

Northumbria Safer Parks



NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Making parks safer and more inclusive for women, girls
and marginalised people

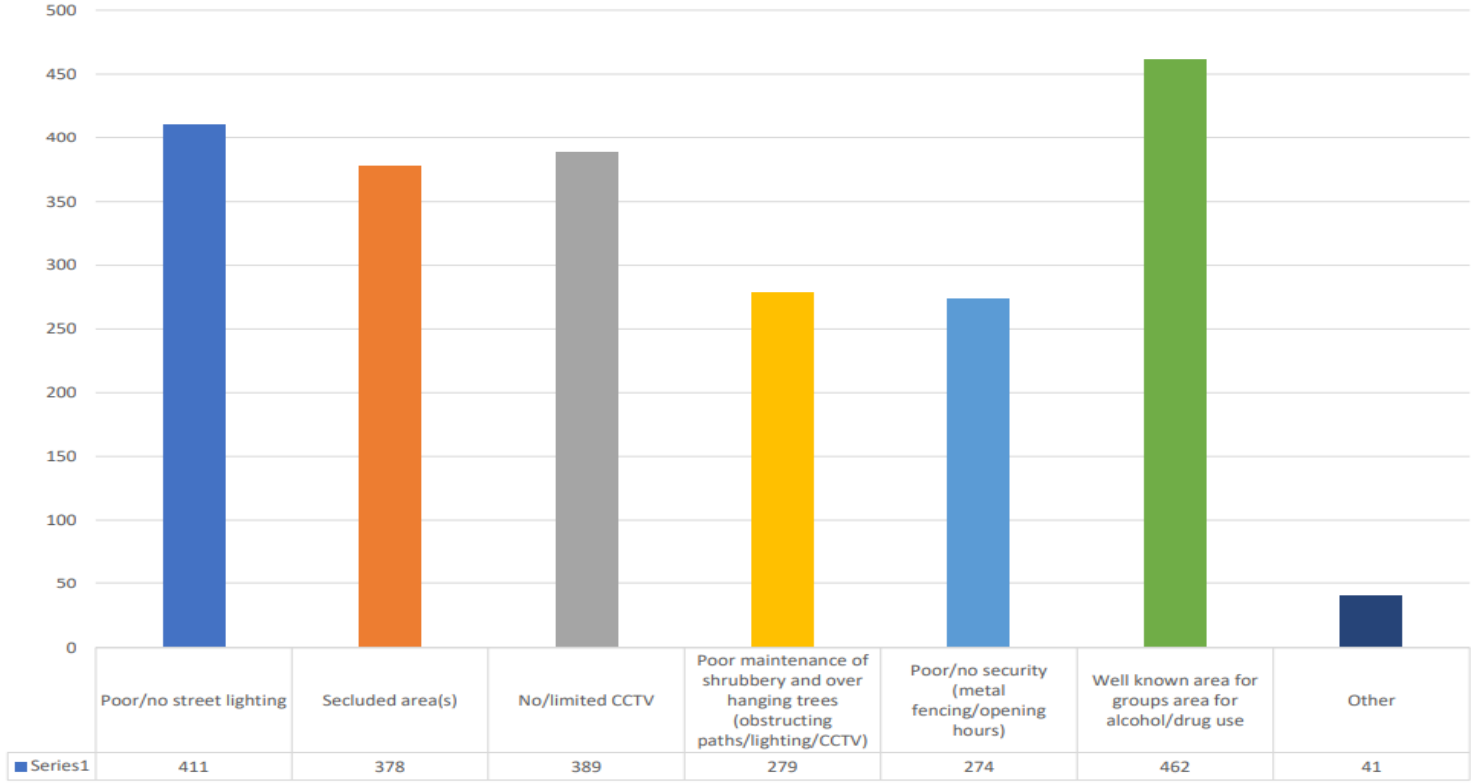


Identifying the problems

- Public survey
- Consultation and engagement with local services
- Data analysis
- Parks were in the top 3 areas that people felt unsafe
- 62% felt unsafe or very unsafe in parks at night
- 30% of those who experienced indecent exposure were in parks
- 89% felt unsafe due to men and boys and groups of people.

