



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Accountability Report

Presented at Policing Board Meeting:

7 May 2026



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Chief Constable's Foreword



Policing in Northern Ireland continues against a history of unique complexity, sustained day-to-day demand and a continued security threat. At its heart, however, remains a simple and enduring purpose: Looking after victims, protecting our communities and taking care of our overworked officers and staff. It is critically important that our communities are aware that everyday our officers and staff respond to incidents with professionalism, commitment and a clear focus on protecting the public. The Human Rights focus of the organisation is a key pillar in everything that we do. My report this month reflects a period of significant operational activity and attention upon the Service with a continued focus on the issues that matter most to the safety of our communities.

At the outset of this report, I want to condemn in the strongest terms the totally senseless and unacceptable attack at Dunmurry Police Station on Saturday 25 April. Let me be absolutely clear. This was a deliberate and reckless attempt to endanger life. The coercion of an innocent delivery driver and the placing of an explosive device in his vehicle, bringing it into a residential area, showed complete disregard for the safety of local people. This was undoubtedly an attempt to kill police officers, but it endangered everyone nearby. This type of attack brings fear and disruption to local residents and undermines the safety of

the very people we are here to protect. Incidents like this are intended to intimidate and to cause harm, not just to police officers and staff, but to the communities we serve. They will not succeed.

I pay special tribute to the courage and professionalism of the officers and staff who responded. In an environment of uncertainty and danger, they put the safety of others first, running towards risk to evacuate nearby homes and bring residents, including families with very young children, to safety. The device detonated as that evacuation was under way. Thanks to the swift actions of police, no one was injured, which is nothing short of miraculous. My thoughts are with all those affected by this cowardly act: the delivery driver for whom this will have been an extremely traumatic experience; residents who have experienced fear and disruption; and our officers and staff, along with their families, who will be grateful they are safe but will undoubtedly have been left shaken by the ordeal. I have met the officers who immediately responded from within the police station to run towards the danger regardless of any thought for their own safety. Their only consideration was the safety of the local residents. I cannot praise them highly enough.

We need to be clear that an attack against the Police Service is an attack against everyone in Northern Ireland. What is most striking to me is that this was not an attack in isolation against a police station; it brought risk directly into a residential community and placed innocent people in danger. In those moments, officers and staff acted exactly as the public would expect, evacuating homes and bringing vulnerable residents to safety. That instinct to protect life, even in the most challenging moments, is the essence of public service, and it should never be taken for granted.

I am grateful for the unanimous condemnation of this attack from Northern Ireland's political and other leaders, and from across wider society. As we celebrate 25 years of the PSNI we should all collectively be clear that there is no place in society for these mindless attacks and that the PSNI is a police service for all communities. It should also be remembered that police stations of today are a place of safety for vulnerable people, for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The mindless idiots who perpetrated this attack are being rightfully vilified and called out for what they are – egotistical idiots.

An attempted murder investigation has commenced and is being led by our Terrorism Investigation Unit. Those responsible will be relentlessly pursued, and we will use all the resources available to us to identify them and bring them before the courts. This attack, following the recent incident at Lurgan Police Station, is a stark reminder of the enduring threat environment in which our workforce serves. It is also important to note that the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) raised the UK national threat level on 30 April 2026 from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely. This reflects the wider UK threat picture, including increased risk from individuals and small groups linked to Islamist and extreme right-wing terrorism, something we remain acutely alive to in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland-related terrorism threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL and is kept under constant review. We will continue

high visibility policing to counter the ongoing dissident threat alongside work to address other forms of terrorist threat. It will not deter us from our duty. Our focus remains on protecting the public, supporting our communities, and ensuring that those who seek to drag Northern Ireland backwards are arrested and prosecuted for such acts and put where they belong, in prison.

