalf of the victim. Other Labour & Co-operative PCCs have also taken significant action on violence against women and girls – including Alun Michael, who has produced a *South Wales Police Plan for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls*.⁶

⁵ONS (2021) *Sexual offences prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2020*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesprevalenceandtrendsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>

⁶South Wales Police (2014) *South Wales Police Plan for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls*. Available at: <https://commissioner.south-wales.police.uk/en/our-work/violence-against-women-and-girls/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan/#:~:text=The%20Tackling%20Violence%20Against%20Women,called%20%E2%80%9Chonour%E2%80%9D%20based%20crimes.>

Sustainable Policing

As we work towards achieving net zero, it is imperative that our public services become more sustainable. Reducing environmental impact and lowering carbon emissions will be an integral part of improving the sustainability of police authorities across the UK. Labour & Co-operative PCCs have provided leadership in efforts to decarbonise police forces and put them on a sustainable footing. Jeff Cuthbert, the Gwent PCC, has made sustainable policing a key priority of his Police & Crime Plan.⁷ New sustainability initiatives commit Gwent to investing in buildings, technology and equipment to reduce emissions – by bringing these up to a higher energy efficiency standard. The force is also actively reducing consumable waste and lowering its ecological footprint.

Victim Voice

Promoting victim voice is an important part of ensuring justice for victims of crime. Raising victim voice and ensuring they are heard by authorities is a constructive way of rebuilding trust in police and justice institutions, as well as helping victims to rebuild their lives and move on with appropriate support.

Andy Dunbobbin, North Wales PCC, has delivered on his commitment to prioritise victim voice by establishing a Victims' Panel in North Wales. The Victims' Panel provides the opportunity for victims of crime to raise their experience of the police and justice system with authorities, so that better services can be delivered, and authorities held to account. The Panel will meet quarterly and will engage with the Victim Help Centre on how the feedback has been put into action in order to improve services.

In Durham, Joy Allen PCC has appointed a Victims' Champion which aims to put victims' voice at the heart of Durham Police's work.⁸ The Victims' Champion engages one to one with victims and victim support services to ensure the best provision of service and care for victims. This includes working with the National Victims' Commissioner's Office and encouraging regional criminal justice agencies to undertake Victim Impact Assessments of their policies and operations.

⁷Jeff Cuthbert (2021) Gwent Police & Crime Plan 2021-2025.

⁸Joy Allen (2021) Durham Police & Crime Plan.

**Spotlight
on:**

Tackling the retail crime epidemic



The impact of retail crime hurts not only victims and staff, but communities, businesses and local economies. The ripple effect of retail crime harms business presence, high street vitality and local economic prosperity – making it a substantial impact on the communities who are affected. With such widespread consequences for communities and businesses, action to reduce retail crime is more pertinent than ever during the cost-of-living crisis.

Alarmingly the frequency of shoplifting has risen considerably over the last few years, driven by persistent and prolific offenders. Prolific repeat offending occurs due to a multitude of different factors, with the most threatening being theft to fund further criminal activity, such as the drug trade and prostitution.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) 2023 found that customer theft had increased from £663 million in 2022 to £953 million in 2023.⁹ There were over eight million incidences of reported retail theft – indicating the scale of the issue affecting businesses and communities across the UK.

While incidents of violence and abuse of retail workers has declined from the mid-pandemic record of 1,301 incidents per day, it is still double pre-pandemic levels, with over 867 incidents per day in 2023. The BCS's figures indicate that at least 10% of the retail workforce have suffered some form of harassment over the last 12 months. Data from the British Retail Consortium's Crime Survey 2019 indicated that around 39% of violent incidents resulted in injury, demonstrating

the considerable toll crime against shopworkers has on victims. This includes long-term mental health consequences from violence, such as long-lasting anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹⁰

Statistics from the Metropolitan Police indicate that while there has been an 18.9% increase in shoplifting over the last year, the number of sanctions against perpetrators has declined. This demonstrates there is still much more that needs to be done to confront and tackle this issue.¹¹ The Co-operative Party supports the introduction of similar protections for retail workers across the UK's nations- similar to those in Scotland, so that we can better record instances of retail crime and hold the perpetrators to account.

