



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of 29 May 2025 to 27
June 2025

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3 July 2025



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Foreword

This month, we witnessed widespread scenes of racially and sectarian motivated disorder across Northern Ireland. In disgraceful events reminiscent of last summer, we saw masked rioters in hate-filled mobs throw petrol bombs, masonry, and fireworks at homes, businesses, and police officers. They targeted Roma and families of other ethnicities, creating fear in communities who simply wish to live in peace.

Let me be clear and reiterate what I said last summer, this behaviour is abhorrent. There is no place for this kind of hate-fuelled criminality in our society. These actions are not protest, they are attacks on the very fabric of our society's shared values. We are treating every incident as a racially or sectarian motivated hate crime. To date, 52 arrests have been made, with 27 individuals remanded into custody. More will follow, as PSNI's Public Order Enquiry Teams relentlessly pursue those responsible and bring them to justice.

I warmly welcome the strong words from the District Judge in Ballymena and the early, robust action he took in remanding a number of riot suspects into custody. Alongside our arrest operations and the swift release of suspect images, I believe this had a powerful deterrent effect, helping to prevent further disorder. Investigators will continue to oppose bail for those involved in serious public disorder and attacks on police.

I am also aware of commentary suggesting that rioters are treated differently in parts of Northern Ireland. I want to be absolutely clear, we respond to public disorder without fear or favour, there is no difference to our approach based on the cultural background of those committing the disorder. To suggest otherwise removes the focus of condemnation and public debate from where it rightfully belongs – upon those using violence and spreading

hate. I always welcome fair challenge but it is important that our political leaders are seen to be unequivocally standing together against these hateful acts of violence. We use the most appropriate tactics, including Attenuating Energy Projectiles (AEP) and water cannon, based on the specific circumstances facing officers at the time. We do not, and will not, police based on the background or motivation of those attacking officers and their communities. Our approach is robust, as already demonstrated, lawful, proportionate, and consistently applied.

Many will have seen reports and footage of the eight nights of serious disorder on mainstream and social media. While this month's report details the wider policing response, it is difficult to fully convey the outstanding bravery shown by so many officers. The level of violence they faced was extraordinary. Across Northern Ireland, officers came under sustained attack from a barrage of masonry, fireworks, and petrol bombs, launched by individuals intent on causing serious harm. These missiles were thrown indiscriminately, with no regard for the injury or devastation they might cause. I am in no doubt that the actions of my officers saved lives, particularly on that first night in Ballymena, where they escorted terrified families to safety and formed human shields to protect vulnerable people and property. In doing so, I can now clarify that 107 officers were injured, some of them seriously. The courage and professionalism they displayed stands in stark contrast to the hate-filled behaviour of those intent on violence. Despite the very real risks they faced, their resilience, restraint, and determination were exceptional. I cannot overstate how immensely proud I am of each and every one of them.



I recognise the deeply personal impact this disorder has had on our own officers and staff, particularly colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds. The disorder, and the events that led to it, affected people in different ways. Some faced the physical threat on the streets, while others experienced re-traumatisation, fear for their loved ones, or the emotional toll of the hateful rhetoric circulating online. I have personally spoken with many of our injured colleagues and, during the height of the disorder, was out on the ground with frontline officers, staff, and those managing our response in command rooms. They are all fantastic people doing amazing jobs and are our greatest strength. I stand firmly with every officer and staff member affected by these events.

I also met with ethnic minority community leaders early in the unrest, including hosting an engagement event to inform, reassure and listen. Their insight and support were invaluable, and I am grateful for the open and constructive engagement that continues. To the families who remain frightened in their homes and communities, I can assure you, the PSNI stands firmly with you also. We will not allow these attacks or this thuggery to undermine our mission to protect the vulnerable and preserve peace and security. We are working tirelessly to identify, arrest, and prosecute those responsible for inflicting hate, fear, and violence in our communities.

In response to the escalating disorder, I took the decision to request mutual aid from Police Scotland under UK-wide cooperation arrangements. I met with these exceptional colleagues on arrival. These mutual aid officers support was timely and deeply appreciated. Their presence significantly bolstered our capabilities during this difficult period, helping our already stretched officers to maintain a robust public order response while sustaining routine policing. I am deeply grateful to Chief Constable Jo Farrell of

Police Scotland and her team for their solidarity, and I particularly want to thank them for agreeing to extend their deployment, ensuring continued support for our officers and communities during the sustained unrest.

This further requirement of mutual aid again highlights the fragility of our resourcing. With 107 officers injured during this period, and significant responsibilities ahead over the summer, our reliance on external support has never been more apparent or necessary. I am grateful to the Justice Minister for submitting a £5m bid to cover the unexpected costs of policing this disorder. However, this is emergency relief, not a sustainable solution. Every pound spent reacting to violent outbreaks is one that cannot be invested in schools, healthcare, or neighbourhood policing. In effect, rioters are not only damaging their own community facilities but are also draining their own communities of vital public resources. This funding must now be embedded in our baseline policing budget to strengthen readiness, resilience, and proactive prevention, rather than remaining a reactive, stop-gap measure.

I have repeatedly sounded the alarm over our overall funding, which continues into this financial year with a £21m shortfall for the PSNI. This gap is forcing us into daily triage, fewer public order trained officers in Tactical Support Groups, regular diversion of neighbourhood teams, and, most recently, reliance on mutual aid. Beyond those headline pressures, our Major Investigation Teams fall below UK standards, legacy Troubles cases remain unresolved, and specialist units tackling sexual violence, trafficking, and terrorism are at critical minimum staffing levels. Even basic protective operations, such as close protection and covert surveillance, lack

consistent funding. People in Northern Ireland come to harm because we do not have sufficient police numbers. This cannot be allowed to continue.

If our proposed £200m Recovery Business Case is not approved, these shortfalls will deepen. The risk is stark. Visible policing in some communities could disappear, our ability to protect vulnerable groups will further shrink, and progress on digital and intelligence capability stall. I have pressed political leaders at Stormont and Westminster to act urgently. The Policing Board has done likewise, and I very much welcome their support. Last month's disorder is a vivid reminder that when policing is under resourced, entire communities pay the price. I am heartened that both the Justice Minister and First Minister have publicly signalled support for our Recovery Plan. This must now lead to action.

The disorder also showed how quickly officers can be exposed to the most ferocious and indiscriminate levels of violence. But that danger is not confined to riots or public order events. 'Everyday policing' is increasingly fraught with risk. I am proud to support the Police Federation for Northern Ireland's (PFNI) 'Let Them Protect' campaign, launched on 19 June, which highlights the wholly unacceptable levels of assault faced by PSNI officers. Policing is inherently demanding. While our people expect danger, they should never face violence simply for doing their job. Yet every year, hundreds of assaults, from punches and head-butts to spitting and ramming with vehicles, are directed at officers and staff. These attacks injure individuals, distress families, and reduce our ability to serve the public when officers are off work recovering. Support for policing must be society-wide and the courts must impose sentences that are both decisive and deterrent. I remain committed to working with PFNI and the Department of Justice to strengthen sentencing guidance and ensure

that no one in uniform is expected to accept violence as part of their "normal" working day.

Building on our existing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and Action Plan, I have commissioned an independent review under Rachel Langdale KC. This will benchmark PSNI's policy, data, culture, and practice, including our Virtual Officer Attendance Scheme, a decade of VAWG case data, workforce attitudes, frontline experiences, and multi-agency partnership. We will seek input from victims, charities, and partners in health and justice. I am determined this review will deliver real change, strengthening our investigative capability, embedding victim and survivor centred practice, and reinforcing the zero tolerance culture we demand of ourselves. A final report and recommendations will be shared with the Policing Board later this autumn.

I welcome the Policing Board's recently published [Northern Ireland Policing Plan Survey](#), which offers important insights into public perceptions of safety, confidence, and engagement. This is a key accountability measure which helps us reflect honestly on where we are succeeding and where we must do better.

It is encouraging that over 91% of people feel safe in their communities and that nearly three quarters view the PSNI as effective or very effective in keeping their area safe. That said, the findings reinforce what we already know, visibility matters. Six in ten people report not seeing enough policing in their area. This is not surprising, I have been warning of this outcome for some time. Diminishing numbers, particularly in neighbourhood and response policing, are increasingly being felt on the ground.

Public satisfaction with the PSNI remains relatively strong, with two-thirds expressing confidence in the job we are doing and in the fairness with which we treat the public.



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However, confidence among victims of crime is understandably lower. I do not shy away from this. These results speak directly to the impact of constrained capacity, where fewer officers and overstretched teams must make difficult choices every day. We are still delivering, but under ever growing pressure.

It is also clear that people want a police service that is more visible, engaged, and present. Community policing is a cornerstone of peace, safety, and partnership in Northern Ireland. However, maintaining those relationships requires time, resources and a visible presence, things that are increasingly difficult to guarantee.

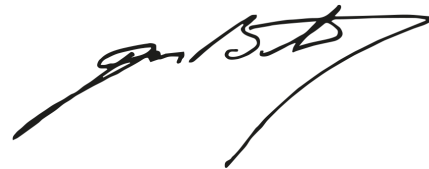
These challenges must not become barriers to progress. The public rightly expects a police service that is responsive, fair, and effective. I share that ambition, as do my Service Executive Team and colleagues across the PSNI. However, to deliver that consistently, in every town and neighbourhood, we need investment that matches the scale and complexity of modern policing.

We are proud to police with consent in a society still healing from conflict. This requires not only professionalism and integrity, but also capacity. The public's message is clear, they want to see more of us, trust us to do more, and need us to be there when it matters. That is our goal, but it cannot be achieved on goodwill and resilience alone.

Despite mounting pressure, officers continue to serve communities with professionalism, courage, and an unwavering commitment to public duty. In June, this was seen in a coordinated operation in Limavady, where officers from the Local Policing Team, Operational Support Department, and CID detectives safely resolved a live firearms incident. A suspect vehicle was intercepted, a weapon recovered, and further searches led to the seizure of ammunition, an imitation

firearm, and cash. In Derry City & Strabane, officers acted swiftly in response to a domestic violence incident involving a stabbing and house fire. The suspect was arrested and remanded in custody. In Belfast, neighbourhood teams disrupted drug activity, removing harmful substances from circulation, rightly receiving local community praise. These are just a few examples of the vital work PSNI officers and staff deliver every day, often without recognition.

Finally, I am incredibly proud to see our people recognised in the King's Birthday Honours 2025. Seven officers and staff were awarded for outstanding service, dedication, and commitment to public safety, with two MBEs, two BEMs, and three King's Police Medals. These honours reflect not just individual accomplishments, but the professionalism and values that define this organisation. On behalf of the entire Service, I offer heartfelt congratulations to the recipients and their families



Jon Boutcher QPM

Chief Constable

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Finance and Resource Update

The audit of the 2024/25 financial year is nearing completion and a small underspend is expected to be recorded against both Resource and Capital budgets, with audited Accounts laid before the Summer recess. This helps demonstrate our sound financial management of the police budget, despite the challenges of insufficient funding and dependence on in-year allocations.

The draft Resource Plan for 2025/26 was presented to the Resources Committee in May and considered by the Board in June. The Draft Plan projects an unaddressed Resource funding gap of £21m this year and I am asking the Board to support the Plan, including ongoing recruitment, and again advocate for sufficient funding to close the gap. A year to date pressure is recorded at the end of May, consistent with our Plan.

As a first step, we have already submitted our June Monitoring return and bid for £21m to close the gap. This gap is made up of a £7m National Insurance Contribution shortfall, £7m to recover the workforce, £6m for pressures due to Ill Health Retirements and a £1m shortfall in Legacy Inquest funding. A potential new pressure relating to the Omagh Bomb Inquiry was also highlighted, although the costs are unknown.

To underscore the volatile nature of the demand and costs on policing, our response to the public disorder in June has come at a human and financial cost. A further late bid of £5m has been notified to the NI Executive.

The impact of the recent Spending Review announcement by the Chancellor is not yet fully understood, but a planning exercise has already been commissioned by the NI

Executive and we will discuss our response with the Board.



Our Performance

Statistical Update

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.

Police Recorded Crime

In the 12 months from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025:

- There were 94,750 crimes recorded, a decrease of 7,275 (-7.1%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 49 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population¹ in the 12 months June 2024 to May 2025, compared with 53 in the previous 12 months.
- When compared with the previous year, crime levels have been lower in all of the months since June 2024.
- All crime classifications have recorded lower levels, with the exception of an increase in sexual offences (+155) and an increase in homicide from 13 to 15. Theft offences (excluding burglary) fell by 1,668, with decreases also seen in drug offences (-1,014), criminal damage (-914), violence without injury (-970), violence with injury (-921) and stalking and harassment (-724)².
- All policing districts experienced a lower level of crime.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person. The largest volume decreases were in violence with injury and

violence without injury, with a smaller decrease seen in stalking and harassment.

- Lower crime levels were also seen across 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 sexual offences.

Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents (ASB)

In the 12 months from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025:

- There were 44,481 ASB incidents in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 87 (-0.2%) on the previous 12 months. This is one of the lowest 12 month figures since the data series began in 2006/07.
- When comparing the current and previous 12 months, seven policing districts showed lower levels of ASB. Six policing districts showed lower levels in May 2025 compared with April 2025.

Police Recorded Security Situation

In the 12 months from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025:

- There were no security related deaths, compared to one during the previous 12 months.
- There were fewer shootings and paramilitary style attacks than during the previous 12 months.

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.



- There were 5 bombing incidents, the same number as during the previous 12 months and 17 shooting incidents, compared to 22.
- There were 18 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 28 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (8). All 18 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 8 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 12 during the previous 12 months. All 8 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 41 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 78 during the previous 12 months. 5 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 18 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 5 firearms found during the past 12 months, compared to 18 during the previous 12 months.

Explosive Finds

- There were no explosives found during the past 12 months compared to 3.12kg during the previous 12 months.

Ammunition Finds

- There were 98 rounds of ammunition found during the past 12 months compared to 824 rounds found in the previous 12 months.

Use of Force

During the 12 months between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025:

- There were 19,028 uses of force reported by PSNI officers, a decrease of 12% on the number reported during the previous year (21,508).
- Use of attenuating energy projectiles (AEPs), conductive energy devices (CEDs) and firearms increased compared to the previous year, while use of batons, irritant spray, police dogs, handcuffs / limb restraints, unarmed physical tactics and spit and bite guards decreased.
- The most common type of force used was unarmed physical tactics, accounting for 60% of all uses of force.
- The most common reasons an officer used force was to protect themselves (80% of the time) and protect other officers (78% of the time).
- Belfast District accounted for just over one-third of the use of force (35%), followed by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (13%).
- Alcohol was the most common perceived impact factor when force was used (60% of the time).

In relation to those persons* on whom force was used:

- 83% were perceived to be male
- 36% were perceived to be between 25 and 34 years old
- 93% were perceived to be white.

**Figures do not represent a unique count of the number of people who were subject to use of force, but rather how many times force was recorded by police officers, disaggregated by gender, age and ethnicity.*



Police use of force between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 compared to the same period last year

Use of Force	Apr 23 – Mar 24	Apr 24 – Mar 25	% change ⁽¹⁾
AEP pointed	78 ⁽²⁾	100 ⁽³⁾	28%
AEP discharged	9 ⁽²⁾	10 ⁽³⁾	11%
AEP Total	87	110	26%
Baton drawn only	149	130	-13%
Baton drawn & used	100	78	-22%
Baton Total	249	208	-16%
Irritant spray drawn only	253	196	-23%
Irritant spray used	248	262	6%
Irritant spray Total	501	458	-9%
Firearm drawn or pointed	445	485	9%
Firearm discharged	0	0	.
Firearm Total	445	485	9%
Police dog	191	119	-38%
CED drawn	232	282	22%
CED fired	21	19	-10%
CED Total	253	301	19%
Handcuffs / limb restraints	6,670	5,753	-14%
Unarmed physical tactics	12,924	11,420	-12%
Spit and bite guard	188	174	-7%
Water cannon deployed	0	0	-
Water cannon deployed and used	0	0	-
Water cannon Total	0	0	-
Total	21,508	19,028	-12%

(1) Percentage figures are rounded to the nearest integer. (2) During April 2023 – March 2024 AEP was pointed and discharged only as a less lethal option.. (3) During April 2024 – March 2025 AEP was pointed on 99 occasions as a less lethal option and pointed on one occasion during public disorder; during the same period it was discharged on 6 occasions as a less lethal option and discharged on 4 occasions during public disorder.

A use of force is counted as when a police officer uses any of the following force tactics:

- Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) - pointed or discharged
- Baton – drawn only or drawn and used
- Irritant spray – drawn only or used
- Firearm – drawn or pointed, or discharged
- Police dog
- Spit and bite guard
- Conducted Energy Device (CED) – drawn (including aimed, arced, red-dotted) or fired (including drive-stun)
- Handcuffs / limb restraints (including flexi-cuffs)
- Unarmed physical tactics (including blocks/ strikes, take downs, pressure points, physical restraints, other / improvised)
- Water canon – deployed or used



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Motoring Offence Statistics

In the 12 months from 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025:

- There were 33,576 detections for motoring offences in Northern Ireland, of which 97% were dealt with by means of a fixed penalty notice or referral for prosecution.
- The remaining 3% (996) resulted in the completion of a speed awareness or safer driver course.
- Total detections decreased by 18% on the 40,923 detections recorded in the previous 12 months, with notable reductions across a number of offence groups including insurance, speeding, driving licence and careless driving offences.
- Only one of the 19 offence groups showed an increase in detections over the year - breach of signs and signals, which rose slightly (18) to 204 detections.
- The largest offence group was insurance offences with 5,214, which along with speeding (4,579) accounted for under one-third of the total detections.
- The highest speed detected by PSNI officers in the latest 12 months was 132mph, on the A8 Belfast Road, Larne.

Number of motoring offences by disposal type, 1 May 2023 – 30 April 2025*

	1 st May 2023 – 30 th Apr 2024	1 st May 2024 – 30 th Apr 2025	Change over last 12 months	Percentage change over last 12 months
Endorsable Fixed Penalty	8,368	6,756	-1,612	-19
Non Endorsable Fixed Penalty	4,456	3,979	-477	-11
Referred for Prosecution	26,896	21,845	-5,051	-19
Speed Awareness Course	775	616	-159	-21
Safer Driver Course	428	380	-48	N/A
Total	40,923	33,576	-7,347	-18

**Figures are provisional and subject to change.*

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 from 1st May 2024 – 30th April 2025. It does not include any detections by the NI Road Safety Partnership (NI RSP). It presents the most recent motoring offence statistics based on figures extracted on 23rd June 2025. Referred for prosecution figures from 1st January 2023 onwards remain provisional and therefore subject to amendment, as do the remaining disposals for the 2025 period only.

Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025:

- There was a total of 4,779 injury road traffic collisions recorded, resulting in 64 fatalities, 932 people seriously injured and 6,575 slightly injured.
- There were 198 fewer collisions recorded in 2024/25 when compared with 2023/24 and 312 fewer casualties over the year.
- The 64 fatalities in 2024/25 was 9 fewer than the 73 recorded for the previous financial year.
- Nearly a third of all child KSI (killed and seriously injured) casualties were pedestrians.
- There were 105 children (under 16) killed or seriously injured – 23 more than in 2023/24. In 2024/25, there were 167 KSIs in the 65 and over age group, which was similar to the number recorded in 2023/24 (166).
- The most common principal causation factors for KSI casualties during 2024/25 were 'inattention or attention diverted' (156 KSI casualties) followed by 'wrong course/position' (84 KSI casualties), and 'excessive speed having regard to conditions' (80 KSI casualties).
- Fermanagh and Omagh district had the highest number of road deaths with 14 fatalities. Belfast City district recorded the most serious injuries in 2024/25 (144 seriously injured).



Outcome 1: Victim Focused

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

As part of our continued commitment to proactive crime prevention and partnership based policing, Organised Crime Branch delivered a number of targeted cyber and economic crime engagement activities throughout May.

On 13 May 2025, our Cyber Protect Officer delivered the UK wide **Cyber Crime: Decisions & Disruptions** exercise to the Department for Communities (DfC) Management Board and Permanent Secretary. This workshop is designed to explore the critical decisions that people make in order to protect their businesses against cyber threats - including hacking, malware, and physical security breaches.

Further to this engagement, the Cyber Protect Networks 'Cyber Escape Room' experience was delivered to DfC Information Asset Owners. This session focused on promoting essential cyber hygiene behaviours to support improved organisational and personal online security.

These events reinforce our shared commitment to building digital resilience across the public sector.

Separately, the PSNI's Economic Crime Unit piloted a new '*Money Laundering Prevent*' educational initiative on 20 May 2025. This immersive session was delivered to 60 secondary school pupils from North and West Belfast. The initiative aims to increase awareness among young people about the origins of criminal finances, how criminal networks exploit individuals to move money, and the risks of unknowingly facilitating financial crime.

Investigations

- On 9 May 2025, police tracked a suspect pallet of controlled drugs from Dublin Port, through the Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland land border, and onwards to Northampton via a legitimate freight forwarding company. The pallet was located and the vehicle detained in Northampton. A search recovered approximately 80kg of suspected herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of £1.2m and 8kg of suspected cannabis resin with an estimated street value of £40,000.
- On 28 May 2025, the Paramilitary Crime Task Force charged a female with five drug possession and supply offences following a proactive investigation. A search in February 2024 in the Belfast area led to the seizure of a sawn-off shotgun, ammunition, and one kilogram of cocaine. The woman was linked to the ammunition via DNA and was found in possession of Class A and Class C controlled drugs at the time of arrest. Telecoms data further connected her to the supply of controlled drugs and known INLA associates.
- On 31 May 2025, detectives from the Economic Crime Unit executed an extradition warrant in Dublin for a man who failed to pay a Confiscation Order imposed in 2017 following a drugs investigation. Despite holding property in Liverpool, the individual had not satisfied the order, prompting the initiation of extradition proceedings.



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Court Outcomes

- On 21 May 2025, a man was sentenced to two years and six months' imprisonment, suspended for three years, for possession of Class A and Class B controlled drugs with intent to supply. The conviction followed a search by detectives at a North Belfast address in August 2023, where Class A controlled drugs valued at £70,000 and £280 of Class B controlled drugs were recovered.
- On 22 May 2025, a man with links to the West Belfast UDA was sentenced to 14 months' imprisonment and 14 months on licence. The conviction related to a 2021 search in Donaghadee, which uncovered over 200 prescription tablets, cannabis, and digital evidence linking the individual to a range of drug related offences.
- On 22 May 2025, a man was sentenced to 24 months (half in custody, half on licence) after being convicted of being concerned in the supply of a Class B controlled drug. This followed the search of a vehicle on the Deerfin Road, Ballymena, in May 2024, during which police recovered approximately 22kg of herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of £220,000.
- On 23 May 2025, a man from East Belfast received a two-year sentence (half in custody, half on licence) for possession and supply of Class A and B controlled drugs, possession of criminal property, and obstructing police. The case stemmed from a property search in January 2023 that recovered cocaine, cannabis, and over £2,000 in cash.
- On 29 May 2025, a man was sentenced to two years (half in custody, half on licence) following a 2021 search of his home address. He was convicted of being concerned in the supply of Class A, B and C controlled drugs and possession of Class B, and possession of criminal property.

Serious Crime Branch

Since our Accountability Report in June, PSNI's Serious Crime Branch has secured a number of significant convictions relating to serious violence, including murder, firearms offences, and violent assaults. These outcomes reflect our continued focus on tackling serious and organised crime and demonstrate the professionalism and tenacity of our investigative teams, who work tirelessly to deliver justice for victims and protect the public. They also reaffirm our commitment to victim and community focused policing.

Investigation

- Criminal Investigation Department Detectives:
 - Have charged a man with possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence and assault on police following an incident in Bangor on 18 May 2025.
 - Have charged a man with grievous bodily harm with intent, aggravated burglary and inflicting grievous bodily harm, non-fatal strangulation and possession of an offensive weapon with intent to commit an indictable offence following an incident in Maghera on 2 June 2025.
 - Have charged a man with attempted arson, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, possessing an article with intent to damage property, possession of an offensive weapon with intent to commit an indictable offence, theft and two counts of criminal damage following an incident in Lisburn on 8 June 2025.
- Detectives from PSNI's Major Investigation Team have charged a man with murder and non-fatal strangulation in relation to the murder of Mary Green in



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Belfast on 3 June 2025. He has also been charged with common assault against a second victim.

Court Outcomes

- A woman was sentenced to 12 years in prison for the murder of James Crossley in March 2022.
- A man was sentenced to a minimum of 19 years in prison for the murder of Natasha Melendez in March 2020.
- Two men have been found guilty of the murder of Malcolm McKeown in August 2019. They were sentenced to life imprisonment with the minimum tariff to be set on 12 September 2025.
- A man was sentenced to two and a half years in prison (half to be served on licence), and a second man received a five-year sentence (half to be served on licence), following guilty pleas to firearms and ammunition offences.
- A man, previously convicted of grievous bodily harm with intent and kidnapping, was sentenced to 11 years in prison in connection with a serious assault in October 2021, which left the victim with a permanent brain injury. Four co-accused were sentenced in 2023.
- A man was sentenced to three years and ten months for robbery, making off without payment, and possession of a firearm or imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence, following a series of incidents in Belfast on 3 February 2024.
- A man was sentenced to 200 hours of community service and ordered to pay £20,126 in compensation, after pleading guilty to theft and fraud by abuse of position. The offences involved multiple thefts from his employer between May 2021 and May 2022.

Public Protection Branch

Public Protection Advisory Group Leadership Conference

In June, PSNI's Public Protection Branch convened a multi-agency, cross-border Leadership Day for the Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) at the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Building. Under the theme "Leading and Managing Change," we brought together senior leaders and practitioners from police, prison, probation and criminal justice policy units in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

We were honoured to welcome three distinguished guest speakers: former Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner and ex-PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Barbara Gray; former RUC and PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Stephen White; and College of Policing Assistant Chief Constable Tom Harding. Each speaker reflected on their experiences in leading change across systems and organisations, embedding national practices, and the challenges in driving change at different levels of leadership.

The event encapsulated a wide range of challenges in leading change, and provided a valuable opportunity for professionals to network and develop their leadership skills, not only across agencies but also across borders

Feedback from across all participating agencies has been overwhelmingly positive.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee – VAWG

On 18 June, Detective Chief Superintendent Zoë McKee attended the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to give oral evidence on the subject of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Northern Ireland. The session explored prevalence, victims'



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experiences, government and police responses and prevention strategies. Zoe was joined by a Women's Aid representative Sonya McMullan, who detailed first-hand experiences from victim and survivors and a leading academic, Siobhan McAlister, who provided comparative analysis and research on the scale of VAWG in Northern Ireland.

[The Committee Meeting can be viewed at: Parliamentlive.tv - Northern Ireland Affairs Committee](https://parliamentlive.tv/Programme/Northern-Ireland-Affairs-Committee)

Police Foundation Annual Conference – Future Direction in Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

This month, senior Public Protection officers represented PSNI at a National Policing Conference on Violence against Women and Girls. The conference convened senior policing leaders, academics, and specialist agencies to explore the future direction of tackling Violence Against Women and Girls across the UK. The focus was on prevention, justice reform, and cultural change within policing and across wider partners.

Investigations

Metropolitan Police Investigation – Serial rapist (ZOU) update

Zhenhao Zou has been sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 24 years in England, after pleading guilty to eleven counts of rape, voyeurism, possession of extreme pornographic images and false imprisonment. Following our public appeal to identify any further victims and the completion of extensive enquiries, no linked offences have been identified in Northern Ireland. Close liaison with the Metropolitan Police Service and Queen's University Belfast continues, and the case remains under active review in the PSNI Rape Crime Unit through regular case conferences.

Court Outcomes

Child Abuse

- On 28 May 2025, a juvenile offender pleaded guilty to rape and other sexual offences against his siblings. This complex and highly sensitive investigation demonstrated the dedication and professionalism of our officers, resulting in a positive outcome for the victims.
- On 4 June 2025, a man pleaded guilty to 36 sexual offences, including rape of a child under 13, attempted rape of a child under 13, sexual assault of a child under 13, incitement of a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity, and possession/distribution of indecent photographs of children. He has been placed on the Sex Offenders Register while pre-sentence reports are prepared. Sentencing is expected later this year.
- On 9 June 2025, a man was convicted a number of sexual offences against an 11 year old victim. He received a custodial sentence of 22 months and will remain on the Sex Offenders Register for life.
- On 15 May 2025, a man was convicted of multiple serious sexual offences against a child and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, with lifelong registration on the Sex Offenders Register.

Domestic Abuse

- On 13 June 2025, a man was sentenced for 43 domestic abuse related offences, including grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, and threats to kill. These serious and sustained offences took place over a six-year period between 2014 and 2020. The defendant received an 11-year sentence, comprising five and a half years in custody and a further five and a half years on licence.



Police Service
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Outcome 2: Community Focused

Op Angle 441



In June, the Police Service of Northern Ireland launched **Operation Angle 441**, a major policing response to the widespread, racially motivated disorder following a serious alleged sexual assault in Ballymena. While criminal investigations progressed swiftly, including the arrest and charge of two suspects, the incident generated considerable attention online and led to a protest in Ballymena on 9 June. What began peacefully escalated into serious public disorder, with rioters targeting Roma and other ethnic minority families, attacking homes, setting vehicles alight, and injuring police officers.

Unrest quickly spread to other areas including Belfast, Portadown, Coleraine and, separately, Derry City & Strabane, where sectarian tensions also triggered violence. Across multiple nights, officers faced sustained attacks involving petrol bombs, fireworks, masonry, and paint. In response, we deployed up to 22 public order units each evening, supported by dogs, water cannon, air support, and specialist investigation teams.





To safeguard core policing and reinforce our response, we activated a Mutual Aid request to Police Scotland. Within 48 hours, 81 officers were deployed to support PSNI officers. Their professionalism and rapid deployment made a tangible difference, with officers playing a key role in managing disorder in Ballymena and Derry/Londonderry and supporting policing across four districts.

Alongside enforcement, engagement with local communities and partners was a key strand of our policing response. The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable led briefings with ethnic minority communities and partner organisations, including the Romanian Consul. Daily situation reports were issued to key partners, and a Strategic Coordination Group, comprising the Northern Ireland Office, Department of Justice, The Executive Office, Housing Executive, emergency services and local councils, was convened to align support and plan recovery.



The violence witnessed in June was both unacceptable and deeply damaging. These attacks were not only aimed at individuals but at the shared values of our society. To date, 107 police officers have been injured and 52 arrests made. Around 65 households have sought support from housing authorities, with at least 17 families displaced. A dedicated public order enquiry team has been established to investigate and ensure that those responsible are held to account.



Outcome 3: Workforce Focused

Victim Detection Dogs

PSNI's Victim Detection Dogs continue to provide vital support in high profile investigations, both within Northern Ireland and across the border. These specialist dogs are trained to detect the scent and gases released following death, and have become a critical resource in locating human remains, bringing much needed answers to families and supporting complex murder investigations.

Recently our colleagues in An Garda Síochána have formally requested mutual aid from ourselves in the form of deployment of our Victim Detection Dogs.

Earlier this year, a man was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his wife, whose body was discovered concealed beneath the stairwell of their County Cork home, more than six years after she was reported missing in March 2017. In October 2024, Victim Detection Dog Fern and her handler supported the investigation by locating a concrete covered area under the stairs, leading to the discovery of the victim's remains and a breakthrough in the case.

In a separate case, Police Dog Charli and her handler assisted in locating the body of a murder victim buried in a shallow grave. Charli identified the scene in less than two hours, and a suspect is now awaiting trial for the victim's murder. Charli has also supported the ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Co. Tyrone teenager Arlene Arkinson, although no significant findings have yet been made.

These highly trained dogs, and the officers who work with them, are a valued asset to the organisation. All PSNI dog handlers undergo rigorous national accreditation and

training, and their responsibility extends well beyond the working day, as they provide round-the-clock care, welfare, and development of their furry companions. We are proud of the dedication and professionalism shown by these officers, whose work is helping to bring resolution to grieving families and supporting the delivery of justice across jurisdictions.



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