



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

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2024 to 26 September 2024

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3 October 2024



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Foreword

September saw the publication of the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government (PfG). I very much welcome and support the inclusion of 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' and 'Safer Communities' as two of the immediate priorities for the current mandate. My report this month provides detail on the progress of the PSNI's Violence Against Women Action Plan since its introduction two years ago, and outlines our sustained commitment as we look ahead to the next five years. The Executive's highly anticipated Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) is therefore timely. Despite the huge challenges facing PSNI, playing our part in a societal effort to end VAWG remains a vital strategic priority.

While recognising that policing will clearly be a key partner in both of these priorities, I am hugely disappointed that it was not front and centre and the subject of greater focus. I, of course welcome the recognition that police officer numbers are at an all-time low, along with the acknowledgement this is insufficient to respond to and deal with crime, and the commitment to grow officer numbers to 7,500 in line with the 'New Decade, New Approach' commitments. But, are these merely words on a page or do they come with the cast iron commitment required to make Northern Ireland a safe place to live? We absolutely need our officer numbers to be at least 7,500, however, I am realistic about the available funding and the capacity we have to bring recruits through our Police College.

The Executive's Draft Plan is currently out for consultation and I would urge everyone with an interest in promoting a safer, more secure and confident Northern Ireland, to engage with this process and call for the prioritisation of policing, ring-fenced funding and support

for our Recovery Plan to bring officer numbers to 7,000 within the next three years. A link to the consultation can be found here:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG-consultation>

September also witnessed the launch of the consultation on the Policing Plan for 2025 – 2030. This is a key document that sets out what we as a Police Service and the Policing Board want to achieve in the next five years. It reflects our strategic direction, what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. The three proposed outcomes of; 'PSNI is victim focused', 'We have safe and engaged communities with confidence in policing' and 'PSNI has a representative, valued and enabled workforce', should hopefully resonate with everyone. My objective is to deliver a plan that is uncomplicated and understood by all, a plan that is:

Victim focused: Where we promote and create an organisational culture, attitude and mind-set that puts victims first. In tackling crime such as anti-social behaviour, hate crime, VAWG, assaults, murders and threats to national security, we do so in a more holistic way, utilising the skills and expertise of partners in a whole system approach that brings true help to victims and their families. An approach where we do not simply focus on prosecution, but seek to prevent harm, intervene and problem solve early.

Community focused: Where we strive to be an organisation for all of our communities, from the two main traditions through to our emerging communities who bring such richness and diversity. Where we have a workforce reflective of these communities and where we listen to the need, concerns and problems of communities, putting them



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at the heart of problem solving and decision making.

Workforce focused: Where staff are a reflection of our diverse communities. Where they feel engaged, valued, supported and given a voice, and where a culture of learning and continuous development permeates everything that we do. Police officer and staff numbers remain at their lowest ever levels and the morale of the workforce is at its lowest ebb. We need to celebrate, recognise and promote the world class people we are fortunate to have.

This consultation could not have come at a better time given where we find ourselves as an organisation. With officer and staff numbers at their lowest level since the formation of the PSNI, we simply cannot be as victim and community focused as we want or need to be. Equally, we cannot deliver against the Executive's priorities for Safer Communities and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in a way they deserve.

Almost on a daily basis I'm out meeting my officers and staff. I see what they do day in and day out. Unimaginably difficult jobs being done in an incredibly professionally way. It is truly remarkable. However, attempting to do everything, everywhere, all the time is breaking the workforce. PSNI has not received the support it should and we need to get numbers back to where they need to be. This year will be one of survival. From April 2025, my ambition is to grow the organisation to 7,000 officers over a three year period. This Recovery Plan is not overly ambitious, it's just putting back what has been taken away. In years four and five we will seek to progress to 8,000 officers, which by any reasonable assessment is the number PSNI require to keep the people of Northern Ireland safe.

I wish to develop and deliver against a Policing Plan that communities want and deserve, not a plan based on what PSNI can afford to do.

