



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

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**we care
we listen
we act**

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Foreword

On 3 April and in partnership with the Board we launched the 2025-2030 Northern Ireland Policing Plan. As Chief Constable, I am committed to delivering a Service that meets the changing needs of our society - one that is visible, responsive, and built on trust. The evolving nature of crime, particularly online threats targeting children and vulnerable people, and the increasing demand on policing due to mental health crises, parades, protests, and legacy issues, place immense pressure on our resources. My officers and staff serve with courage and professionalism, often under challenging conditions and in the face of significant personal risk. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to delivering a world class policing service, one that is Victim Focused, Community Focused, and Workforce Focused. This Plan sets out what we, as the Police Service and Policing Board, want to achieve in the next five years. It reinforces our commitment to protecting the vulnerable, tackling crime, supporting our workforce and ensuring safer communities for all. However, resourcing remains a critical issue. Without urgent investment, our ability to protect the public will continue to erode, as highlighted by independent reviews warning that underfunding is already putting lives at risk. The success of this Plan relies not just on our officers and staff but also on the support of the Board, Government, partners, and communities to secure the necessary funding and resources.

On Friday 28 March, we took ownership of a site based at the former Kinnegar Logistics base in Holywood that will provide the future site for a new Police College. This development recognises progress on the long outstanding Recommendation (n.131) from of the Patten review that established the PSNI and demonstrates commitment and

recognition of the importance of investing and developing our current and future workforce in the PSNI. I'd like to thank the team involved in achieving this important milestone. The Business Case for workforce recovery to begin rebuilding the PSNI to 7,000 officers and 2,572 staff is well recognised and the additional capacity provided by this site will be a key enabler.

The work begins now, and the PSNI is committed to progressing the further Business Cases for the Future Police College itself and with this enabler site in place we will progress our Business Cases for further site rationalisation in the Belfast area. I am grateful for the Board's support in progressing this commitment to policing in Northern Ireland.

The pressures facing policing are of course not limited to crime and investigations; they extend to the demands of public order and policing major events. The St Patrick's Day celebrations that took place across Northern Ireland are a case in point. Thousands of people gathered in Belfast and Derry City & Strabane to enjoy the numerous parades and events. While thankfully the majority enjoyed the celebrations responsibly, a policing presence was necessary to address issues of anti-social behaviour, alcohol-related incidents, and minor disorder. Large-scale public events such as these further highlight the requirement for effective resourcing levels, strong partnership working, and community engagement to keep people safe. Policing is afforded no respite and officers and staff across the Service have already begun planning for Easter and the summer Marching Season.

The recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) "PEEL" (Police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy) inspection of PSNI reinforces these resourcing concerns. Inspectors have confirmed what I, along with oversight bodies, have been warning about for some time: years of underfunding have severely affected our ability to deliver essential policing services. Neighbourhood policing, offender management, crime prevention, and safeguarding efforts are all under strain. The consequences are real, they mean delays in risk assessments, overdue visits to registered sex offenders, and inadequate psychological support for officers handling high-risk investigations. I am grateful to the Board for their recognition and understanding of the resourcing challenges faced. While I accept the findings of this report, I want to provide reassurance of my commitment to address the concerns raised; indeed, I have already taken action. In April 2024, I commissioned a review of PSNI's Crime Department. This work will ensure we remain fit for the future while delivering on the priorities outlined in the new Policing Plan. Now, more than ever, we need decisive action and investment to ensure the PSNI can continue to protect communities, uphold public safety and support our workforce. I would like to pay tribute to HM Inspector Lee Freeman and his Inspectorate Team for the thoroughness of their inspection and collaborative approach.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also welcomed the publication of the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) report on the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI)'s investigation of abuse of position concerns and complaints. The Inspectorate rightly recognised that the vast majority of police officers and staff go to work every day often in the most challenging of circumstances to serve the public and demonstrate high

standards of ethical behaviour, but we do accept the small number of recommendations for the Police Service and these are either already in place or being progressed and any abuse of position by Police officers or police staff is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The Cross-Border Conference on Serious and Organised Crime took place in Belfast in March, bringing together colleagues from An Garda Síochána, both Justice Ministers and partners from either side of the border. There was a focus on innovation and collaboration, with discussions covering key threats such as drug trafficking, cybercrime, and human trafficking - issues that transcend borders and require a collective response. In these times of severe financial constraints for the PSNI, the conference reinforced the critical importance of working together, pooling resources, and sharing expertise to combat organised crime effectively. Operational successes during March showcase the value of cross-border cooperation. As part of the Joint Agency Task Force, our teams carried out a highly successful 'Day of Action' leading to multiple arrests, drug seizures, and disruption of criminal activity across border regions. In separate operations, an estimated £6.5m worth of suspected cannabis, cocaine, and ketamine were recovered in Mallusk and €1.9m worth of cocaine and cannabis recovered in Drogheda/North Dublin. I am determined to build upon successes such as these and strengthen cross-border partnerships. They are essential in ensuring that criminal groups cannot exploit jurisdictional boundaries for their own gain.