In recent weeks, we have also seen sustained protest activity linked to issues of fuel pricing, requiring a visible and measured policing response across Northern Ireland. For many people, particularly in rural communities and those working in agriculture and haulage, this is a matter of genuine pressure and real hardship, and it is right that those concerns can be lawfully expressed. Our responsibility as a police service is to facilitate peaceful protest while also protecting the wider public from unsafe or prolonged disruption, particularly on key arterial routes and around locations critical to daily life and essential services. That balance is rarely straightforward in practice. However, we have engaged early, explained our role and responsibilities, encouraged lawful and responsible protest and, where there was no alternative, enforced the law. Commanders have worked closely with organisers and partner agencies and deployed proportionately to reduce impact and prevent escalation. Overall, our objective was to keep disruption as limited and short-lived as possible, and the protracted scale seen elsewhere was not realised. Where offences were identified, officers took appropriate action, including issuing fixed penalty notices. I recognise that not everyone will agree with every decision made, but my priority is that decisions are taken fairly, proportionately and always in the interests of public safety.

Alongside these operational demands, we must remain focused on the issues that continue to cause the greatest and most enduring harm. Violence against women and

girls remains a significant and persistent demand on policing and one of the clearest tests of how we protect the vulnerable and build public confidence. Behind the figures is the daily reality officers and staff face, responding to harm in homes and communities, safeguarding victims, and taking action against those responsible.

In the twelve months to February 2026, 21,868 offences were recorded, including domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, and a wide range of sexual offences such as rape and sexual assault, as well as serious violence ranging from common assault to homicide. These figures reflect both physical violence and the non-physical abuse - coercion, intimidation and control - that causes lasting harm to victims and families. Since September 2022, officers have made 6,155 arrests under new domestic abuse and stalking legislation. Prevention and early intervention are essential, not optional, and through Operation Encompass, now operational across all of Northern Ireland's 1,162 schools and education settings, more than 55,900 referrals have been made so that children impacted by domestic abuse receive timely support from safeguarding partners. From June 2026, we will further refresh our approach through a Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Action Plan, explicitly recognising children as victims in their own right and strengthening early intervention. Alongside enforcement and protection, we will continue to drive prevention through Phase 2 of our Power to Change campaign, challenging misogyny and the normalisation of harmful behaviours and making clear that preventing violence is a shared responsibility across society.

We are also seeing the consequences of harm in other areas of daily life, most notably on our roads. Sadly, further lives have been lost in recent weeks, bringing the total number of people who have died on our roads this year to 29, including five in one weekend. Each death represents a family left devastated and communities coming to terms with sudden loss. It is a reminder that road harm is not an abstract statistic, it is grief that arrives without warning. Too many of these tragedies remain

preventable. I again urge all road users to drive sensibly, slow down, wear your seatbelt, stay focused, do not allow yourself to be distracted and recognise that the decisions we make behind the wheel can have irreversible consequences not only for ourselves but for other road users and pedestrians. These collisions do not always happen to other people, they easily can happen to you.

This need for responsibility on our roads includes the use of e-scooters, which, while legal to purchase, cannot generally be used lawfully on public roads or footpaths under current legislation. Many people, often well-meaning parents buying for children, or those simply trying to travel cheaply and conveniently, do not fully understand the legal position or the safety risks until something goes wrong. We are seeing increasing community concern about their use and the risks they pose to riders and pedestrians, including serious injuries and fatalities. Between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2025, there were 176 injury road traffic collisions involving e-scooters. These collisions resulted in 200 injuries, including three fatalities; two of which occurred during 2025, and 51 people seriously injured. Our approach is to reduce harm through clear public messaging, partnership work to raise awareness, and a proportionate policing response using an engage, explain, encourage and enforce approach, including seizure where it is necessary and safe to do so. In the longer term, a durable solution will require legislative reform and a co-ordinated approach involving retailers, parents and users to prevent further deaths or serious injury.