⁹British Retail Consortium (2023) BRC Crime Survey 2023

¹⁰<https://www.co-operative.coop/media/news-releases/new-report-reveals-epidemic-levels-of-crime-in-shops>

¹¹<https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/year-end-crime-statistics-22-23/>

Case Study

Scotland's Protection of Workers Act

Scotland has led the way in taking action on violence against retail workers. In 2021, Labour & Co-operative MSP Daniel Johnson's Protection of Workers Act was passed into law by the Scottish Parliament. The Act aimed to give greater protection to retail workers against assault, threat and abuse whilst doing their jobs. A particular clause relating to age-restricted goods, such as alcohol and tobacco, makes offences aggravated if they are related to these goods. The Act aims to make it easier for workers and victims of retail crime to report incidents to the police, so offenders can be punished and reoffending reduced.

The Protection of Workers Act represents a significant step forward in legal protections for retail workers, creating new provision to hold offenders to account. 1,600 incidents of shopworker abuse were reported within the first six months following the introduction of the Act, with 58% being formally detected by Police Scotland.¹² Though more can be done to tackle retail crime, this targeted legislation has clearly defined the problem, and allowed specific action by the police and justice system.

Co-operative action to end retail crime

In order to tackle the rising levels of persistent and prolific shoplifting, the Co-op Group has been investing in new innovative technology and building partnerships with policing authorities across the country.

Since 2020, the Co-op Group has invested £70m in body-worn camera technology to help deter potential criminals and provide evidence to the police to then target offenders. Investments will also be made in SmartWater Fog Cannons, cutting-edge CCTV and communication headsets.¹³

Partnership building with police authorities is another key area of Co-op Group action on retail crime. The first partnerships started were with Nottinghamshire Police and Sussex Police forces. The Co-op Group has developed the partnerships by collating internal data on retail crime, analysing it and then passing it on directly to police authorities.

This initiative uses data to target prolific repeat offenders, which account for as much as 80% of total retail crime. Through the partnership, police authorities can arrest and process prolific offenders – helping to prevent them from repeat offending which reduce the morale of staff and cost retailers in revenue.

Following the first two partnerships, the Co-op Group has now begun partnerships with Essex Police, Hampshire Constabulary and Police Scotland. Police and retailers should look to build these partnerships across all policing authorities, with the assistance of the National Business Crime Solution (NBCS).

¹²<https://brc.org.uk/news/2022/new-research-shows-need-for-shop-worker-protection-legislation/>

¹³<https://www.co-operative.coop/media/news-releases/retail-crime-in-focus-at-co-op-with-body-camera-roll-out>

The East of England Co-op has established Co-op Secure Response (CSR), a service which provides support on security to East of England Co-op businesses, customers and colleagues. Launched in 2018, CSR provides a variety of services including site guarding, anti-trespassing, fire alarms and CCTV surveillance.

Through CSR, East of England Co-op employs an Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, who has responsibility for engaging offenders and raising awareness of the harm caused by anti-social behaviour in shops. The Anti-Social Behaviour Officer educates young people and offenders through digital learning materials, role-play and first-hand accounts of harm. The Officer works closely with police, local authorities and other social organisations to raise awareness of retail crime, reform offenders and work to prevent people from falling into retail crime.

Police and Crime Commissioners' action to end retail crime

Labour & Co-operative PCCs have been implementing their own actions to reduce and eliminate retail crime in their constituencies. In Durham, PCC Joy Allen has made action on crime against retail workers a feature of the Durham Police & Crime Plan. Allen has committed to delivering several initiatives, including promoting the use of SentrySIS to record business crime, supported the rollout of retail watch schemes and engaged with local businesses on crime prevention methods.

Given the deep impact on high streets, staff and communities, Labour & Co-operative PCCs need to ensure that tackling persistent and prolific offenders is a priority in their police and crime plan. They can develop partnerships with co-operative societies and other retailers, which collaborate using internal data to target repeat offenders, as piloted in Nottinghamshire, Sussex and Hampshire.

This should be supported by police efforts to raise awareness of the serious and organised nature of retail crime amongst the public, encouraging shopworkers to report every incident of theft or assault and signposting to support services for workers.

**Spotlight
on:**

A co-operative approach to policing



A belief in the importance of co-operation formed a key part of Sir Robert Peel's principles of policing by consent, which aimed to define what an ethical and accountable police force should be. Rebuilding trust in policing institutions and strengthening the principle of policing by consent will require a renewed commitment to co-operation with the public. Below are several approaches to policing which aim to build co-operation between the public and the police.

Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting enables people and communities to have a real say in the decision-making process. Participatory budgeting provides citizens with the opportunity to decide democratically how to spend part of a public budget. The objective of participatory budgeting is to help ensure those who have been traditionally left out of decision-making processes have their opportunity to be heard, such as low-income citizens and young people. Initially pioneered by the Worker's Party in Brazil, participatory budgeting has been implemented by public institutions around the world as a way of empowering communities.

By implementing participatory budgeting in part of the police budget, PCCs and policing authorities would be able to ensure community priorities are reflected in policing budgets. In 2013, the landmark Stevens Report

on policing recommended *'that police forces consider establishing participatory budgeting units in order to ensure greater involvement of local communities in allocating local policing resources'*.¹⁴

Pilot schemes have already begun under Labour & Co-operative PCCs – including in Merseyside under Emily Spurrell. Funding from the Community Safety Grant and cash seized from criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Act have been used to support participatory budgeting in the city of Liverpool on ways to tackle theft and anti-social behaviour.

¹⁴Independent Commission into the Future of Policing (2013) *Policing for a Better Britain – Report of the Independent Police Commission*.

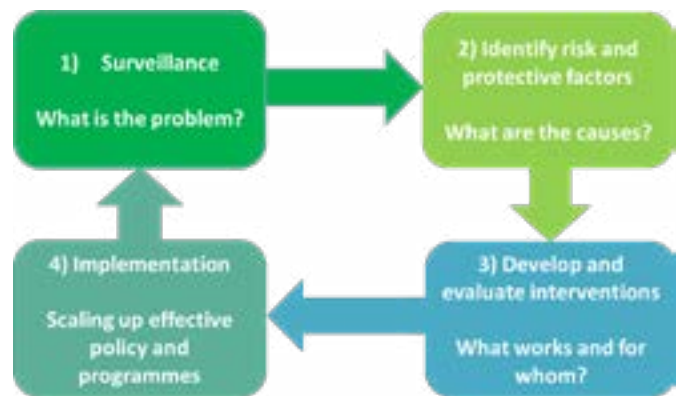
Public health approaches to crime

In recent years, new public health approaches to tackling violent crime, such as knife crime, have become more prevalent, as authorities seek to confront both the crime and the causes of crime. The public health approach to violent crime seeks to take a multi-disciplinary approach which intervenes early, aims at the root cause of violence and takes action to reduce occurrences.

The public health approach to violence requires the building of partnerships which work across all areas, using evidence-based initiatives and strategies. These initiatives bring together police, social workers, teachers, healthcare professionals and others to work towards early intervention and prevention of violent crime.

Though this is the right long-term approach to tackling the causes of crime, the implementation of violence reduction units by the government has seen year-by-year funding approaches which has not allowed long-term sustainable investment, and therefore undermined the public health approach.

Despite this inadequate funding, Labour & Co-operative PCCs have been finding innovative ways to develop public health approaches to violence reduction. In Merseyside, PCC Emily Spurrell's Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) has made targeted interventions on more than 21,000 young people – through education, mentoring, sports and cultural initiatives. By building partnerships with external organisations, the VRP has managed to rapidly expand its scope of interactions



Above: HM Government (2019) A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention.

with at risk groups, including vulnerable and disabled children.

In South Wales, PCC Alun Michael has chosen several keys areas of focus for his Violence Prevention Unit (VPU). Domestic abuse, community safety and youth crime have been the focus of the VPU's efforts, with the body using data to develop targeted interventions which make a difference for communities.

Neighbourhood policing

The impact of austerity saw the number of police officers decline across the country, making police less visible in our communities. As police officers and budgets were cut, people saw less of their local police force in their communities and neighbourhoods. This has an impact on the perception of safety and security in a local area.

Effective neighbourhood policing is vital to building trust in the police and confidence in the justice system. Research by the College of Policing has found neighbourhood policing is effective in reducing public perceptions of disorder and increasing trust in the police amongst the population.¹⁵

The Co-operative Party believes neighbourhood policing needs to be at the heart of a community-based approach to policing which builds community confidence and engagement.

PCCs can take the lead in developing a community-based approach to policing by investing in neighbourhood policing initiatives. This could include funding additional PCSOs, so there is one for every neighbourhood and community, increasing visibility and community connection.

