



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



My October Accountability Report is set in the context of sustained budgetary challenges, an uncertain political environment, potential for another Northern Ireland Assembly Election and the wider cost of living crisis. This turbulent mix of circumstances will inevitably have an adverse influence on policing in Northern Ireland.

I have previously highlighted the increasing pressures on the police budget and the current in year pressures now sit at approximately £90m. As officer headcount shrinks, through natural attrition and reduced recruitment, in real terms, this

could mean up to 1,000 fewer Police Officers over the next three years. This would take officer headcount closer to 6,000 than the 7,500 commitment made in the New Decade New Approach Agreement and, indeed, the Patten Commission. Fewer officers and staff will force us as a public service, to ask fundamental questions about how we manage crime and incidents and protect 999 emergency response and neighbourhood policing.

Since my last update, and perhaps timely and reflective of the need for a refocus in our approach to policing, was the inaugural Problem Solving Awards. This joint NIPB initiative centred on evidence based problem solving which is integral to identifying early intervention and crime prevention opportunities with a view to reducing demand and improving services and sharing good practice. The event was a celebration of innovation and a practical demonstration of how a structured problem-solving approach can better address local priorities. My congratulations go to all the nominees



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of awards across various sectors, who made this inaugural event one to remember and build upon.

My report also contains detail on our input to Hate Crime Awareness Week and the successes in Crime Department, the outcomes of which reflect arrests and sentencing's for some of the most serious offences.

The Service Executive has also spent time managing and communicating the internal impact of the fiscal challenges. We have delivered internal messages to our people and this has been duplicated with key external partners, including a written brief to all political parties in Northern Ireland. As I look ahead, our attention will also be on how we manage the impact of any organisational change in officer numbers and service delivery models on our staff and officers.

My penultimate reflection on the past month is drawn to one of the principles of Sir Robert Peel, widely known for his influence on modern policing, who said, *'the police are the public and the public are the police'*. This has never been more relevant and important than during this time of significant financial

uncertainty. Now more than ever, we need to rely on the principles of community policing where it will be incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare, that we work together to build on the successes achieved over the last year to ensure Northern Ireland continues to be a safe and thriving place to live and work, despite the severe cost of living crisis, the reducing officer numbers and the wider impact on other public services.

Finally, we cannot lose sight of the significant achievements in the last 12 months. This is something we are fiercely proud of and want to protect, for example: Northern Ireland is amongst the safest places in UK; our threat level has been lowered - we have the lowest national security incidents in 50 years and our Neighbourhood Hallmarks have been launched. We have also seen progress towards a digital service and positive changes in our estate, fleet and uniform.



Simon Byrne

Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland



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Finance and Resource Update

We have previously updated the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) on the profoundly challenging budgetary situation facing the Police Service and what it will mean for policing in Northern Ireland.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I have consistently highlighted my concern about the increasing size of the financial gap, the rising cost base, the lack of clarity on budgets and the shortening timeframe to take what limited mitigating actions may be available to the Police Service.

The NIPB and public will be aware our ambitions this time last year had been:

- Reaffirming the New Decade New Approach commitment to 7500 officers and effective funding arrangements;
- Creating a Digital Police Service;
- Building the Police College the next generation deserves; and,
- A Police Estate fit for a changing world.

Regrettably, we have had to reconsider our priorities due to the ongoing and increasing pressures on the police budget for 2022-2023 and beyond. There is a real potential for the Police Service to incur costs in excess of our allocated Contingency Planning Envelope (CPE) this year.

We were projected to receive a funding reduction of approximately £226m over three years as a result of the Draft Budget that was published for consultation by the Executive in December 2021. We already entered this year facing significant financial pressures, with an estimated funding shortfall of some £59m. As the year has progressed, the Board has been appraised that a number of new and unforeseen additional pressures have emerged, including the potential of an average 5% pay award and ever increasing utility and fuel costs. As a result, the estimated shortfall in funding has grown to approximately £90m.



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In real terms, this could mean up to 1,000 fewer Police Officers over the next three years, taking officer headcount closer to 6,000 rather than the 7,500 commitment made in the New Decade New Approach Agreement and indeed, the Patten Commission.

We acknowledge, in the absence of an Executive, any decision making regarding budgets is not possible. However, we have and will continue to work closely with the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to agree priorities including how we protect 999 response together with neighbourhood policing and the outworking's of this, through the development of our demand analysis, will become clearer in the coming months. However, as highlighted, without mitigation it will almost certainly mean a smaller, less visible, accessible and responsive Police Service. It will also mean some aspects of service delivery will look different and slow down.

It is important that we also highlight the impact of the present situation on our Police Officers and Staff, who continue to work with dedication and commitment for local communities.