Despite the immense pressures on our resources, the steadfast dedication and professionalism of my officers and staff ensures that we continue to deliver significant results for the people of Northern

Ireland. A recent conviction for human trafficking and controlling prostitution in Belfast emphasised the devastating impact of exploitation, with victims initially too fearful to come forward. Through victim focused investigative work, a six-year sentence was secured for the offender. We remain resolute in protecting the most vulnerable in our society, tackling domestic abuse, child exploitation, and sexual violence. Policing is often unpredictable, and the past few weeks have demonstrated the exceptional dedication, professionalism, and bravery of officers in responding to serious incidents. Examples where they act decisively and courageously to protect the public occur daily. A few worth highlighting this month include life-saving interventions on the River Foyle, where officers, working with partners from NIFRS, NIAS, and Foyle Search and Rescue, navigated mudflats and entered the river to rescue someone who had jumped from the bridge. In Portadown, two off-duty officers risked their own safety by climbing over the railings to prevent a person in mental health crisis from jumping from the Charlestown Road Bridge.

My report this month provides detail on recent convictions secured for serious child sexual offences, domestic assaults, and historic abuse cases, outcomes that ensure perpetrators are held to account. Bringing justice for victims remains at the heart of our work. This month, two people were sentenced for separate murder cases, including the tragic killing of Lewis Rowland, while another offender was jailed for 15 years for a fatal attack in Bangor. These results send a clear message: those who prey on the vulnerable, who commit violent and life-destroying crimes, will be relentlessly pursued and brought to justice. Sir David McFarland placed on record his 'praise for the response of members of the public and police' in his sentencing remarks following convictions in respect of the murder of Ian Ogle with further praise remarked upon

for police in respect of the overall investigation.

On 17 January 2025, Angus McCullough KC published an update on the work of his Review in relation to concerns raised surrounding the surveillance of journalists, lawyers and other groups. On 19 March, Angus advised me that it is his intention to produce a draft substantive report by early July. In recognition that certain potentially relevant matters are currently the subject of ongoing proceedings before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (and so under his Terms of Reference excluded from his remit for the time being), he impressed upon me that this report might not be the final report. However, it is his expectation that by July he will be in a position to reach reliable conclusions on the central matters under review and that this will be the Review's main substantive report, albeit one potentially subject to future update. Full details of the indicative timetable have been published on [the McCullough Review](#) website. I am absolutely committed to PSNI learning any lessons and rebuilding confidence in our procedures. I reiterate my thanks to Angus and his team for undertaking this really important body of work.

Over the last few years we have worked closely with the Assembly, the Electoral Commission and the Electoral office to ensure that all of our politicians are supported, and that they can undertake their role free from fear and intimidation. We regularly engage with our elected representatives in order to provide information on personal safety and discuss steps that can be taken to address and reduce the risk of physical or online abuse, including development of an MLA Safety Strategy and the establishment of an MLA safety group going forward. We hold dedicated crime prevention events within the Assembly building, with the next event due to take place next month, where we will be

available to provide advice on a range of issues, including personal and cyber security. It is totally unacceptable that anyone should face abuse or risk physical attack for simply carrying out the duties of their office. We continue to engage with Assembly and Parliamentary officials, and the Electoral Commission, in regard to elected representative safety and we are committed to thoroughly investigating any reports of criminal behaviour that includes abuse or harassment directed towards our elected representatives.

It was an honour to welcome His Majesty King Charles III to the sixth Team PSNI event at Newforge Sports Complex on the 19 March. His visit was a moment of immense pride for the Service, and we are deeply grateful for his time and engagement with our officers and staff. His Majesty's presence emphasised the significance of the work our people do every day and in particular on this special occasion, the invaluable contribution of our Peer Support Team. These volunteers provide essential post-incident and wellbeing support to colleagues facing the psychological toll of policing. It was a privilege to join His Majesty in presenting them with the inaugural Team PSNI Award, in recognition of their unwavering dedication in supporting over 1,000 colleagues through some of the most challenging moments of their careers. Their work exemplifies the very best of PSNI — resilience, compassion, and commitment to each other. I would like to place on record my thanks to Policing Board Chair Mukesh Sharma and Members Les Allamby and Tommy O'Reilly for their attendance and support of the event.