We cannot deliver effective policing without the support of the public and our partners, so, similar to the PfG consultation, I encourage anyone with an interest in making Northern Ireland a safer place to live and work to take this opportunity to engage and share their views and shape the plans for the future of Policing. A link to the consultation can be found here: [Policing Plan Consultation 2025 - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

I have addressed the Board about the disgraceful events of the summer and the tireless work we are doing to protect victims of racially motivated hate crime and their families, our regular engagement with those affected communities and continued robust pursuit of criminal justice outcomes for those responsible. I have also outlined that this is not something the PSNI can, or should, do alone. This past week, we took the decision to remove offensive posters which may constitute a criminal offence, from lamp posts in the Rathcoole area, despite having sought the support of partners in the Department of Infrastructure some time ago to assist with removal as per the agreed protocol. That support did not materialise after a period of some six to seven weeks. It is clear that urgent action is needed to look at how all relevant partners engage with each other, share information and remove offensive material as quickly as possible from public display if it constitutes, or is likely to constitute, a criminal offence.

We are very willing to initiate that process. This will go some way, I believe, to restoring the black and minority ethnic community's faith in our public bodies including the Police Service. The significance of that as an outcome, cannot be underestimated.



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There has been further media attention since my last report to the Board on the issue of the use and release of custody images. I take this opportunity to reinforce my commitment to publishing photographs of people convicted of certain serious crimes where there is a policing purpose to do so. We are in the process of finalising the logistics of how we do this and I anticipate operational practice coming into effect in the very near future.

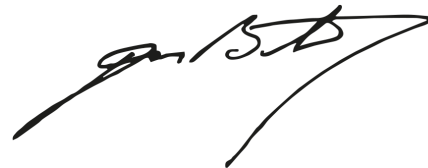
On 20th September, I was joined by Justice Minister Naomi Long and NI Policing Board Chair Mukesh Sharma, at the Attestation ceremony for 28 new Constables held at the Police College. This was the first Attestation since February 2024 and it was a pleasure to celebrate the occasion with the officers and their family and friends. I wish them well as they embark on their new career, and I look forward to welcoming the 200 new appointments due to join our ranks between now and March 2025.

On 24th September, I hosted the first of our 'Team PSNI' events. The PSNI is a large organisation and these events are essential in communicating with all officers and staff about the future planning for the Service, to listen to their views and acknowledge what they do. The day provided an opportunity for the Service Executive Team and I to meet and engage with colleagues from across the Service and to begin to address the issues raised in last years 'Your Service, Your Voice' survey.

Also on the 24th, I had the privilege of hosting the Police Services' High Commendation Awards ceremony. I was delighted to be joined by Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA and her Permanent Secretary Hugh Widdis, Chair of the Justice Committee, Joanne Bunting MLA and Policing Board member, Mr Peter Osborne. These awards demonstrate the range of incidents officers and staff are involved in on a daily basis, and how they perform to the highest of standards, often in

the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. It was inspiring and humbling to hear about all of the various acts that were recognised. Each and every individual was rightly recognised for their bravery, which often came at personal risk to themselves, to protect others in our society.

In policing, and in wider society, a person's sacrifice and ability to act on behalf of others is something we often take for granted. The courage and professionalism displayed by these officers and staff is a true reflection of the PSNI. I commend each, and every one of them, they are a credit to their teams, this organisation and their loved ones. This demonstrates why these events are so critically important and I look forward to hosting more in the future.



Jon Boutcher QPM
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Finance and Resource Update

The funding position in the current year remains under great strain, with the costs of policing recent public disorder only increasing our projected full year deficit to some £37m. I have consistently highlighted the precarious nature of the police budget and we simply cannot absorb any unanticipated costs of this kind. Policing, in terms of both resources and funding, must be put on a stable footing to underpin services and avoid this cycle of constant crisis.

I have submitted a bid to address the in-year shortfall in funding as part of the October Monitoring Round and await the outcome with interest.

Our Draft Resource Plan 2024/25 was presented to the Resources Committee in September. The figures are stark, with a total funding shortfall of £239m this year. The gap is inflated by the inclusion of anticipated costs in response to the Holiday Pay Judgment and Data Leak just last year. These costs will crystallise at some point but are so significant that they cannot be absorbed by the budgets within the Service or the Department of Justice. Our underlying shortfall on running costs is now better estimated at £37m as set out above and after some internal cost reductions. Significantly, the Plan still includes recruitment of both officers and staff, simply to prevent overall numbers falling yet further.

Having reviewed all our costs, we are not in a position to close a funding gap of this size – it simply reflects an unrealistic budget settlement.

At the end of August, the Department of Finance commissioned a three year budget planning exercise covering the period 2025/26 to 2027/28. We submitted our response to the Department of Justice just recently and the projected gaps against the 'planning budget' are significant, rising from £100m in 2025/26 to £228m by the last year. A briefing will be provided to the Board's Resources Committee in October, however, it further emphasises the need to resolve our underlying structural deficit.

I am seeking the support of the Board to do all that it can to improve the funding position this year and to advocate for a more appropriate settlement going forward.

Police Pay

In July 2024, PSNI were invited to submit a Temporary Approval Pay Remit to enable incremental pay progression for eligible Officers from Constable to Chief Superintendent. Incremental progression provides for one step progression at either the officer's date of a confirmation as a Constable, or their date of promotion to other ranks. In previous years this process has been tied to the implementation of the annual pay award and has been subject to extended delays. Following work from our Police Federation of Northern Ireland colleagues, HR Reward team and in engagement with the Department of Justice, temporary approval was granted and eligible officers will receive one step progression from September 2024 onwards. We continue to engage with the Department in relation to the pay award recommendations for 2024/25 which are currently being considered by the Minister of Justice.

Our Performance

The information in this section is extracted from our Official Statistics published reports. The full reports can all be accessed from the following link. <https://www.psnl.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics>. These are in-year provisional figures and may be subject to change.

Recorded Crime

In the 12 months from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024:

- There were 98,563 crimes recorded, a decrease of 11,635 (-10.6%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 51 recorded crimes per 1,000 population in the 12 months September 2023 to August 2024 compared with 57 in the previous 12 months.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person. The largest decrease was in Stalking and Harassment, with smaller decreases seen in violence with and without injury. However, changing levels in Stalking and Harassment should be considered alongside changes in requirements to the way crime is recorded.
- Lower crime levels were also seen across sexual offences, robbery, burglary, theft, criminal damage, drug offences, public order offences, possession of weapons offences and miscellaneous crimes against society.
- Higher crime levels were seen in shoplifting offences

Anti-Social Behaviour

In the 12 months from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024:

- There were 43,899 anti-social behaviour incidents, a decrease of 2,814 (-6.0 %) on the previous 12 months.

Security Situation

In 12 months from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024:

- There was one security related death, the same number as during the previous 12 months.
- There were 5 bombing incidents, compared to 8 during the previous 12 months and 19 shooting incidents, compared to 35.
- There were 24 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 31 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (7).
- There were 9 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 14 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of shootings occurred in 'Belfast' and 'Ards and North Down' (3 in each district). All 9 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 87 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 114 during the previous 12 months.
- 13 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 25 during the previous 12 months.

¹Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the NISRA website (opens in a new window). ² Full details are available in points to note on page 3 of The Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin.



Motoring Offences

In the 12 months from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024:

- There were 36,711 detections for motoring offences of which 97% were dealt with by means of a fixed penalty notice or referral for prosecution.
- The remaining 3% resulted in the completion of a speed awareness or safer driver course.
- Total detections decreased by 16% on the 43,633 detections recorded in the previous 12 months, with a notable reduction in speeding offences, which was down by 1,544 (23%).
- All of the 19 offence groups showed decreases in detections over the year.
- The largest offence group was insurance offences with 6,644 which along with speeding (5,060) accounted for one-third of the total detections.
- Three road user groups showed an increase in killed or seriously injured (KSIs) between January to June 2023 and January to June 2024, most notably drivers which increased by 32.
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Fermanagh and Omagh districts both recorded 7 road deaths between January and June 2024. Belfast City district had the most people seriously injured with 66 recorded during this period.
- Single vehicle collisions resulted in 14 fatalities or 41.2% of all fatalities during January to June 2024. In the equivalent period of 2023 there were 7 single vehicle collision fatalities or 20.0% of all fatalities.
- The most common principal causation factors for KSI casualties during the reporting period were 'wrong course/position' (54), 'inattention or attention diverted' (49) and 'excessive speed having regard to conditions' (39).

This report provides statistics on the number of motoring offences detected by police in Northern Ireland from 1st August 2023 – 31st July 2024. It does not include any detections by the NI Road Safety Partnership (NI RSP).

Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties

Between 1st January 2024 and 30th June 2024:

- There were 2,215 road traffic collisions recorded compared with 2,437 between January and June 2023 – a decrease of 222 collisions (-9.1%).
- There were 34 fatalities, 443 people seriously injured and a further 2,991 people slightly injured. Total casualties were down by 315 year on year, including 1 fewer fatality, between January and June 2024 but there were 30 additional seriously injured casualties recorded.



Outcome 1

We Have a Safe Community

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

Investigation

- Following the race related violence across Northern Ireland during August, detectives investigating serious and organised criminality linked to it have arrested nine people for various offences including encouraging arson and riot, publishing written material intended to stir up hatred and sending a menacing message. Nine searches have been conducted at properties in the Antrim, Belfast, North Down and Portrush areas, with three imitation firearms, ammunition, a cross bow and an offensive weapon recovered. Anti-Islamic publications, a sum of cash and a number of mobile phones were also seized. Four men have been charged to Court with the remainder released on police bail pending further enquiries.
- On 16th September 2024, police on patrol in the Newry area pursued a vehicle which failed to stop when indicated. The vehicle was brought to a controlled stop on the A1. On searching the vehicle officers recovered £387,860 in cash. The driver was arrested for the offences of possessing criminal property, failing to stop for police and dangerous driving. A follow up search was conducted by colleagues in An Garda Síochána at a property in the Dundalk area. The driver was subsequently charged to appear at Newry Magistrates Court. The seized cash will be the subject of a Proceeds of Crime Investigation.

Court Outcomes

- On 4th September 2024, a man was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment at Antrim Crown Court, half of which is to be served in prison with the remainder spent on licence. This followed his conviction for possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply and relates to his arrest at Belfast International Airport following the seizure of 14 vacuum packed bags containing herbal cannabis from his luggage, with an estimated street value of approximately £200,000.
- On 5th September 2024, a man was sentenced to 32 months imprisonment at Belfast Crown Court and ordered to serve half in prison, with the remainder on licence. This followed his conviction for a number of drug related offences including possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply.

Detectives from Organised Crime Branch identified him as a significant member of an organised crime gang involved in distributing drugs in the Belfast area. During October 2022, officers then searched his home address recovering Class A controlled drugs, mobile phones and other drug supply paraphernalia. Two other prominent members of this organised crime gang are due to be sentenced at Belfast Crown Court for serious drugs offences in the coming weeks.

- On Wednesday 18th September 2024, a Co. Down man received a 36 month custodial sentence at Belfast Crown Court, with half to be served in prison and half on licence. This followed his conviction for



possession of a Class A and Class B drugs with intent to supply and relates to his arrest in February 2022 when detectives stopped a heavy goods vehicle and trailer disembarking a ferry at Belfast Harbour and recovered drugs worth an estimated £3m.

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

On 16th September 2024, six men entered guilty pleas at Belfast Crown Court for the offence of conspiracy to intimidate, contrary to the Protection of the Person and Property Act, they will be sentenced in November.

This follows an investigation into a pre-meditated paramilitary style attack planned by members of Belfast INLA at a property in the West Belfast area in August 2022.

Serious Crime Branch

Recent Successes

Detectives from Major Investigation Team have:

- Charged a man in connection with the murder of Sophie Watson in Magherafelt.
- Charged a man in connection with the murder of Montserrat Martell in Londonderry.
- Charged a man in connection with the murder of Rachel Simpson in Belfast.

Court Outcomes

- A man was sentenced to 20 month's imprisonment - half on licence, and a 23 year old woman to a three year probation order, for drug-related offences following a house search in Lisburn in June 2023.
- A man has pleaded guilty to 16 offences of blackmail and one offence of possession of extreme pornography in following an investigation into 'sextortion' dating from 2022. He had blackmailed a number of

women using social media platforms. Pictures had been shared consensually with the man initially, he then demanded more pictures and when the victims declined to share anything further he threatened to share the material with friends and family of the victims across social media platforms. He will be sentenced on 24th October 2024.

- A man has pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent, possession of an offensive weapon with intent and assault occasioning actual bodily harm following two separate incidents in February 2023. He has been sentenced to four and a half years in custody, two and a half years of which will be spent on licence.
- A man has been convicted of burglary, false imprisonment, attempted burglary, theft, possession of a Class B drug and criminal damage. He was sentenced to three years and eight months imprisonment, half of which to be spent on licence, following an incident at the home of an 86 year old woman in Ballymena in November 2022.
- A number of people have been sentenced in relation to the death of Charlotte McHugh who died as a result of a road traffic collision in Dundonald in 2021. One man was sentenced to 16 year's imprisonment with half on licence, for causing death by driving carelessly whilst unfit, perverting course of justice, dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, using motor vehicle with no insurance and possession of Class C controlled drug. He also received a 10 year driving disqualification from the date of release from prison.

A further man was sentenced to four years eight months, again with half to be



spent on licence, for assisting an offender, driving whilst disqualified and no insurance. He too received a 10 year driving disqualification from the date of release from prison.

Public Protection Branch

- On 3rd September 2024, a search was conducted at the premises of a registered sex offender during which laptops, tablets, computers and mobile phones were recovered. The man has been arrested, and subsequently charged for the offences of breach of sexual offences prevention order and possession and distribution of indecent images of children.
- A 20 year old man has pleaded guilty to the rape and serious sexual assault of a female in Magherafelt in January 2022. He is due to be sentenced in October.
- A former teacher and school principal has been convicted of 36 charges of historical child sex abuse against nine young boys. The abuse of these children spanned three decades and took place while they were in his care at various Christian Brother Schools in Belfast, Newry and Armagh.
- A man has been convicted of Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH), criminal damage, threats to kill, and false imprisonment. He has been sentenced to 40 months imprisonment, half to be spent on licence, for AOABH, and 12 months for each of the offences, to run concurrently. This relates to a serious domestic abuse incident that took place in Belfast on 3rd March 2023, which involved the victim having to make her escape from the male and flag down a member of the public for assistance.

Drug Wipes Devices



Road Safety is a key policing priority and the 'Fatal Five' is important messaging relating to this.

We are dedicated to continually improving road safety and robustly challenging those who recklessly risk the safety of road users and the wider public. Our Roads Policing Officers have now been equipped with drug wipes devices which indicate whether drivers are using vehicles whilst under the influence of illegal substances. This important piece of equipment will allow us to target those using illegal drugs while driving and ensure they face the full rigours of the law for their lack of care for the safety of fellow citizens.

Sadly 46 people have lost their lives on our roads since January this year. Those who drive whilst intoxicated by drink or drugs risk increasing this tragic tally and officers will actively seek to challenge them at every opportunity.

Headed by ACC Melanie Jones, and in partnership with the Department of Infrastructure, a supporting media campaign was launched during September.



Outcome 2

We Have Confidence in Policing

Violence Against Women and Girls

In September 2022, we launched a seven year Tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Action Plan using the then national framework for delivery. This laid out those actions policing committed to take to build trust and confidence, relentlessly pursue perpetrators and create safer spaces.

Earlier this year the National Police Chiefs' Council published a revised national framework outlining how UK police services will work to tackle VAWG over the next five years, with a strong focus on those outcomes that make a real difference.

Between 2019 and 2024, 30 women and girls across Northern Ireland were killed by men. This is a grotesque statistic, horrifying and simply unacceptable. We mark the second anniversary of our action plan with the launch of our approach for the next five years. It is our intention to adopt the new national framework and place our policing response to VAWG on a par with how we tackle terrorism and serious and organised crime.

Years one to two update:^[1]

Two years on, 33 of the 41 actions in our VAWG action plan have been completed and significant progress made on the remaining eight. 3,230 arrests have been made under new legislation (domestic abuse, stalking and non-fatal strangulation) and hundreds of targeted patrols have taken place in a bid to relentlessly pursue perpetrators.^[2] Two stalking protection orders have also been put in place using new legislation.

Summary:

- October 2022 to 31st August 2024: 1,894 arrests for the new domestic abuse offence.
- April 2022 to 31st August 2024: 336 arrests made for stalking offences
- July 2023 to 31st of August 2024: 1,000 arrests for non-fatal strangulation^[3].
- In the twelve months to July 2024 there were 22,403 VAWG offences recorded. This is a reduction of 15.6% compared to the previous 12 months.^[4] This can partly be attributed to changes in counting rules and improved crime recording.^[5] There has also been significant police activity to prevent and deter VAWG offences and offenders.

[1] The following statistics are based on female victims recorded at the time of the offence. The person or persons accused of the offences may be recorded as male, female or transgender

[2] Custody Arrests (based on first booking in date) where the person was arrested and processed through custody for at least one of each of the offences listed

[3] Non-fatal strangulation became an offence on 26 June 2023. The figure for the previous 12 month time period covers just over one month and so no calculations for Aug22-Jul23 are provided

[4] VAWG offences include female victims of violence against the person and sexual offences (excluding offences of corporate manslaughter, death/serious injury by unlawful driving and assault on police)

[5] Between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2023 there was some 'double counting' of offences when an incident involved a conduct offence (Harassment, stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour) and another offence, which would have led to an increase in the number of crimes recorded. From 1st May 2023, this practice was reversed, and the current approach is more similar to the period prior to 1st April 2018, where a conduct/behaviour crime will only be recorded when it is deemed to be the most serious offence.)



Looking ahead to years three to seven:

Over the last two years we have worked diligently to build relationships with key partners, bolster our training and challenge our own thoughts and behaviours. As a result of targeted resourcing and the relentless pursuit of perpetrators, we have seen a reduction in VAWG offences and an increase in outcome rates for victims.

Looking ahead, we are adopting the nationally tested methodology that was developed in counter-terrorism. This showcases how serious we take tackling violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls in our communities. The eight outstanding actions from our initial action plan have been brought forward to complete in years three to seven and a further 12 actions have been added, these include:

- A review of previous cases of sexual impropriety and misconduct alleged against PSNI personnel to ensure appropriate investigative actions were taken.
- Operationalising the introduction of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders / Notices.
- Developing scrutiny panels for rape “no prosecution” outcomes.
- Supporting the Executive Office with the development of a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy.

We know that policing only sees the tip of the iceberg and that there are women and girls out there who are still suffering in silence. Our message is please report to us. Have confidence in our ability to keep you and your family safe from harm. We want to help you and we want to see that justice is served to those who have hurt you in any way.

Hate Crime



Monday 7th October marks the first anniversary of the Israeli/Gaza conflict. This serves as a timely reminder of the challenges we have faced as a society in Northern Ireland from racially-motivated hate crime and anti-immigration action, protest and sentiment, which has sadly endured over that period. The PSNI continues to work tirelessly to help protect victims of racially motivated hate crime and their families, engaging regularly to support those affected communities and continues to pursue criminal justice outcomes for those responsible. We also continue to arrest and charge those identified for their involvement in the disgraceful scenes on our streets in August. Our dedicated team has, so far, viewed almost 4,000 hours of footage, made 48 arrests and charged 38 people for their involvement in criminal activity.

Work has commenced on the three outcomes contained in the revised Hate Crime Control Strategy which was briefed to the Board last month. This plan of action will play a large part in supporting our efforts to restore confidence in policing around reporting hate crime, continuing to improve our standards of service as well as working to improve criminal justice outcomes for victims. Hate Crime Awareness Week (12th to 19th October) will serve as an excellent opportunity to renew our commitment to those victims, families and communities impacted by hate crime in partnership with PCSP's across Northern Ireland, the Hate Crime Advocacy Service and

other partners. A busy programme of events has been planned and we look forward to supporting this. In addition, a programme of engagement with key stakeholders has continued throughout the month of September and a social media communications plan has been running during September and into Hate Crime Awareness Week.

This month, Neighbourhood Policing Team officers removed racially offensive posters from lamp posts in the Rathcoole area which was featured prominently by many media outlets. That decision was made due to concerns that, despite early notification to the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) for assistance and a lengthy period of corresponding with them, these potentially constituted an offence. In addition and importantly, confidence in the police and other public authorities by those affected communities was being further eroded as time passed. This action was praised by local elected representatives and has not led to any negative response from the local community.

Whilst our policy position on the removal of such items has not changed, as a Police Service we recognise and have been told first hand of the very negative impact any perceived lack of action on the part of police and other partners has on black and minority ethnic communities. As a result, the Police Service will initiate engagement with DfI and other relevant partners to review the process by which we collectively share information and remove such items to significantly improve timeliness and cooperation.



Outcome 3

We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

The Irish Open

The Irish Open Golf tournament took place between 12th and 15th September at Royal County Down Golf Club, Newcastle. The event attracted over 71,000 spectators and PSNI played a significant role in ensuring their safety throughout the event week, acting in support of the DP World Tour and Royal County Down Golf Club.

The overall effective flow of traffic was a key priority for us. A tried and tested plan is in place to manage large volumes of traffic for events of this type. This was implemented in partnership with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Department for Infrastructure and Translink. We are very grateful for their support and that of the local community who saw a significant increase in visitors over the period.

This was another successful event, not only for the PSNI, but also for Northern Ireland "PLC". We would like to pay tribute to our officers and staff who put in long and demanding hours, and recognise the positive behaviour of those attending and the local communities impacted. Together this ensured one of the safest and most successful golf tournaments the DP World Tour has ever held.

Ligoniel Combine Parade

Three Ligoniel Orange Lodges submitted an application to parade from Woodvale Road to Ligoniel Road, Belfast, on the morning of Saturday 21st September 2024. They sought this same parade route on the morning of 13th July 2024. On that occasion, the parade was subject to a determination that prevented walking a section of their route, and ultimately, the organisers decided not go ahead.

On this occasion, the parade was still subject to a determination by the Parades Commission, however, it was permitted to travel the full route, with prohibitions placed on music, drumbeats and supporters. A protest against the parade was notified by the Crumlin Ardoyne Residents Association (CARA).

While planning assumptions took into consideration the potential for disorder, and we resourced accordingly, on the morning of the parade the policing operation was led by local neighbourhood police officers. The parade and protest passed off without incident, with approximately 100 people taking part in the parade and 60 in the CARA protest.

We are grateful to all parties involved for their engagement in the lead up to the parade and their behaviour on the day.

Key Campaigns and Events



The PSNI and Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland have been jointly short listed for an award at the 2024 Northern Ireland Social Media Awards for our collaboration through the Online Safety Committee on an online campaign which ran from January to March 2024. The campaign sought to educate young people and their parents and carers about online risks and reporting pathways focusing on Sextortion, Online Grooming and Risks around young people sharing images online. This online safety campaign will extend further into new legislative offences and support the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) strategy in coming months.



Halloween



Messaging encouraging the safe and legal use of fireworks will be a focus during October. Social media messaging will also focus on reporting anti-social behaviour to police via the [online reporting form](#).

We will be engaging with partners to share social media messaging as Halloween is typically a very busy time of year for emergency services and it is not uncommon to see an increase in calls reporting a range of concerns.



