



Police, Crime and Justice news from Durham's Police and Crime Commissioner

AYKLEY MAIL



Making the communities of County Durham and Darlington safer by tackling alcohol and drug related crime and anti-social behaviour

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ISSUE #01

THIS ISSUE

PREVENTING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Through partnership working, 420 harmful vapes appealing to vulnerable community members have been removed from shelves in Darlington.

PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS

The Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) are awarded the Victims Choice Quality Mark.

DETERRING OFFENDING AND REOFFENDING

I call to Ministers for better resettlement for early-release prisoners to prevent reoffending and overcrowding.

DELIVERING JUSTICE

Sentence achieved in just 39 days for families of 8-month old Zackary Blades and his aunt Karlene Warner after crash on the A1(M) caused by drunk, speeding driver.



NEW PCSOS STRENGTHEN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Read more overleaf >>>

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGES

From Joy Allen

Welcome to my first edition of The Aykley Mail, a monthly newsletter designed to keep partners, and the public updated on the work being done to effect change locally, regionally, and nationally within the criminal justice sphere.

This edition highlights recent successes and the ongoing efforts of my Office to make the communities of County Durham and Darlington safer, stronger and more resilient to crime and anti-social behaviour.

As PCC, I proudly serve as the APCC Lead for Drink/Drug Driving, Environmental Sustainability, Finance, Road Safety and Substance Misuse and Addictions. I have also been nominated as Labour's lead on the APCC Finance portfolio, where I aim to influence the development of a new 'fair funding' formula and the setting of police grants.

Through this newsletter, I am delighted to keep you informed about my national advocacy efforts to drive positive changes here in County Durham and Darlington.

UPCOMING EVENTS



The PCC's Engagement Team will be attending the below events, and have a stall to provide personal safety merchandise and advice on how to keep the public safe. We will also be asking for feedback on policing issues that matter to the public.

- **Seaham Fun Day**
27th August, 10am-3pm
Seaham Redstar Football Club, SR7 0HP
- **Cornforth Community Fun Day**
30th August, 10am-2pm
West Cornforth Community Centre, DL17 9LA
- **Weardale Show**
31st August, 9am-4pm
St. John's Chapel, DL13 3JG
- **Wolsingham Show**
7th and 8th September 9am-5pm
Wolsingham Showground, DL13 3JG
- **Stanhope Show**
14th and 15th September 9am-5pm
Unthank Park, DL13 2PQ

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT



Joy Allen PCC backs calls for cut to drink-driving limit

This month, I've called for urgent action to lower the drink-driving limit, endorsing the British Medical Association's proposal to reduce the blood alcohol content (BAC) limit from 0.08% to 0.05%. This change, supported by international evidence, could save over 150 lives annually by reducing road fatalities.

cont. overleaf >>>

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cont. from front page

This call for action is underscored by the tragic deaths of 8-month-old Zackary Blades and his aunt Karlene Warner, who were killed when a drunk driver crashed into their vehicle on the A1(M). The offender was found to be driving at 141mph and, when breathalysed, blew 95mg of alcohol per 100ml of breath - the legal limit being 35mg.

In County Durham and Darlington, over 110 people were arrested for drink or drug driving during the Euros, with Durham Constabulary conducting over 800 checks from 14th June to the 14th July. These checks resulted in 114 arrests - 54 for drink driving, 52 for drug driving and 8 for failing to provide samples. Car safety inspections during these stops also revealed defects in several vehicles. My push for a lower BAC limit aims to improve road safety and prevent further tragedies on our roads.

WHAT'S NEW DURHAM PCC



Appointment of Deputy Commissioner

I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Graham Hall as my Deputy was unanimously approved by the Police and Crime Panel in July. Hall, a retired Chief Superintendent and Head of Community Safety for Darlington Borough Council, brings extensive experience to enhance County Durham and Darlington's safety initiatives. He will serve full-time until May 2028.



VCAS Victims Choice Quality Mark

The Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) is delivered in-house by my office and proudly funded by myself. The service has just received the Victims Choice Quality Mark for its exceptional victim support in County Durham and Darlington. VCAS, a free and confidential service, was praised for its innovative practices and comprehensive care that supported over 3,200 victims last year.