Finally, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Assistant Chief Constable Anthony McNally to the Service Executive Team. With a wealth of experience, most recently as Head of Public Protection Branch where he was instrumental in the launch of our Violence Against Women and Girls

(VAWG) Strategy, Anthony is a welcome addition to the Team. On behalf of the Service Executive Team and wider organisation, I wish him every success in his new role.



Jon Boutcher QPM

Chief Constable

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Finance and Resource Update

As highlighted in the report last month, the additional £121m of in-year funding allocated to policing over our opening baseline now enables me to expect a largely break even position for 2024/25. This is a remarkable achievement and testimony to the work of the Board and others, in securing greater recognition of the financial requirements of the Service.

As always, the final outcome will be finely balanced but I look forward to presenting the provisional outturn figures in my next report.

Looking to this new financial year (2025/26), both the Executive and Department of Justice have allocated an improved draft budget for policing. While this additional funding is welcome, it still leaves PSNI with an opening funding shortfall of some £31m. Our draft Resource Plan for 2025/26 will be considered at the next Resources Committee and, as last year, I will be asking the Board to support the case for further funding rather than implement unnecessary and painful cuts.

New Police College

We are pleased to have received approval from the Departments of Justice and Finance on the Outline Business Case for site acquisition of a new police college. This marks a significant milestone for the Service in setting a future vision to deliver on the long standing ambition to provide a new purpose built police college, meeting a specific recommendation of the Patten Review.

PSNI's strategic priorities have been clearly set out to ensure our Service is victim, community and workforce focused. Achieving this milestone goes some way in demonstrating commitment to the current and future workforce. It recognises the critical role

that policing provides in keeping our communities safe and peaceful and ensures that those who offer their service can be supported with flexible educational and training accommodation that is capable of adapting to future changes in policing and is responsive to the policing environment.

This acquisition is just the start of the journey, we will now move to develop a further business case for the building of the future college. In line with the commitment to make best use of our resources, we will ensure to optimise opportunities to rationalise our estate and dispose of surplus assets.



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.psni.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 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025:

- There were 96,143 crimes recorded, a decrease of 9,159 (-8.7%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 50 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population¹ in the 12 months March 2024 to February 2025 compared with 55 in the previous 12 months.
- When compared with the previous year, crime levels have been lower in all of the months since March 2024. November 2024 shows the smallest decline of 125 offences (-1.6%).
- All crime classifications shown have recorded lower levels, with the exception of an increase in homicide from 11 (the joint second lowest 12 month figure since the start of the data series) to 19. Theft offences (excluding burglary) fell by 2,187, with decreases also seen in criminal damage (-1,325), violence without injury (-1,474), stalking

and harassment (-1,041)² and violence with injury (-892).

- All policing districts experienced a lower level of crime.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person, with the largest volume decrease in Violence without injury (1,474 crimes). Stalking and Harassment fell by 10% (1,041 crimes). 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.

Anti-Social Behaviour

In the 12 months from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025:

- There were 43,986 anti-social behaviour incidents, a decrease of 1,358 (-3.0%) on the previous 12 months. This is one of the lowest 12 month figures since the data series began in 2006/07.
- Between March 2024 and February 2025, seven of the months recorded lower levels of anti-social behaviour when compared with the same month in the previous year, with the exception of March, September, November and December 2024, and February 2025.
- When comparing the current and previous 12 months, eight policing districts showed lower

¹ Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,920,382 for 2023, 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, which describes the changes in the recording of these 'behavioural offences' since April 2017 with the latest change from May 2023 requiring fewer such offences to be recorded



levels of anti-social behaviour. Eight policing districts showed higher levels in February 2025 compared with January 2025.

- Each month March 2024 through to February 2025 recorded the lowest levels of anti-social behaviour for those months since the start of the data series in April 2006, with the exception of March, May, September and November 2024, and February 2025, all of which recorded their second lowest levels in the data series. December 2024 recorded its third lowest level in the data series.
- The latest month (February 2025) was 156 incidents higher than January 2025. Levels in February had been lower than those in January in each of the three years from 2020 to 2022, but have been higher in the last three years.

Security Situation

In the 12 months from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025:

- There were no security related deaths, compared to one during the previous 12 months.
- There were fewer shootings, bombings and paramilitary style attacks than during the previous 12 months.
- There were 5 bombing incidents, compared to 8 during the previous 12 months and 18 shooting incidents, compared to 25.
- There were 23 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 31 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (7). Of the 23 casualties, one was under 18 years old.
- There were 7 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, half the number that occurred during the previous 12 months (14). Ards and North Down and Causeway Coast and Glens each experienced 3 such attacks,

while Derry City and Strabane experienced one. All 7 casualties were aged 18 years or older.