Tragically, the impact of sudden and preventable loss is not confined to our roads. We have seen a number of farming and industrial fatalities over the past few months. Farming remains one of the most dangerous working environments, and these incidents

are a sobering reminder that a moment's inattention or a small misjudgement can have life changing consequences. Preventing avoidable harm is a shared responsibility and one that sits at the heart of building safer communities.

It is equally important to recognise the work of our officers and staff who respond to incidents and support communities every day, and to ensure that their role is properly understood and valued.

During National Response Policing Week in April, we highlighted the vital role of response officers, who are often the first on the scene in complex and challenging situations. They step into the unknown, bring calm in a crisis, protect life, secure scenes and preserve evidence, and provide reassurance when it is needed most. Their resilience and dedication are remarkable, and their actions are fundamental to public trust and confidence.

In that context, I encourage everyone to watch the BBC series 'Peelers: The PSNI – For Real'. This programme presents an important opportunity for the PSNI to tell our story more openly, something I have been clear since becoming the Chief Constable, that we need to do more. I know how outstanding our officers and staff are but the public do not see what they do every day – I am determined to change that. Over the course of the series, viewers will see the varied and often unpredictable incidents officers attend, the split-second decisions that have to be made, and the professionalism and humanity they bring to some of the most challenging situations. I have no doubt the series will prompt debate about decisions made in difficult circumstances, but that is the reality of policing: it is demanding work, it is never straightforward, and every incident must be judged on its own merits. I am delighted with the six episodes. This programme has been a couple of years in the making with understandable concerns about risks to officer safety due to our troubled history.

What the series shows is that the PSNI is made up of ordinary people from across our communities, who have chosen to serve and to make society

better, in a role that most people could not or would not choose to do. I am immensely proud of those who volunteered to take part, and for the courage and openness they demonstrated. They are representative of their colleagues across the Service, and what is reflected on screen is the dedication, resilience and commitment to public service that I see every day. In this, the 25th anniversary year for the PSNI, it is right that we are transparent about the challenges we face, recognise how much has been achieved, and be clear about how much more we can deliver if policing is properly resourced and supported.

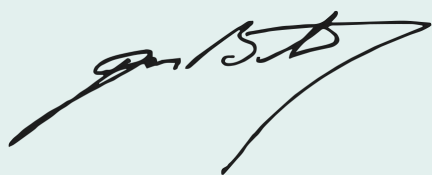
All of this demand, responding to terrorism, policing public order, reducing deaths and serious injury on our roads, tackling violence against women and children, and providing reassurance in communities, depends on having a properly resourced and sustainable workforce.

I am pleased that, despite the financial uncertainty throughout 2025/26, we have reported a provisional breakeven position, with a Resource underspend of £0.3m (or 0.03%) and a Capital underspend of £0.4m. Our position as we start this new financial year is sadly familiar. The indicative draft budget allocation issued to us by the Department of Justice falls far short of our requirement and means that we are again facing a significant projected Resource shortfall, with recently revised figures, of £57m, £92m and £149m over the next three years. Capital funding is also in short supply with an indicative draft budget allocation of £52m for this year (a 20% reduction on last year), against a requirement of £70m. This lack of capital funding will impact our services quickly, including urgent but currently unfunded needs such as replacing our Public Order vehicles and maintaining adequate air support capability. Such gaps in our capability will put officers and the public at additional risk. There is no timeline or certainty about when a final budget will be set or over what

period. This is simply an unacceptable position and, if not addressed, will become an endemic millstone to the detriment of the Police Service.

Finally, this report once again demonstrates the full breadth of operational activity delivered over the past month. It highlights ongoing safeguarding work to strengthen accessibility and confidence in reporting, serious investigations progressed through the courts, and a proactive approach to tackling drug supply and organised criminality. This is reflected in the seizures and arrests arising from searches in Moneymore and Cookstown, where Class A and Class B drugs with an estimated combined street value of more than £280,000 were recovered. It also captures the everyday contribution of neighbourhood and response teams, addressing local concerns, providing reassurance and intervening quickly to prevent harm. While the attempted attack at Dunmurry rightly stands apart in its seriousness, it sits within a wider picture of sustained demand and public service, and it is a reminder of the exceptional professionalism and courage our people bring to this job.