Another mechanism which can enhance neighbourhood policing is the development of Safer Neighbourhood Panels. These panels enable members of the public to hold local policing authorities to account, with input on priorities and planning. Safer Neighbourhood Panels are ward-level bodies which engage with local

neighbourhood policing teams to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Safer Neighbourhood Panels have been rolled out in the wards of many London Boroughs and provide an effective link between local residents and police officers and PCSOs. Policing authorities should encourage diversity in the participants of Safer Neighbourhood Panels, ensuring that under represented groups have a voice and a say on the panels.

Community Safety Funds

PCCs and local councillors can play a pivotal role in supporting and enhancing community safety through grassroots action. By pooling funding to create a Community Safety Fund, PCCs and councillors can help to devolve power and funding down to neighbourhood levels, so local residents can decide how they would like to spend the money keeping their community safe. This could include a variety of different options, such as developing Neighbourhood or Speed Watch schemes which act to deter anti-social behaviour and crime.

¹⁵ College of Policing (2018) *Neighbourhood Policing: Impact & Implementation: summary of findings from rapid evidence assessment*.

**Spotlight
on:**

Co-operative solutions to Youth Justice

The Co-operative Party believes the Government must seek to improve the life chances and outcomes for all young people, wherever they live in the UK. This will be an important aspect in delivering real meaningful levelling up, which helps restore productivity and prosperity in the UK's nations and regions. Breaking down the barriers to opportunity at every stage is one of the Labour Party's five missions for a better Britain, with the ambition of improving education standards and attainment for all children. Delivering for young people will also mean delivering youth justice – for those who are victims of crime and those who have fallen into criminal activity. A future Labour & Co-operative Government will need to rebuild youth services, develop a plan for reducing youth offending and empower young people to take greater control of their lives.



Restoring Youth Services

Since 2010, youth services across the UK have been decimated by austerity and a lack of funding. Between 2010 and 2019, youth services saw real terms decline of 70% in funding from local government.¹⁶ This has had a substantial impact on the availability and quality of youth services across the country.

In 2019, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Knife Crime & Violence Reduction, in association with Barnardo's and Redthread, *“were able to establish an approximate relationship between cuts to youth services and rises in knife crime on a geographical basis. This showed that there is a strongly negative association between a decline in the number of youth centres and an increase in knife crime in the same area”*.¹⁷ The link between youth service cuts and violent crime illustrates the need to restore quality youth services across the country – with the resources required to prevent young people from sliding into criminality.

Youth services are a vital part of assisting young people's development, helping them to build relationships with peers and learn new skills. They also act as an important component in preventing young people from falling into crime and anti-social behaviour. PCCs are able to take independent action to rebuild youth services by committing funding to the restoration of services. This includes funding youth crime prevention services for those at risk of offending and young persons mentor schemes. Rehabilitation services for previous offenders enable authorities to help



reintegrate young people into society, reducing their risk of reoffending.

Northumbria PCC Kim McGuinness has been using funding from Operation Payback to fund community centres, sports clubs, and youth groups in the local area. Operation Payback funding comes from the money seized from criminal groups, involved in drug dealing, human trafficking and theft. Kim McGuinness has invested approximately £225,000 in community and youth services, which aim to prevent young people from

¹⁶LGA (2023) *Re-thinking local youth services*. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/re-thinking-local/re-thinking-local-children-and-young-people>

¹⁷APPG on Knife Crime & Violence Reduction (2019) *Securing a Brighter Future*. Available at: <http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Securing-a-brighter-future-the-role-of-youth-services-in-tackling-knife-crime-v.2.pdf>



falling into criminality.¹⁸ Kim McGuinness has called this strategy a ‘Fighting poverty, fighting crime’ approach – stating “*we need to look at crime through a different lens. We need to see the wider picture. Reducing the number of families in poverty will help reduce crime in the North East*”.¹⁹

Empowering youth voice

Too often young people are left out of decisions which affect their lives and futures. This is particularly the case in public services, where young people are often absent from the decision-making process. The Co-operative Party believe PCCs can take the lead in empowering young people’s voices by creating new structures to give them a formal role in decision-making. A youth commission could be the ideal model for empowering youth voices, enabling them to scrutinise and feedback on local policing and crime justice policies.