Call: **0800 138 2020**
Email: victimcare@durham-pcc.gov.uk
Website: victimcareandadvice.service.uk

RECENT ACTIVITIES RECAP

Tackling Illegal Vapes, Police Bravery and Support for Prisoners

Collaborative efforts between my Office, Durham Constabulary and key partners have led to significant crime-fighting successes. A recent operation with Darlington Borough Council has tackled illegal vapes. During a day of action, 294 packs of cigarettes, 52 packs of tobacco and 420 illegal vapes were seized. Many vapes exceeded the legal limit of 600 puffs, with some containing up to 10,000 puffs.

These illicit products pose serious health risks and fund organised crime, potentially leading to more violent offences and exposing underage children to exploitation. My Office have developed an action plan to tackle this growing concern, to ensure there is no place for illegal vapes or synthetic opioids in our communities.

This month, I had the pleasure of supporting PC Stuart Furlonger at the National Police Bravery Awards in London alongside Chief

Constable Rachel Bacon. Whilst responding to a call in September last year, he was rammed by a quad bike and thrown up into the air, breaking his tibia and fibula in his right leg.

The Community Peer Mentor scheme continues to support the most vulnerable individuals, recently expanding into Low Newton prison. Originally started by the late Ron Hogg CBE, the scheme has grown significantly, now including over 300 volunteers with lived experiences. Operated by my office, these mentors aim to inspire confidence in the police and criminal justice system, with a new focus on resettling female prisoners by assisting with housing and employment.

For more information or to become a Community Peer Mentor, contact CommunityPeerMentors@durham-pcc.gov.uk.

New PCSOs strengthen Neighbourhood Policing

Welcoming 18 PCSOs to Durham Constabulary, I emphasised my commitment to a strong local police presence. Neighbourhood Policing is the public's top priority and is vital for increasing trust. PCSOs are valued for their crucial role in local policing, supporting communities and deterring offenders.

NEW PROJECTS

Support for Gambling Addictions

I have urged the government to implement a compulsory gambling industry levy without delay to protect addicts. As National Portfolio lead for Addictions and Substance Misuse, I advocate for stronger betting regulations and spearheaded reforms, including Durham Constabulary's Gambling Charter commitment. The government's proposed reforms include a mandatory levy, player protection checks and stake limits.

Expanded naloxone training to 238 individuals across the force and secured funding for drug testing on arrest in County Durham and Darlington

The North East has the highest drug misuse death rate in England and Wales. Since 2019, Durham Constabulary's naloxone-trained officers have saved over 30 lives. PCC Joy Allen has expanded naloxone training and secured funding for drug testing on arrest in County Durham and Darlington. Nationally, nearly 100,000 drug tests have been conducted since March 2022, revealing that 56% of tested suspects were positive

for cocaine, opiates, or both. This testing is vital for reducing re-offending by connecting offenders to treatment services. With current funding ending in March 2025, I am dedicated to securing continued investment.

Early Release Resettlement Support for Prison Leavers

I have raised these concerns with the government to provide better resettlement packages for early-release prisoners to deter reoffending and prevent system failure. Highlighting cases of prisoners released without housing, she stresses the need for practical support to avoid quick returns to prison, exacerbating overcrowding. Allen has raised these concerns with the newly appointed Minister for Justice and Home Secretary and will continue to lobby to prevent re-offending.

PCC'S SPOTLIGHT

As your newly re-elected Police and Crime Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington, I am committed to ensuring that our police force and my office address the priority areas that matter most to the public.

We will soon launch our Police and Crime Plan Preliminary Consultation. This brief survey will assist me in developing a Police and Crime Plan tailored to the needs of our community.

To stay updated and be one of the first to make your voice heard, please follow the PCC's Office on social media:

- Durham Police and Crime Commissioner
- (formerly Twitter): @DurhamPCC
- @DurhamPCC
- Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office



CONTACT

Call: **0191 375 2001** | General.EnquiriesPCC@durham-pcc.gov.uk

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