“The indecent exposure relates to drunken men/boys who think it is acceptable just to urinate anywhere they want in the park .” (Survey respondent)

Contributing factors



What our communities wanted

Respondents said they felt what was needed included:

- Men need to challenge other men
- Bystander interventions
- Earlier reporting by young women
- Push buttons in parks for when something was happening to raise an alert





Funding and Vision

- Secured £377,237
- Pilot in 6 parks

Vision:

To make parks safer and more inclusive for women, girls and marginalised group by:

- Encouraging earlier reporting, increasing data and understanding the problem
- Co-designing interventions and solutions with park owners
- Taking a Public Health Approach to attitude and behaviour change
- Using evidence of what works to scale the approach





Actions taken

Physical Interventions

'Provide locations for anyone feeling unsafe to access help and report'

- **Help Point** aid stations to be fixed within each of the identified parks
- **Help Point Reports** to be picked up by Local Authority control rooms
- Bespoke **Independent Lighting Review** to inform parks lighting design
- Each Local Authority will commit a **Horticulture and Arboriculture Review**

Education

'Raise awareness of what to report, increase active bystander activity and address attitudinal/behaviour change'

- Provide and promote a positive **Messaging and Social Action Campaign** across partner media channels
- Improve **park signage**
- Introduce multi-agency **Days of Action** to promote the positive ways in which parks can be used

Academic Research

'Provide an evidence-based standard for future improvements in all parks across Northumbria'

- Creation of a **Northumbria Safer Parks Standard** (similar to an accreditation scheme)
- Commissioning of a **Research Team** to inform the Northumbria Safer Parks Standards
- Establish a **steering group of women** to co-produce the research
- Embed any learning for future **park improvements or park creations**

Northumbria Safer Parks Standard: Research Findings

- Unsafety and fear in parks are greater for women and girls, and overlap with other issues of inequality.
- Women and girls feel unsafe and are unsafe in parks.
- Women and girls should not have to avoid parks for fear of violence.
- VAWG and hate crimes should be designed out of parks...
- ...But not at the expense of nature and biodiversity
- Consult park users so changes meet local needs

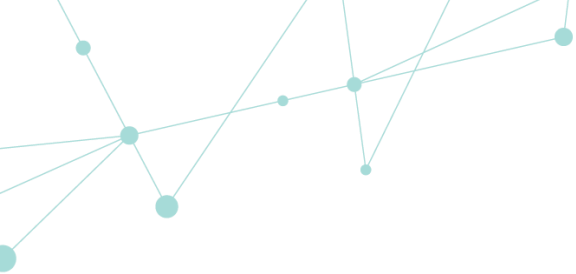


Northumbria Safer Parks Standard: Recommendations

1. A park that is well used in all seasons by different types of people
2. Infrastructure built with girls in mind
3. Users and park staff/ volunteers who are educated and trained in responding to harassment abuse and hate crime
4. Planning that is inclusive and participatory
5. A park that is well lit and respects nature