In South Wales, Alun Michael PCC has helped establish a project which promotes youth voices – Young Voices Conversation. The project, launched in 2021, aims to provide a regular forum for young people aged 11 – 25. The forum enables young people to feedback directly to the PCC, his team and the wider South Wales Police on issues which matter to them. This can help to ensure priority issues for young people are raised with police forces, holding them to account for policies and decisions which impact youth.

¹⁸<https://northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/kim-mcguinness-announces-frontline-community-causes-to-get-225000-cash-stripped-from-criminals-across-the-north-east/>

¹⁹<https://northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-kim-mcguinness-becomes-the-first-pcc-to-unveil-a-fighting-poverty-fighting-crime-focus-for-local-policing/>

Preventing youth offending

Preventing youth crime and early intervention are important in saving young people from falling into a pattern of criminality or anti-social behaviour. Youth offending teams are an integral part of early intervention for youth offenders and those at risk of offending – with the teams comprising of social workers, police officers, mental health practitioners and probation officers.

Working co-operatively between different service providers and youth offending teams will be important to improving outcomes for young people. PCCs should take the lead in encouraging greater collaboration between different elements in youth offending teams, as well as inviting service providers which are not legally required to take part in youth offending teams – such as mental health practitioners and local businesses. By formally incorporating non-statutory partners into youth offending teams, greater opportunities can be provided to help intervene or rehabilitate young offenders. This could include mental health support, training and workplace opportunities and sports programmes.

Northumbria PCC Kim McGuinness has been a vocal champion of improving youth justice. In 2019, Kim McGuinness launched the project You Only Live Once (YOLO) in partnership with Newcastle United Foundation, which sought to protect young people from falling into crime and offending.²⁰ The YOLO project intervenes to support young people between 8 – 14 who are at risk of falling into crime or anti-social behaviour. YOLO provides young offenders and those at risk of offending with the chance to take part in

positive opportunities, learn from role models and have support available through a one-to-one mentor. The project has demonstrated the benefits of developing co-operation between a wide range of organisations to provide opportunities which can help break the cycle of youth anti-social behaviour.

Youth justice leadership in the co-operative movement

Co-operative societies have been playing an important leadership role on youth crime and justice in communities across the country. Education and training is the fifth co-operative principle and has been at the heart of the co-operative movement since the days of the Rochdale Pioneers. Concern for the community is the seventh co-operative principle – so there is a clear connection between the co-operative movement and promoting youth justice through education, training and community engagement.

The Co-op Group has been a notable leader in this field, developing partnerships with a range of organisations seeking to promote youth justice and crime prevention. The Co-op Group has developed a partnership with the Damilola Taylor Trust, named after one of Britain's most tragic victims of knife crime. The partnership aims to establish training and skills

²⁰<https://northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/celebrating-2-years-since-launching-yolo/>

opportunities for disadvantaged young people in the Greater London region as an approach to tackling the causes of crime. The Career Search & Skills Development Programme (CSSD) provides young people with education on job searching, CV writing, communication and time management in order to help them secure job opportunities.

Partnering with Greater Manchester Police, the Co-op Group has been working with young offenders at Chorlton High School to educate them on restorative justice, rather than criminalising them early in life. The objective is to discourage youth crime while promoting the benefits of youth justice.

In 2020, the Co-op Group launched a new report, *Young People and the Future*. The report focused on violent crime, the risk of young people falling into criminality and raising job opportunities. Built on engagement and interviews with young people and frontline workers, the report makes significant recommendations on youth involvement in service commissioning, reform of stop and search and the expansion of restorative justice for youth offending.²¹



Above: The Co-op Group has been a notable leader in the field of youth justice.

²¹The Co-op Group (2020) *Young People and the Future*. Available at: <https://assets.ctfassets.net/5ywmq66472jr/3yynN6lQMMe5EHoF5bnBiO/96ce874102b5d43722db77ae41ece9d5/young-people-and-the-future-report.pdf>

**Spotlight
on:**

Promoting restorative justice and community payback



Restorative justice

Recidivism – or persistent reincarceration through reoffending – is a big issue for the UK. In 2023, the proven reoffending rate from custodial sentences of less than 12 months was 54.4%, demonstrating a clear cycle of reoffending and conviction.²² The UK's prison population has been growing rapidly since 1990, with the population doubling in England and Wales and going up 60% in Scotland.²³ This brings the total number of incarcerated people up to 89,520 by June 2022.