Our People, Your Service

Team PSNI Events



In September 2024 we launched the first of 17 TEAM PSNI events. These will provide opportunity for everyone to meet and engage with the Chief Constable and members of the Service Executive Team, enable colleagues to engage and build relationships and learn more about our organisation. Attendance is mandatory for all officers and staff.

The first three events will take place in September, October and November. The remaining 14 recommence in 2025, with the anticipated end date for all events scheduled for March 2026.

The strategic background for the events is linked to PSNI Strategies, NI Government objectives and our recent workforce survey results and includes; PSNI People Strategy 2025 'Our People Your Service', Northern Ireland Policing Board Policing Plan 2020-2025, Cultural Audit 'Your Service Your Voice' and the NI Executive Draft Programme for Government (PfG).

The anticipated benefits from these events include, improved workforce confidence, morale and trust, a greater team ethos within our organisation and an increased perception of value.

Highly Commended Ceremony



Peter Osborne, Northern Ireland Policing Board; Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice and Chief Constable Boutcher

On Tuesday 24th September, the Chief Constable hosted a Highly Commended Awards Ceremony at the Kingfisher Country Estate near Templepatrick.

The Minister of Justice, Naomi Long MLA, her Department Permanent Secretary Hugh Widdis, NI Policing Board member Peter Osborne, Justice Committee Chairperson Joanne Bunting MLA and members of the Police Services' Executive Team were in attendance.

A High Commendation is the highest award within the remit of the Chief Constable to award internally and is awarded to those individuals who have demonstrated exceptional professionalism, bravery, courage and resilience – above and beyond what would reasonably be expected.

A rigorous selection process involved the consideration of 100 nominations and culminated in 40 police officers/staff and three members of the public receiving awards.

These awards demonstrate the range of incidents our officers and staff are involved in on a daily basis and how they perform to the

highest of standards, often in the most difficult and challenging of circumstances.

Some examples include:

- An officer, who remained with a vulnerable member of the public for over two hours, preventing that person from taking their own life;
- An off duty officer who ran towards danger, in the immediate aftermath of the attempted murder of our colleague, DCI John Caldwell;
- A team of officers who had the determination and resilience to ensure an extremely complex and protracted operation resulted in a successful outcome;
- Two officers who provided life-saving first aid to a young child who had suffered horrific injuries in a road traffic collision, when there were no Ambulance or other police crews available;
- Three members of the public received awards for exceptional acts of bravery, and assisting police in the subsequent investigations, resulting in significant prosecutions.

Concluding the ceremony the host, Cool FM broadcaster Pete Snodden, interviewed the Blue Lights creator, writer and director Declan Lawn. Declan gave a unique insight into the background to the series and how the development has been supported by the Police Service and individual officers.

Promotion Processes & Career Development

Following the successful launch of the Inspectors promotion process in August. PSNI has now launched the Sergeants Promotion Process. Sergeants are the first level of management in policing and play a pivotal role in the organisation. This role will co-ordinate, monitor and respond where necessary, to front line policing activity to uphold the law, enable public safety and build public confidence in

policing in line with legal frameworks and policy guidelines. Law and procedure examinations are scheduled for November for both potential Inspectors and Sergeants.

Police College

The Police College and Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHW) have collaborated to issue an updated 'Wellbeing and Trauma Resilience Plan' and a new guide called 'Supporting Those That Serve'. The guide is aimed at family and friends of police officers and staff and gives details of how they can support their loved one in their policing role, with a particular focus on mental health and wellbeing.

The plan and guide were launched at Police College, Garnerville, on the evening of Wednesday 28th August where the Police College hosted the first "Supporting Those that Serve" evening and invited family and friends to attend. Family members and friends of the current student officer course attended the event which was supported by the Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Officer Clare Duffield and Director's of OHW and HR.

Earlier on the 28th, the Police College also hosted the Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing (CoP), Sir Andy Marsh, and the head of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue, Andy Cooke. This provided an opportunity to share learning, and engage with the CoP to highlight the excellent work of the PSNI and articulate the unique challenges we face with our current resourcing and budgetary pressures.

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