- There were 60 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 102 during the previous 12 months.
- 8 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 23 during the previous 12 months.

Finds of Firearms, Explosives and Ammunition; *these refer to the seizure or recovery of all illegal firearms, ammunition, explosives, rocket/mortar launchers, detonators and bomb making material/equipment. Replica/blank firing firearms, petrol bombs and petrol bomb making materials, grenades and munitions from World War 1 or World War 2 found on the beach or in attics etc. are not recorded as finds.*

Firearms Finds

There were 11 firearms found during the past 12 months, compared to 19 during the previous 12 months.

Explosive Finds

There were 0.30kg of explosives found during the past 12 months compared to 3.44kg during the previous 12 months. There were 2.29kg of explosives found in September 2023, the most found in a month since June 2020.

Ammunition Finds

There were 183 rounds of ammunition found during the past 12 months compared to 888 rounds found in the previous 12 months.



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Motoring Offences

In the 12 months from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024:

- In 2024, there were 34,795 detections for motoring offences in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 6,697 offences (16%) on the 41,492 detections recorded in 2023.
- Of the 34,795 offences detected in 2024, two thirds resulted in a referral for prosecution and a further one fifth in endorsable fixed penalty notices.
- Motoring offence detections have fallen by over two fifths over the last ten years, from 59,907 in 2015.
- Insurance was the largest offence group in 2024 with 5,739 detections, accounting for 16% of the total, followed by speeding with 4,793 detections. There were a further 4,338 detections related to careless driving offences.
- Two offence groups showed small increases over the year including breach of signs and signals (25) and fraudulent use/declaration (7).
- In contrast, 17 offence groups decreased over the year, most significantly insurance and speeding which fell by 1,783 (24%) and 779 (14%) respectively. These two offence groups accounted for almost two fifths of the overall decrease in detections between 2023 and 2024.
- The number of motoring offences detected in Belfast City represented 21% of all motoring offences' detected in 2024. Ards and North Down, Causeway Coast and

Glens and Mid & East Antrim recorded the fewest detections, each accounting for 5% of the total in 2024.

** Safer driver courses were introduced in Northern Ireland in May 2023 as an alternative disposal to the new fixed penalty notice for careless driving*

This report provides statistics on the number of motoring offences detected by police in Northern Ireland in 2024. It does not include any detections by the NI Road Safety Partnership. It presents the most recent motoring offence statistics based on figures that were extracted on 13th March 2025. The FPN, speed awareness and safer driver courses for 2024 are final figures however, referred for prosecution figures from 1st January 2023 onwards remain provisional and therefore subject to amendment, with the potential for the totals to increase as later detections are progressed through the system.



Outcome 1: Victim Focused

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

Investigations

- Detectives recently intensified operations at Northern Ireland's main airports, targeting an organised criminal network smuggling drugs and cash in luggage. Over the past number of months, officers have seized cannabis worth an estimated street value of over £2m along with a large sum of cash. Eleven suspects, (nine men and two women), have been arrested and charged with drug related offences.

The drugs were intended for multiple criminal groups here in Northern Ireland, with some suspects planning onward travel to Dublin. Investigations into the wider network continue and sadly, it is inevitable that we will uncover exploitation of individuals for the purpose of drug production, supply, and use.



- On Friday 7 March 2025, detectives assisted by local police, arrested two men following the discovery of a cannabis factory in Hillsborough. This followed the search of a property in the Sandringham Court area where approximately 150 cannabis plants along with a large quantity of harvested cannabis and other items were recovered. The drugs have an estimated street value of £300,000.

Two men were arrested on suspicion of a number of drug related offences and have been charged to Court.



Cross-Border Conference on Serious and Organised Crime

- The Cross-Border Conference on Serious and Organised Crime took place in Belfast on 10 and 11 March 2025. Attended by colleagues from An Garda Síochána (AGS), both Justice Ministers and partner agencies, the event focused on tackling organised crime through innovation and collaboration. Topics of discussion included drug threats and trends, cybercrime, and human trafficking, with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) highlighting efforts against cross-border smuggling.

Senior officials, including Justice Ministers Naomi Long and Jim O'Callaghan, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton, and AGS Commissioner Drew Harris, used the event to stress the importance of joint efforts in disrupting organised crime networks exploiting the border for financial gain.

The conference proved an invaluable opportunity for Ministers, both police services and partners to meet and discuss the common issues that we continue to face.



(l-r) DCC Bobby Singleton, Justice Minister Naomi Long, Minister for Justice for RoI Jim O'Callaghan and AGS Commissioner Drew Harris

Recent Cross-Border Policing Operations

- On 3 March 2025, detectives working in collaboration with the Garda National Drugs & Organised Crime Bureau, as part of the Joint Agency Task Force, seized suspected cannabis, cocaine, and ketamine with an estimated street value of £6.5m. This followed the search of a premises in the Mallusk area. It is believed the drugs, concealed in food packaging, were intended for UK markets. A 28 year old man has been arrested and charged with a number of drug related offences.
- Working as part of the Joint Agency Task Force, PSNI and AGS officers conducted a coordinated "Day of Action" across border regions on 6 March 2025. This high visibility policing operation involved officers from across the Service, including Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Local Policing Teams, ANPR Interceptors, Roads Policing, Tactical Support Group officers, Air Support and specialist detectives. This resulted in:
 - The implementation of 44 vehicle checkpoints at varying times across South Area.

- The issuing of sixteen Fixed Penalty Notices for a range of motoring related offences.
- The arrest of three people for driving offences.
- The seizure of three vehicles.
- Five detections for driving with no insurance.
- Three vehicles and seven people being searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- Four arrests for drug offences, including that of one man who was arrested on suspicion of the importation of Class A and B drugs.
- One arrest of a male who was sought in connection with a number of violent offences in Cookstown.

The operation also involved partners from the Joint Agency Task Force, including HMRC, who examined a number of vehicles, making a number of detections for various customs and excise offences .

- On 12 March, members of the Garda National Drugs & Organised Crime Bureau supported by the Louth South Divisional Drugs Unit intercepted a vehicle in Drogheda or in the Drogheda area. Meanwhile, simultaneous searches were carried out at a business establishment in Drogheda, and two residential premises in Drogheda and North Dublin. Two men were arrested on suspicion of facilitating and enhancing drug trafficking for a criminal organisation and more than €1.9m worth of cocaine and cannabis was seized. This operation was part of ongoing collaboration between the Garda National Drugs & Organised Crime Bureau and the PSNI under the Joint Agency Task Force.



Cocaine and cannabis, with an estimated potential street value of €1.94 million was seized

Joint Agency Task Force (JATF)

Established in 2015, the JATF brings together the PSNI, AGS, HMRC, the National Crime Agency, and other agencies to combat organised crime across six priority areas: rural crime, drugs, financial crime, human trafficking, excise fraud, and immigration crime. Through intelligence sharing and coordinated operations, the task force continues to disrupt criminal activity across both jurisdictions.

Court Outcomes

- On 6 March 2025, a man was sentenced to six years, (half in custody and half on licence), for human trafficking, controlling prostitution, sexual assault, paying for sexual services, and drug offences. He was suspected of trafficking and exploiting vulnerable women in Belfast, supplying them with drugs to exert control. The investigation, which began in March 2021, linked him to four young women, many of whom were regularly reported missing and found under the influence of drugs at his home. Initially reluctant to provide statements, the victims came forward following the tragic death of one of the women.

Serious Crime Branch

Investigation

Detectives from Criminal Investigation Department have charged a man with attempted robbery and possession of an offensive weapon with intent to commit an indictable offence following an incident at a supermarket in Lisburn on 7 March 2025.

Court Outcomes

- **Murder of Lewis Rowland:** A man has been sentenced to a minimum of 20 years in prison for the murder of his son, Lewis Rowland, who suffered fatal injuries in November 2015 and passed away three years later. A 32 year old woman received three years' probation and 100 hours of community service for child cruelty.
- **Bangor Murder Case:** A man has been sentenced to a minimum of 15 years in prison for the murder of Denis Shearer in February 2021. A 42 year old woman received a two year suspended sentence for assisting offenders.
- **Arson in Antrim:** A man has been sentenced to three and a half years in prison (half to be served on licence) for arson with intent to endanger life following a house fire in January 2024.
- **Ballymena Crime Spree:** Two men have been sentenced to four and a half years and three years eight months in prison, respectively, (half to be served on licence), following a number of incidents, including burglary, theft, criminal damage, and attempted burglary across Ballymena between June 2022 and April 2023.
- **Robbery in Antrim:** Two men have each been sentenced to 32 months in prison (half to be served on licence) for robbery and theft offences committed in March 2024.



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- **Credit Union Fraud:** A woman has been sentenced to 16 months in prison, suspended for two years, for fraud offences against her employer, a Credit Union, between December 2020 and October 2022.
- **Serious Assault in Newry:** A man has been sentenced to five years in prison (half to be served on licence) for a serious assault in June 2023.
- **Wounding in Newcastle:** A man has been sentenced to four years in prison (half to be served on licence) for wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm following an incident in August 2023.

Public Protection Branch

Court Outcomes

- **Domestic & Sexual Assault:** On 13 March 2025, a suspect was sentenced at Downpatrick Crown Court after pleading guilty to sexual assault, common assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm aggravated by domestic abuse, and criminal damage. They received six years in prison (half to be served on licence), were placed on the Sex Offenders Register and given a restraining order.
- **Child Abuse:** A suspect was sentenced at Laganside Court, Belfast, for a range of serious child sexual exploitation offences, including:
 - Sexual communication with a child
 - Intentionally encouraging or assisting the distribution of indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children
 - Causing or Inciting a child between 13-16 to engage in sexual activity
 - Two offences of Meeting a Child following Sexual Grooming

- Four offences of Sexual activity by an adult with a child aged between 13-16 and
- Several offences of Possessing an Indecent Photograph or Pseudo photograph of a child

The suspect was sentenced to 22 months (six in custody, the remainder on licence), placed on the Sex Offenders Register for 10 years, and made subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) for five years, along with a disqualification and barring order.

- **Domestic Abuse Conviction (South Eastern Trust):** A suspect was convicted at Downpatrick Crown Court for Assault Occasionally Actually Bodily Harm, threats to kill, and choking, with domestic abuse as an aggravating factor. They received a 21 month custodial sentence, followed by 21 months on licence.
- **Historical Sexual Abuse (South Eastern Trust):** On 12 March 2025, 79 year old Hazel Templeton was sentenced at Laganside Court for the historic sexual abuse of a 12 year old boy in 1984. Initially denying the allegations and attempting to place blame on the reporting man, she later pleaded guilty to:
 - Four counts of indecent assault on a male
 - Three counts of inciting gross indecency with a child

She was sentenced to two years and nine months in prison, placed on the Sex Offenders Register indefinitely, and made subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.



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- **Sexual & Physical Abuse, Indecent Images of Children:** A defendant was sentenced to 23 years in prison for blackmail, sexual abuse, and serious assault of three teenage boys between March 2022 and October 2022.

The offender manipulated and blackmailed the victims by threatening to release explicit images, coercing them into escalating sexual abuse, which was often recorded. On 30 October 2022, the defendant also violently assaulted the three boys. The subsequent investigation uncovered indecent images of children and video evidence of the abuse on the suspect's phone.

This case highlights the dangers of online exploitation and the importance of reporting suspicious online interactions.

Outcome 2: Community Focused

Snapshot – Mid Ulster Policing District

In just under a three week period beginning on 21 February 2024, police officers within Mid Ulster Policing District, along with specialist colleagues, have responded to a number of very serious and complex incidents. This includes two murder investigations, three fatal road traffic collisions, one of which was declared a major incident, a drugs death and the suspicious death of an infant. This is an unprecedented level of demand for a District with one of the lowest overall officer numbers in the Service, and required officers and staff at all levels to work increased hours at a relentless pace. As an example of the resourcing implications faced, on the morning of Saturday 1 March 2025, there were seven separate scenes being held for a variety of incidents. This necessitated the deployment of sixteen officers who were drawn at short notice from across South Region, all while maintaining normal business.

The welfare of officers and staff in the District is paramount. After significant incidents, all teams are offered the assistance of trained Peer Support. This service has been utilised to great effect over the last few weeks as many of the same officers were exposed to these traumatic incidents. Members of the Senior Leadership Team have been attending officer briefings to talk through some of the incidents and ensure each and every member of the District is receiving the support they require. Welfare and Personal Development have been set as a District priority, with the aim to further embed the culture of welfare support, empower supervisors and managers to make effective decisions to support their teams and to give

all members of the District a voice to shape how welfare and wellbeing is managed.

The response of officers and staff to the magnitude of the policing requirements of recent weeks has been nothing short of exceptional. They have demonstrated the utmost levels of professionalism, resilience and dedicated service to the people of the District.

Road Safety – “Seeing is Believing”



Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins (2nd left) and Chief Superintendent Sam Donaldson along with business leaders.

As part of our determination to make our roads safer, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Business in the Community (in partnership with the Road Safety Trust) and U105 brought together a delegation of senior business leaders for a ‘Seeing is Believing’ visit in Sprucefield police station, on Tuesday 11 March 2025.

Being acutely aware of the 69 road deaths in 2024 and 71 in 2023, the group explored the importance of road safety and debated how businesses can be a catalyst to raise awareness among their employees, and for them to share the learning with family and friends. Each delegate received a detailed

briefing on the ‘Fatal Five’, and were given the opportunity to meet with operational road policing and dog section officers. They had a sobering input from detectives in our Collision Investigation Unit who talked in detail about the tragic road collisions they have attended to and investigated.

The ‘Seeing is Believing’ programme bridges the gap between boardrooms and communities, giving business leaders first hand exposure to pressing societal challenges. This particular event is part of an ongoing programme entitled “Responsible Business and the Fatal Five Campaign” that is being progressed by PSNI and BITC over a two-year period (www.bitcni.org.uk/responsible-driving).

Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins, Kieran Harding (Managing Director of Business in the Community), Chief Superintendent Sam Donaldson and leading figures from participating corporate partners, including Allstate Northern Ireland, Coca Cola, Heron Bros, PwC, and Veolia were all involved in the visit.

Future commitments on developing these partnerships to improve overall road safety are now being explored.

Irish League Cup Final

Working in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Irish Football Association, statutory partners and the football clubs themselves, a pre-planned policing operation was developed to support the safe delivery of the Irish League Cup Final between Glentoran and Cliftonville on 9 March 2025. This involved the deployment of over 110 officers from our Neighbourhood and Public Order Teams, both inside and outside the stadium, working with stewards to look after the safety of all in attendance and those living in or traveling through the surrounding area.

The final attracted over 12,000 supporters, the vast majority of whom enjoyed the match in a peaceful and sporting manner. Regrettably, however, both inside and outside the stadium, a small number of supporters chose to act in a manner that should never be part of any sporting event. Officers responded to multiple incidents of disorder and three people were detained for their offending within the stadium, with another charged for an offence outside the stadium. The investigation team are actively progressing enquires into other offending on the day and are working with the Irish Football Association and the Northern Ireland Football League to recover the applicable evidence.

The Police Service continues to work in partnership with governing bodies and partner agencies to identify any learning from this event and eradicate this anti-social and criminal behaviour from our local football.



Outcome 3: Workforce Focused

Team PSNI - Visit of HRH King Charles III



On Wednesday 19 March, the sixth Team PSNI event took place at Newforge Sports Complex, where PSNI officers and staff were treated to a surprise visit from His Majesty King Charles III. The visit was part of the King's three-day tour of Northern Ireland.

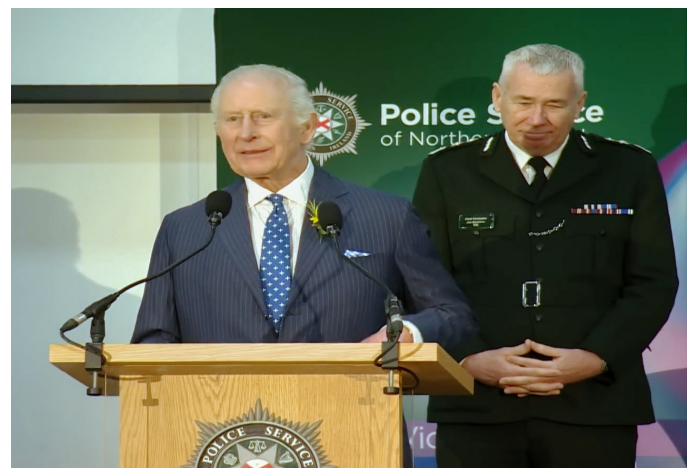
During his time at Newforge, the King visited various stands, including those of the Peer Support Team, HR External Recruitment, and The King's Trust, and spoke with Family Liaison Officers. He later joined the Chief Constable on stage to present the inaugural Team PSNI Award to the Peer Support Team, recognising their work in supporting officers and staff after traumatic incidents.

Introducing the award the Chief Constable praised the Peer Support Team's outstanding dedication, highlighting their post-incident support and wellbeing services, noting that in just two years their 140 volunteers had assisted in over 300 traumatic incidents, supporting more than 1,000 colleagues.

Addressing the audience, King Charles expressed his deep admiration for the commitment and sacrifices of PSNI officers and staff, acknowledging the challenges faced and the remarkable support provided by families. He described PSNI as the thin green line and observed on

the vital role we play in keeping communities safe. He emphasised that the service provided by officers and staff was deeply valued and appreciated, saying, ***"I just wanted you to know that we owe you collectively an enormous debt of gratitude which can never really be paid enough. I certainly don't take for granted what you all do by any means, and my admiration knows no bounds for you all."***

Reflecting on the event, ACC Melanie Jones, service lead for Team PSNI, described it as an honour to have His Majesty King Charles attend the Team PSNI event. It afforded us a unique opportunity to showcase to the King the professional and world class service the PSNI deliver daily, not only to the communities that we serve but also to our own officers and staff.



International Women's Day



On 3 March 2025, the Police Service hosted a one-day conference in support of the #AccelerateAction theme for International Women's Day 2025. Developed in partnership with Belfast Harbour Police, Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office and our Women's Police Association, 120 officers and staff attended the conference in the magnificent settings of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office.

Attendees were treated to a powerful and thought provoking presentation from Dr Sajjan Gohel of the London School of Economics, on the relationship between misogyny and extremism and terrorism. ACC Melanie Jones spoke at the event on the impact of powerful role models and education - not something afforded to all females, as had been highlighted by Dr Gohel during his presentation.

Other keynote speakers included the Justice Minister, Naomi Long, Belfast Harbour Chair, Dr Theresa Donaldson and CEO of the Equality Commission, Geraldine McGahey. All provided valuable insight on those barriers encountered by females and strategies used to overcome them.

The event featured a number of videos that highlighted the success of some of our own "wonderful women" and four individuals delivered inspiring talks on their career highlights within PSNI, as well as outlining what keeps them motivated and engaged. Occupational Health and Wellbeing led the

last breakout sessions of the day on the themes of Healthy Minds and Healthy Bodies.

The final speaker, Helen Richardson Walsh MBE, provided an insight into what it takes to be a female Olympic champion and shared the highs and lows experienced over her 17 year hockey career, which included four Olympic games.

Police Staff Recognition

The National Police Staff Week of Celebration and Recognition was established in 2024 by the College of Policing Senior Police Staff Network (SPSN) to raise awareness about the pivotal contribution made to policing by police staff. This year across the Service, at every grade, 161 police staff members were nominated by their peers for national recognition. As a Service, we were delighted to learn that one of our Information and Communication Services (ICS) colleagues was the winner of the 'Police Staff Unsung Hero Award'. This individual demonstrates unequalled commitment to the Northern Ireland Emergency Services Radio network, which is so often unseen by front-line officers and partner agencies. He is a well deserving national winner.

The Police Service comprises a wide variety of vital disciplines and professions. We are extremely fortunate to have such amazing police staff members across a range of business areas, including Finance, Human Resources, Information and Communication Services, Occupational Health and Wellbeing, Scientific Support Branch, Strategic Communications and Engagement, Legal Services, People & Organisational Development, and Statistics Branch, and there are so many examples that deserve recognition. It was truly heartening to see so many nominated in this year's awards. In celebration of our police staff and to highlight

the significance and importance of how they deliver policing priorities, the Chief Constable and members of the Service Executive Team hosted a congratulatory breakfast for all nominees during March.

NIPSA Annual General Meeting

On 27 February 2025, the Deputy Chief Constable, Chief Operating Officer, ACO Duffield and Senior HR colleagues attended the Police Service NIPSA Annual General Meeting. This was an opportunity to focus on identifying the key challenges facing the organisation and reinforcing our commitment to work together in delivering practical solutions. The meeting brought together members of NIPSA from various departments and created a platform for open dialogue, and shared insights.

Collectively, participants discussed a range of issues, including budgets, police staff recruitment and retention, the cultural audit, revised environmental allowance and police staff pension, emphasising the importance of collaboration in navigating these issues effectively. During the meeting it was evident there was a strong commitment to work collaboratively to create opportunities for constructive discussions, developing innovative solutions that can be implemented to deliver for policing. NIPSA representatives expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to engage directly with senior management, highlighting the importance of transparent communication and collective problem solving.

Attestation of Student Officers

The Attestation Ceremony is an important moment for all police officers as they embark on a career in policing. The pledge made by every new officer underlines their commitment to serve the community with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality throughout their career within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The Attestation Ceremony on the 21 February saw the return of the ceremonial parade to the programme following a hiatus during the COVID 29 Health Pandemic.

The parade is a celebration of the officers' achievements, transitioning from student officers to fully attested police officers. The training and preparation for the procession instils a real sense of teamwork and camaraderie amongst the students, which are valuable and essential skills for becoming a police officer. The ceremony culminates in the traditional throwing of their Forage caps in the air, sharing a special moment with colleagues, friends and family.

The Chief Constable was in attendance, joined by Service Executive Team colleagues and guests from across the Police Service, Policing Board and University of Ulster, in celebrating what is an extremely proud and special day for our newest police officers and their families. We wish them all well, in what we hope will be a long and rewarding career in policing.

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