I remain incredibly proud of the commitment, professionalism and courage shown by our people, and of the service they provide to all communities across Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Boutcher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jon Boutcher QPM
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Outcome 1

Victim Focused

Over the past month, officers and staff have continued to safeguard vulnerable people, support victims, and progress investigations into serious crime, domestic abuse and sexual offending. This has included working closely with partners to identify and prevent harm, taking early action where risk has been identified, and pursuing those responsible to support victims and bring offenders before the courts.

Public Protection Branch (PPB) has strengthened engagement with communities whose voices are less often heard, supporting improvements in accessibility, reporting and victim confidence. Three Department of Justice funded listening events in Derry/Londonderry, Portadown and Belfast welcomed people from LGBTQ+, Eastern European, disability and older person communities and included a women only forum. Participants have described fear and mistrust as barriers to reporting domestic abuse, concerns about potential consequences, and how delays in the justice process can undermine confidence in outcomes. These insights are being used to shape our service delivery, focusing on accessibility, embedding trauma-informed practice and building on positive feedback about safeguarding delivered through Rapid Video Response.

This engagement reinforces PPB's wider prevention and awareness raising work, helping people to recognise abuse, feel able to seek help, and know what support is available. On 31 March 2026, PPB supported the launch of a domestic abuse awareness comic book at the

Guildhall in Derry/Londonderry. The book was developed with children who had experienced domestic abuse in their household and is intended to raise awareness among young people and encourage them to speak up and seek help.

Work to protect children from exploitation continued through PPB led partnerships and practical tools to support early identification of risk. Bangor Alternatives delivered a four week Safe Areas For Everyone (SAFE) Exploitation Awareness programme for local pupils, supported by The Executive Office's Communities in Transition programme. PSNI's Child Sexual Exploitation Team, Predatory Lending Team and the local Neighbourhood Policing Team contributed to the programme's closing event, highlighting how criminal, sexual and financial exploitation can present and the importance of awareness in strengthening safeguarding.

From 1 April 2026, PSNI began trialling a new Child Criminal Exploitation Screening Tool developed by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and Queen's University. The tool is being trialled with children already on the child sexual exploitation framework and those being referred for Child Sexual Exploitation assessment. It is designed to be completed on a police mobile device and supports a more structured, consistent approach to identifying vulnerability and risk. It draws on a range of factors to produce a scaled assessment across categories from low to high,

and an overall low-to-high risk profile. The tool can also generate a visual summary to help identify where risk is concentrated, supporting earlier safeguarding conversations, clearer decision making and more consistent referrals and partnership interventions.

Alongside this safeguarding and prevention work, detectives in Serious Crime Branch continued to progress complex investigations and manage cases through the criminal justice process. In Portadown, Major Investigation Team detectives investigating the murder of Rolandas Kvederis on 26 March have charged a man with murder. Following a security alert in Glenarm on 6 April, a man has been charged with offences including doing an act with intent to cause an explosion likely to endanger life or cause serious injury to property, obstructing police and possessing fireworks without a licence; a second man arrested has been released and a report will be submitted to the Public Prosecution Service. In Enniskillen and Antrim, charges have been brought in relation to a robbery on 6 April and a serious assault on 15 April respectively.

There have also been several significant court outcomes. On 3 March, a man was convicted of assaulting a vulnerable adult while working as a care assistant in a hospital setting and received a custodial sentence suspended for two years. In domestic abuse related cases, a man was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for breaches of a non-molestation order, domestic abuse and threatening and abusive behaviour, with a restraining order granted; in April, a man pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent following an assault on his female partner using a weapon and awaits sentencing. On 27 March, a man was found guilty of 45 serious sexual offences against children and was remanded in custody and is awaiting sentencing.