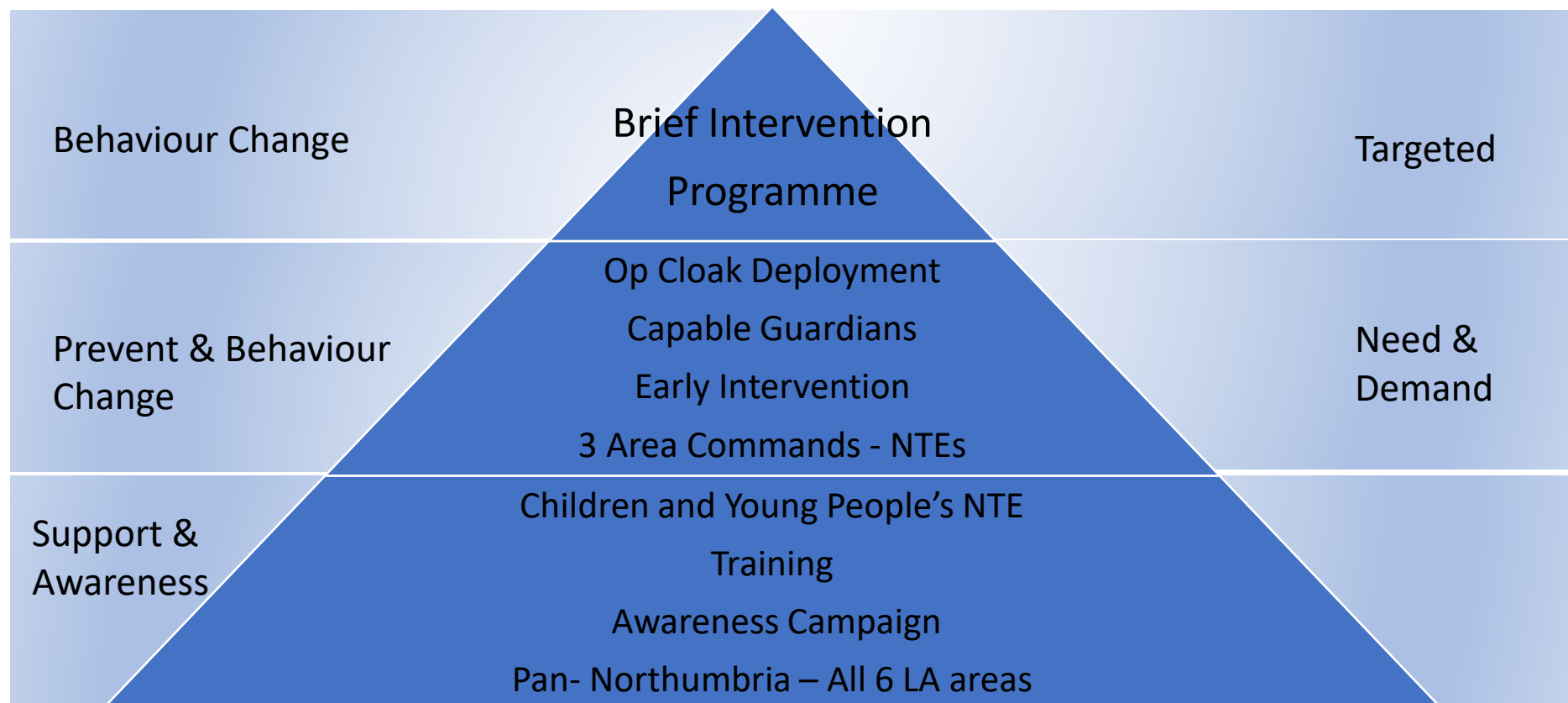
88%

said that visible staff in parks would be helpful



What came next?

Women's Safety in Public Places





Benefits Achieved

- Public Space Risk Assessments based on Safer Parks Standard
- Continued delivery of Days of Social Action led by community organisations
- WSiPP Warden foot patrols in parks during evenings year round
- Policing VAWG
 - Operation Spear – park bike patrols targeting suspected and known perpetrators
 - Operation Cloak – extending patrols that see NTE spaces abut park spaces
- CYP research into alternate NTE spaces to be published in Autumn 2023
- Active Bystander Training and sustainable onward delivery for 2-years
- Research based campaigns #ItAllAddsUp



Future Activities

- Developing App-based technology for park users to update and get help
- Women's Safety Briefings for park patrol teams
- Continued co-ordination in prevention work between Local Authorities Police and other statutory and community organisations
- Continually consulting with a diverse audience of women and referencing lived experience
- Focus on behaviour change and policing perpetrators not women

Thank you.



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Tracy McCann, Commissioning and Policy Manager (Improving Lives)

Tracy.McCann@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

and

Kainat Javed, WSiPP Project Lead

Kainat.javed@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk