



Protecting Cumbria
Cumbria Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Commissioning Strategy 2024 – 2028



I am pleased to present my first Commissioning Strategy since being elected as your Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in May this year. It is a privilege and an honour to have been elected and I want to thank the public for voting for me. Have no doubt, I will work hard for our local communities to deliver what I have promised to the people of Cumbria. This document sets out the principles and framework that will be used to commission services that will achieve the objectives of my Police, Fire and Crime Plan 'Protecting Cumbria'.

As Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, I am responsible for setting the strategic direction of policing, fire and rescue services. I also have responsibility for enhancing the delivery of criminal justice in the area, and for providing support services which help victims to cope with and recover from the consequences of crime.

During my election campaign, and since taking up office, I have spoken with many people living in Cumbria to listen to their local policing and fire

concerns. My plans for each of these areas is published in the Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2024 – 28.

We will continue to consider how we can drive out efficiencies and savings through the joining of enabling services with the Constabulary, and where appropriate, with other partner organisations.

We have already begun a journey of bringing together enabling services between policing and fire so that both organisations can benefit from consistent, high-quality support that will improve services to those on the front-line and deliver the services the public needs.

In my Police, Fire and Crime Plan I have set some joint objectives for the Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer, my Office, and some working with our partner organisations. I strongly believe we must work together to address some of the challenges the people and communities in Cumbria are facing as it is not possible for any one organisation to do this. I want Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service to collaborate whenever it is appropriate, so that we continue to protect the safety of all those who live, work and visit Cumbria.

To achieve the above objectives, I need to commission a number of different providers to help with the delivery of services that will benefit our communities. This Commissioning Strategy provides a clear framework to achieve this as well as ensuring all commissioning decisions are fair, transparent and provide value for money. It also seeks to empower local communities to access funding to tackle crime that concerns them, helping to 'Protect Cumbria'.

Commissioning Principles

Good commissioning is not just about responding to good ideas. Commissioning is about deciding how to use resources to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, and sustainable way. It is about working with partners, the community and service providers to assess and understand needs, decide what the priorities should be and what outcomes commissioning should achieve.

Commissioning also involves understanding the perspective of service users, such as how well existing services are working and whether there

are any gaps in the provision provided. This understanding helps to inform how services need to change and how outcomes can be improved. This is why it is important to have a good commissioning framework that makes sure the needs of communities are met by providing the best possible services, by the best possible organisations, at the best possible cost.

The OPFCC can achieve this through either a procurement process or making of a grant. Procurement contracts are for core activities that require stable and sustainable funding over time and grants provide more flexibility and room for pilot projects and innovation. By having both options available we can ensure efficiency in our contractual relations, and diversity on the range and nature of providers we work with. Both processes involve developing a specification that sets out the outcomes and/or services against which a range of organisations can put forward a tender or funding proposal.

A key aspect of the commissioning process is continuous improvement. All services will be reviewed to assess how well they are delivering against the agreed outcomes within this strategy. This will involve reviewing the performance of contracts and providers and evaluating feedback from service users. This tells us how well the commissioning cycle has operated in meeting needs and improved outcomes.

This commissioning process adopts the following set of principles developed by the National Audit Office, which are designed to provide better public outcomes for individuals and communities.

‘The Eight Principles of Good Commissioning’

- Understanding the needs of users and other communities by ensuring that. Alongside other consultees, you engage with the third sector organisations, as advocates, to access their specialist knowledge.
- Consulting potential provider organisations, including those from the third sector and local experts, well in advance of commissioning new services, working with them to set priority outcomes for that service.
- Putting outcomes for users at the heart of the strategic planning process.

- Mapping the fullest practical range of providers with a view to understanding the contribution they could make to delivering those outcomes.
- Considering investing in the capacity of the provider base, particularly those working with hard-to-reach groups.
- Ensuring contracting processes are transparent and fair, facilitating the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate.
- Ensuring long-term contracts and risk sharing, wherever appropriate, as ways of achieving efficiency & effectiveness; and
- Seeking feedback from service users, communities, and providers to review the effectiveness of the commissioning process in meeting local needs.

The principles do not mention grant making but neither do they preclude it. Where it would provide better value for money (for example, where it is a more economic process, or a more effective approach to the achievement of outcomes) then it remains an appropriate way to source services and meet users' needs.

The Police Fire & Crime Plan

Vision

'Protecting Cumbria'

The Key objectives within the [Police, Fire and Crime Plan](#) against which the intentions within this Commissioning Strategy have been set are:

✓ Putting People First

We will work together to understand and tackle the issues affecting the people of Cumbria.

We will make sure our workforce has the professionalism and skills to respond to the communities we serve.

Working Together

- Engage with communities to understand the policing, crime, fire and safety issues that affect them.
- Commission, co-commission, and co-ordinate support services for victims of crime to help them cope and recover.
- Continue to build a positive workforce culture that demonstrates the highest level of integrity, fairness, and respect towards others, helping to improve public trust and confidence in our services.
- Support the health and well-being of our workforce to enable them to deal with the challenging roles that they perform and can deliver the services the public needs.
- Ensure the workforce has the correct skills and training to deliver a quality service.

Police

- Our neighbourhood policing teams will work with local communities to understand the crime and antisocial behaviour issues that affect them and work collaboratively with partner organisations to address these issues.
- Ensure victims and witnesses of crime receive the services they should under the Victims Code of Practice.

Fire

- Continue to develop our understanding of the risks local communities are facing and use that knowledge to ensure our services meet their needs.

✓ Providing Visible and Accessible Services

We will work together to deliver a visible and quality service ensuring we are there when the public needs us.

Working Together

- Engage with communities to understand the policing, crime, fire and safety issues that affect them.
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Fire

- Continue to develop our understanding of the risks local communities are facing and use that knowledge to ensure our services meet their needs.

✓ Protecting Vulnerable People and Communities

We will work together to protect and support vulnerable people, properties, and the environment to help build safer communities.

Working Together

- Work with partner agencies to deliver our duty to prevent serious violence.
- Work with partner agencies to combat the harms caused by the misuse of drugs.
- Develop and co-ordinate partnership activity to address antisocial behaviour and ensure processes are in place to support victims.
- Ensure victims are supported through the criminal justice process and referred to appropriate services.
- Commission and co-ordinate perpetrator initiatives in order to prevent, educate and target those causing harm in the community.

Police

- Continue to implement a range of measures, operations and activities that target perpetrators of violence against women and girls and help make communities feel safer.
- Ensure the Police is equipped to deal with online exploitation of vulnerable individuals.
- Provide dedicated policing resource to prevent and tackle rural crime.
- Work with partners across the criminal justice system to improve positive outcomes for victims of crime.

Fire

- Work with housing providers, developers and planning teams to minimise the risk of fire and protect the safety of people.
- Engage with local businesses to increase fire protection understanding and ensure they are complying with legislation to help maintain the safety of individuals.
- Deliver a robust fire safety inspection regime that allows the Fire Service to target resources on the commercial premises at most risk of fire, pose the greatest risk to life, the environment and the nation's heritage.

- Respond to intelligence received from the community about fire risk.

Ensure the Fire Service takes an active role in delivering against its safeguarding responsibilities.

✓ Focusing on Prevention to Protect Cumbria

We will provide a range of prevention activities that focus on building resilient communities and increase awareness of personal safety.

Working Together

- Continue to invest in early intervention to prevent young people from becoming involved in, or a victim of, crime or antisocial behaviour.
- Work with partners to prevent offending and reduce reoffending.
- Ensure that people and businesses have access to crime and fire prevention information to keep them safe.
- Work with our partners to coordinate and invest in activity to address antisocial driving and continue to promote safety on our roads.
- Raise awareness in communities of how to spot the signs of criminal exploitation such as modern slavery and human trafficking to help encourage reporting of these crimes.
- Work with partners to safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities to prevent harm.

Police

- Work with our neighbourhood policing teams on early intervention strategies to prevent the offending of young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system.
- Develop campaigns to raise awareness of crime and antisocial behaviour to protect people and to give communities the confidence to report to the Police.

- Engage with communities to raise awareness of cyber-crime and scams to protect people from becoming a victim.

Fire

- Provide a fire prevention programme that targets those most vulnerable and provide interventions that will reduce the risk of fire and other harms.
- Work with partner agencies and communities to provide opportunities for young people to learn new skills.
- Work in partnership to ensure effective referral pathways are in place to provide appropriate support and intervention to safeguard those at risk of fire.

✓ Making Best Use of Resources

We will work together with partner agencies to develop opportunities for shared support and services.

We will work collaboratively with partner agencies to respond to the local and national threats impacting on our communities.

Working Together

- Continue to ensure we have robust financial planning and risk management processes in place and prioritise investments in line with the benefits they will deliver.
- Develop a Joint Estates Strategy that delivers the most effective and efficient use of our police and fire estate.
- Explore and deliver plans for enabling services between police, fire and other agencies that deliver best value for the public.
- Ensure greater collaboration with other partner agencies to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of both services.
- Continue to build a culture of continuous improvement and effective performance management across policing and fire.

Police

- Develop plans that will provide efficiencies to maximise available financial resources.
- Make sure the Police are ready to deal with threats impacting on Cumbria such as civil emergencies, natural disasters, terrorism, cyber-attacks, organised crime and public order.
- Make best use of digital technology to delivery efficiencies across policing.

Fire

- Explore the opportunities to invest in technology that will support the Fire Service to improve how it protects the public and delivers value for money.
- Collaborate with partner agencies to explore the most effective and efficient solutions to deliver support functions.
- Continue to build a stable and sustainable budget position, building financial reserves to improve organisational resilience.
- Respond to increasing risks arising from climate change, such as flooding and wildfires, through training and investment in our service.

Working in partnership

Working in partnership is at the heart of our commissioning approach. By working closely with local partners, we can together tackle problems more effectively and make a real difference to the lives of individuals, families, and communities. The Commissioner works with many statutory organisations such as Local Authorities, Probation, the Youth Offending Service, and the Fire & Rescue Service and explores opportunities for joint commissioning to delivery services in a holistic and joined up way.

With the introduction of the Victims and prisoners Act, we are now more than ever focused on how to improve commissioning of support for victims of crime focussing on effective collaboration and co-commissioning with other local agencies, services for children and young people, and services for marginalised groups.

The Commissioner chairs the Safer Cumbria Partnership which is the County Strategy Group and Criminal Justice Board for Cumbria, and the Contest Board (providing the strategic direction for delivery of the government's strategy to protect communities from terrorism related activity). Safer Cumbria is the key partnership through which the Commissioner, and his office, work to deliver the Police, Fire & Crime Plan 2024 - 28. The Commissioner and partners can make collective decisions and deliver joint solutions that work in Cumbria to achieve their shared outcomes.

The Commissioner also works with the voluntary sector and community and faith organisations to help deliver initiatives aimed at supporting the key objectives within the Police, Fire and Crime Plan. It is the tremendous work of the many organisations and community groups within Cumbria and beyond that make things possible. It is our responsibility to build on this and do what we can to ensure they are well informed and feel empowered to do so, helping to enhancing the quality of life for all.

The Commissioning Budget

The Partnerships & Commissioning budget is split into the following strategic budget areas, the overall budget includes a combination of PFCC's Home Office Police Grant funding, POCA funding and external grant funding from central government departments. Additional budget areas can be added if they are required during the life of this strategy.

The Partnership Fund

The Key objectives within the Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2024-28 can only be delivered by working collaboratively with our public sector partners across health, probation, and the local government sectors. The partnership fund recognises that our partners are uniquely placed through their links to local communities and the services they deliver to act as the lead agency to commission and deliver local services across areas of shared responsibility for victims, witnesses, community safety, crime reduction and anti-social behaviour.

The Ministry of Justice Victims' Services Fund.

Grant funding for the commissioning of victim support services continues to be provided to PCCs by the MoJ under powers given to the Secretary of State by section 56 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. This provides that the Secretary of State may “pay such grants to such persons as he considers appropriate in connection with measures which appear to him to be intended to assist victims, witnesses or other persons affected by offences”. Section 143 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gives PCCs the power to provide, or arrange of the provision of, support services for victims of crime.

The fund primarily supports collaborative partnership arrangements to transition nationally commissioned services to a regional/local level and establish victim care arrangements which comply with the Victims Code of Practice. The fund also supports arrangements for small grant awards with a specific focus on victim's advocacy and capacity building within the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector.

The Victims Funding Strategy (VFS)

The Victims Funding Strategy (VFS) is a cross -government Strategy, published in 2022, that sets out a framework to improve funding of victim support services, seeking to better align and co-ordinate funding to enable victims to receive the support they need. The VFS outlines core metrics and outcomes that commissioners should collect data against, to monitor and evaluate the services we choose to fund.

In the VFS, three key strategic aims were introduced:

1. Fund the victim support sector more strategically.
2. Remove barriers to access.
3. Implement clear and consistent outcomes.

Under the aim of removing barriers to access, the VFS introduced **national commissioning standards**, applicable to commissioners of victim support services, which encourage an expected quality of service for victims.

These standards are:

1. **Victims at the centre of commissioning**, including seeking victim voices as part of the commissioning cycle and commissioning services in response to need.
2. **A whole-system approach to commissioning**, encouraging join-up with other commissioners and agencies where possible.
3. **Equitable access to services**, ensuring that all victims can access the services that are right for them, including tailored services.
4. **Clear and consistent mechanisms for reporting and evaluation**, ensuring that reporting requirements are clear, and services are regularly evaluated for improvement.
5. **Promote sustainable funding**, encouraging commissioners to look for alternative funding sources and build up relationships with the third sector.

The Community Fund

Local people are key in knowing what is needed within their area to reduce crime and disorder. The Community fund is a pot of money that is distributed by the Commissioner (from property coming into police possession with additional contribution from the Commissioner) with the aim of funding communities and organisations to work together to reduce crime and disorder locally.

Those who can apply for a grant are local community groups, watch schemes, parish councils, charities, voluntary groups, and schools. Groups must have the support of a Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) within their local area who will help with the application.

Application information can be downloaded from the OPFCC website. A panel will meet to consider bids for funding four times a year. Funding will be awarded based on the expected outcomes that aim to be achieved from a funding award. Grants will be awarded up to the value of £2,500.

Through the Community Fund, the Commissioner may on occasion also seek applications from local community and voluntary groups to identify

potential projects to target a specific issue such as 'road safety. These opportunities will be published on the OPFCC website and promoted through media.

The Commissioning Approach

The OPFCC employs a variety of commissioning approaches to ensure the best outcomes can be achieved. This mixed model enables the OPFCC to be flexible in how services are delivered and better placed to support a variety of organisations.

The Ministry of Justice Victim's Services Fund and Partnership Fund initiatives will be delivered through a mix of commissioning arrangements. Traditional procurement routes in line with the Commissioners procurement regulations and business code of conduct will be used to procure independently, and in partnership, new preventative services and services for victims that are currently commissioned on a national basis.

The Commissioning Strategy is founded on an outcome/result based approach. It is important that we have measures in place to identify how successful we have been with the activities we have commissioned to achieve our key objectives. This means that each fund will be governed by procurement specifications and terms and conditions that set out clear intentions around what must be achieved but gives providers the freedom to determine how. Identifying and measuring outcomes within funding proposals and bids can be challenging but presents the best way in which the value for money and effectiveness of activity can be assessed. Where practicable, we include provision for providers to develop their own proposals in relation to evaluation and reporting, assessing their proposed approach as part of the assessment of the funding application.

Over the life of this Strategy, we will also collate evidence on the effectiveness of different activities and interventions and make these available to support future commissioning of services.

The main source of OPFCC is Central Government and the local precept.

The local precept is the portion of council tax which contributes towards paying for policing. The Chief Constable will appoint all officers within the force. The PFCC can commission policing services from the Chief

Constable or from other providers, in consultation with the Chief Constable but will not directly fund staff roles.

It would also be deemed inappropriate for the PFCC to sponsor charitable activities.

The Commissioner does not commit to renew or continue financial support to a Recipient after the conclusion of the funding period. A pilot funding period will be limited to 12 months maximum followed by an evaluation.

Contact us.

If you would like to contact us about any of the detail covered within this Strategy, please use the information below.

PFCC Website: www.cumbria-pfcc.gov.uk

Postal Address:

Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

1-2 Carleton Hall,

Penrith,

Cumbria

CA10 2AU

Telephone: 01768 217734

Email: commissioner@cumbria-pcc.gov.uk