Outcome 2

Community Focused



Across districts, officers and staff continued proactive and intelligence led policing to protect communities, reduce offending and disrupt criminality that causes significant harm.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), Local Policing Teams (LPTs) and specialist detectives progressed investigations, executed warrants and undertook targeted enforcement activity to tackle drug supply, acquisitive crime, antisocial behaviour and other issues impacting local communities. This work was supported by ongoing engagement with communities and partners to respond to local concerns and support community safety.

During April, officers responded to fuel price protests across Northern Ireland, including convoys and slow moving vehicles which, at times, affected key routes on the road network. The priority throughout was to uphold the right to peaceful protest while protecting the wider public from unsafe or prolonged disruption, particularly where access to essential services and critical sites could be affected. Officers applied the 4Es approach (engage, explain, encourage and enforce), dealing with each protest on its individual circumstances based on risk and harm. Officers engaged early with organisers and participants and worked with partners to reduce impact and prevent escalation. Where offences were identified, proportionate action was taken, including fixed penalty notices for driving related matters when appropriate.

E-scooters are a growing concern for many communities. While legal to buy, their use in

public places raises real safety risks for riders and pedestrians, and there is increasing public concern and enforcement demand linked to their use. Between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2025, police recorded 176 injury road traffic collisions involving e-scooters, resulting in 200 injuries, including three fatalities, two of which occurred in 2025. Under current legislation, e-scooters are treated as motor vehicles; in practice, most do not meet the legal requirements for use on roads or in other public spaces, which means they should only be used on private land with the landowner's permission.

Officers continue to apply the 4Es approach to e-scooter use, taking proportionate action while recognising the safety considerations involved in busy areas. Where appropriate and safe, e-scooters are seized, riders engaged and detected offences progressed. Seizures have increased over the past year, reflecting public concern and the need to prevent harm; 2026 figures to date indicate a continued upward trend. Public messaging is being strengthened and work is underway with partners, including public health specialists, to raise awareness of the risks and injuries associated with e-scooter use. In the longer term, a durable solution will require legislative reform and a co-ordinated approach involving retailers, parents, owners/users, partner agencies and policing to encourage responsible and legal use.

Alongside these wider community issues, officers across districts continued day-to-day policing activity to address local concerns, reduce harm and provide reassurance.

In Derry City & Strabane, officers from the local Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) team supported a youth focused VAWG story book project. The publication, *The Storm before the Calm*, uses the experiences of fictional teenage girls to raise awareness of domestic abuse and encourage reporting and support seeking. The launch took place at the Guildhall on 31 March, with the Deputy Chief Constable and members of the Policing Board in attendance. The resource is being made available to schools, youth clubs and organisations across the district.

The District Support Team also supported local harm reduction efforts by presenting a cheque for £2,460 to the charity HURT, Have Your Tomorrows, following a forfeiture order granted at Londonderry Crown Court arising from a drugs seizure investigation.

Detectives from Organised Crime Branch conducted a warranted search at a dwelling in Londonderry and seized a firearm, ammunition and controlled drugs with an estimated street value of £561,000. A man and a woman were arrested; the man was charged with offences including possession of a firearm in suspicious circumstances and possession of Class A and Class B controlled drugs (including with intent to supply), and the woman was released on bail pending further enquiries.

In separate operations, Derg NPT conducted searches in Newtownstewart, Killen and Castlederg, seizing suspected Class A and Class B drugs along with cash, a suspected imitation firearm and electronic devices; two men were arrested and later released on bail pending further enquiries. Ballyarnett NPT detained a man on an e-scooter who was acting suspiciously and recovered suspected Class A and Class B drugs and cash; he was arrested and subsequently released on bail pending further enquiries.

Officers from Ballyarnett NPT also carried out a road safety operation, seizing vehicles including an SUV, an e-scooter and scrambler bikes, with drivers reported to the Public Prosecution Service for offences including having no insurance. This activity was in direct response to raised community concerns and reduces the risk posed by illegal and unsafe vehicle use.

In North Area, officers in Limavady identified a prolific offender as the suspect in a series of repeated shoplifting offences. Evidence gathering, including CCTV enquiries, led to his charge and remand and provided considerable reassurance to long suffering retailers.

In Carryduff, police responded to a report of a missing young child who is non-verbal and has learning disabilities. Officers who were first at the scene began a co-ordinated search, using local knowledge to prioritise high-risk locations requesting additional support given the surrounding rural terrain. During the search, one of the officers located the child in a river and recovered him safely. Medical assistance was requested and the child was reunited with family and checked by paramedics. The speed, judgement and decisive action of officers prevented further risk to the child and avoided the need for a prolonged search operation having to take place into the late evening and night.

In Belfast City, officers from Lisburn Road LPT responded after a member of the public reported that a young woman had disclosed she had been raped. The reporting person obtained a photograph of the suspect, separated the victim from him and ensured she victim was brought to safety. A short time later, during routine patrols, officers recognised the suspect from the photograph and arrested him. They supported the victim, secured early evidence and the man was charged and subsequently remanded into custody.

In North Belfast, detectives from the Paramilitary Crime Task Force carried out planned searches at three properties as part of an investigation into criminality linked to the West Belfast UDA. A man and a woman were charged to court for drug related offences including possession of Class A and Class B controlled drugs and possession with intent to supply. Additional charges included possessing criminal property, concealing criminal property, evading excise duty and VAT, and entering into an arrangement to acquire criminal property.

Local Policing officers based at Tennent Street assisted during a medical emergency when ambulance availability was limited, transporting a child with additional needs and a teacher to hospital. Separately, Court North NPT received warm and positive feedback following engagement at a local nursery. This reflects the value of visible, approachable neighbourhood policing in building trust and confidence with young people, families and schools.

In South Area, officers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District responded to an urgent call from Lifeline and located a man in crisis who was threatening to take all of his prescribed medication. Officers ensured he received medical care and family support. The man has since contacted the officers to thank them for intervening and helping to prevent him from taking his own life.

Following searches in Moneymore and Cookstown, officers recovered Class A drugs with an estimated street value of £151,200 and Class B drugs with an estimated street value of £129,860, along with a large quantity of cash. Counterfeit currency and devices linked to counterfeit manufacture were also seized. A man has been charged with drug related offences and possession of counterfeit currency, and a woman was released on bail pending further enquiries.

In Enniskillen, officers discovered a cannabis factory at a property in the Drumgarrow Court area and seized a large number of cannabis plants and associated paraphernalia. A man was charged with cultivating cannabis and possession of Class B

controlled drugs (including with intent to supply), alongside associated offences.

Outcome 3

Workforce Focused



The continued development, collaboration and recognition of our officers and staff remains central to building a capable and professional workforce equipped to meet evolving demand, protect communities and deliver a high quality policing service.

During March, officers from our Proactive Economic Crime Team (PECT) attended the national PECT conference in Cardiff. The conference highlighted the significant emotional and financial harm scams cause to victims and recognised the ongoing success of the PECT network in tackling offences such as romance fraud and courier fraud, reinforcing the value of continued collaboration across forces and partner agencies to prevent fraud, disrupt organised criminality linked to economic crime and improve outcomes for victims.

PSNI was also recognised at this year's Northern Ireland Blue Light Awards, with success in the Blue Light Team of the Year and Innovation and Operational Excellence categories, alongside "Highly Commended" recognition (including Emergency Service of the Year and Bravery and Courage). This reflects the professionalism and contribution of officers and staff working alongside emergency service partners to keep communities safe.