It is clear the UK suffers from a system which fails to significantly rehabilitate many of its incarcerated offenders, leading to lives of crime which blight their

families and communities. Where appropriate and proportionate, non-penal sentences can offer an alternative option which can promote rehabilitation away from carceral settings.

Restorative justice takes a victim focused approach to justice, with the objective of providing victims of crime with closure and resolution. For offenders, they will need to admit their crimes, gain an understanding of the suffering they have caused to the victim and work towards rehabilitation. Research from the Restorative Justice Council indicates that 85% of victims were satisfied with the restorative justice process, with it leading to a reduction of 27% in reoffending.²⁴ The

²²Ministry of Justice (2023) Proven reoffending statistics: April to June 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-april-to-june-2021/proven-reoffending-statistics-april-to-june-2021#overall---offender-demographics>

²³House of Commons Library (2022) UK Prison Population Statistics. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/>

²⁴Restorative Justice Council (2011) What does the Ministry of Justice RJ research tell us? Available at: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/Ministry%20of%20Justice%20evaluation%20of%20restorative%20justice.pdf>

College of Policing's research found restorative justice reduced the seriousness and frequency of repeat offending, while reducing the rates of post-traumatic stress suffered by victims.²⁵ This demonstrates the applicability of restorative justice to retail crime reduction – which is demarked by persistent repeat offending and negative psychological impacts for victims.

PCCs and leaders of police authorities should look to expand the usage of restorative justice through partnerships with local prisons, support services, charities, local councils and others. Labour & Co-operative PCCs have been expanding the availability of restorative justice programmes in their local regions. In North Wales, Andy Dunbobbin has made promoting restorative justice a key pledge in his efforts to deliver justice for victims. Andy Dunbobbin has expanded access to restorative justice programmes, commissioned age-appropriate restorative justice services and supported the training of police officers on restorative justice. In Northumbria, Kim McGuinness has begun building partnerships for restorative justice programmes, including victims services, offender-focused organisations and other support agencies.

Community Justice Panels provide a larger, group-oriented form of restorative justice, bringing together victims and perpetrators. The Community Justice Panels aim to solve issues related to crime and anti-social behaviour, raising awareness of the damage caused by perpetrators' actions and providing potential

solutions to crime. Early pioneers of this model include Sheffield City Council, Manchester City Council and South Somerset Council.

Community payback

Communities should have a greater say in determining how community payback schemes are delivered and what they focus on. Community involvement in decision-making would have numerous positive effects, including increasing trust in non-penal sentencing, aligning community payback to local priorities and having offenders engage with their locality. Community involvement in decision-making can be delivered by the establishment of community panels, which would identify, assess and decide on projects of merit for community payback.

²⁵College of Policing (2022) Evidence briefing. Available at: [https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/restorative-justice/evidence-briefing#:~:text=repeat%20offending%20was%20generally%20reduced,\(Research%20Excellence%20Framework%2C%202014\)](https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/restorative-justice/evidence-briefing#:~:text=repeat%20offending%20was%20generally%20reduced,(Research%20Excellence%20Framework%2C%202014))

Calls to action

For Police Authorities, PCCs and Local Councillors.

1.	Expand police work on modern slavery detection, victim support and prosecution of perpetrators. Including developing partnerships with external organisations and strategies for modern slavery elimination.
2.	Establish Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) strategies and action plans in all police areas, with a focus on ensuring victims' voice is central to plans and commissioning.
3.	Create action plans to decarbonise police forces, including vehicles, equipment and buildings.
4.	Strengthen victims' voice in justice, by creating victims' panels or appointing victims' champions in police areas.
5.	Develop partnerships with retail businesses, which can provide internal data to police forces to help better target repeat offenders of business-related crime.
6.	Prioritise the tackling of persistent and prolific retail crime offenders within Police & Crime Plans.
7.	Explore the devolution of part of the policing budget for participatory budgeting initiatives.
8.	Strengthen neighbourhood policing with initiatives to improve police visibility and community engagement.
9.	Invest in and reinvigorate youth services which work towards the prevention of youth crime.
10.	Create new structures to give young people a formal role in decision-making on crime and justice issues which impact them.
11.	Expand Youth Offending Teams (YOT) in order to broaden involvement of specialists and activities available to young participants.
12.	Encourage the further development of restorative justice programmes across the UK's police areas.

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