They are facing the same cost of living pressures as everyone else, compounded by not having their pay increments or pay awards for 2022/23. Working closely with our Staff Associations, we will endeavour to provide every support we can and ensure they understand what these budgetary challenges mean for them.

Despite these challenges, the Police Service will continue to serve the people of Northern Ireland with professionalism and pride. We would welcome the continued support and advocacy of the Board as we progress towards a new model of Service delivery.

Parades and Bonfire Events

Policing the vast majority of parades is now about public safety rather than public disorder however, there is still the requirement for the deployment of significant police resources to a number of the larger parades. We are now in a position to report on the cost of parades and protests to date for this financial year. This is notable in the context of fiscal challenges.



The following table provides a summary of the costs incurred in policing parades, protests and related disorder this year against the most recent non-COVID comparator year of 2019 -

| Costs | 2019 | 2022 | change |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Overall | £4.835m | £5.457m | £622K (13%) |
| Opportunity | £2.070m | £2.522m | £452k (22%) |
| Additional Overtime | £2.570m | £2.634m | £64k (2%) |
| Part Time Reserve | £0.060m | £0.041m | -£19k (-32%) |
| Other | £0.135m | £0.260m | £125k (93%) |

1. Opportunity Costs represent the salary-related costs of those officers who have been diverted away from other core policing activity. These are not easily extracted from Police systems and should be considered as best estimates.
2. Additional Costs are real cash costs that would not have been incurred but for the Police Service having resource these events.

The principle reason for the increase in cost is due to the significant increase in the number and size of parades and events following the removal of COVID restrictions. Setting aside the cost, we are very proud of the peaceful outcome of this year's parading season, something we hope will be a regular feature for our communities in the future.

Election Costs

In the context of financial uncertainty it is noteworthy that the overall cost of the May Assembly Election across Local Policing and Operational Support Departments was £672,750. This includes £334,423 duty time and £328,943 overtime. We would anticipate that any further election called later this year would incur similar costs, dependant on the exact nature of the arrangements for Count Centres etc.

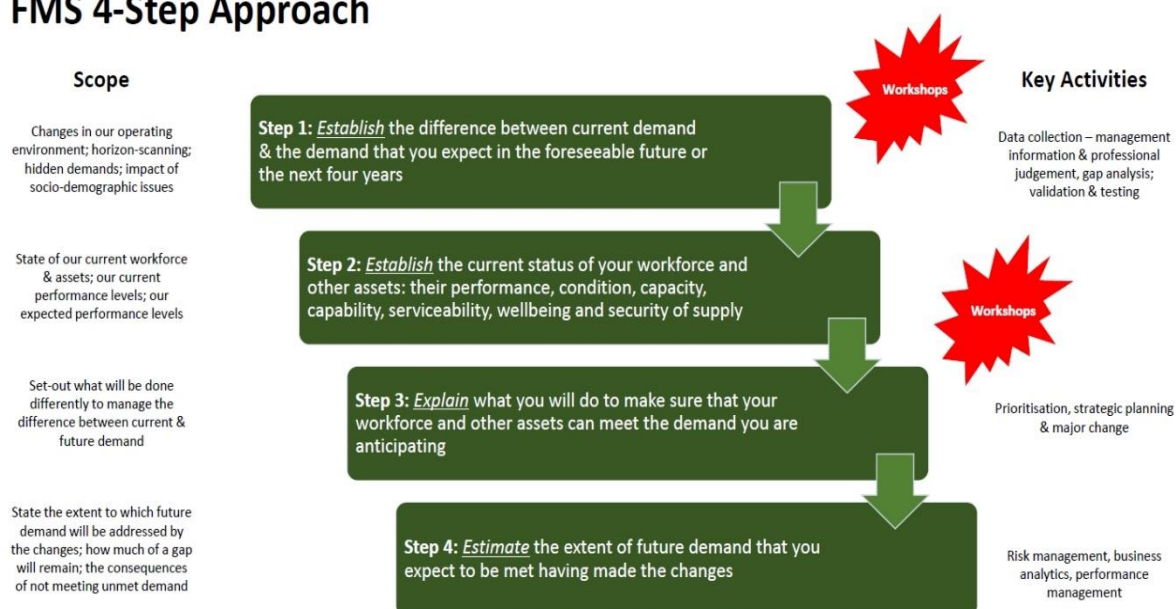


Our Performance

Force Management Statement (FMS) Update

The FMS is a self-assessment that UK Police Forces prepare and provide to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) each year. Completing the exercise is considered best practice and essential in planning future strategic activities. This is particularly important given the budgetary challenges we are currently facing. FMS is a four step process:

FMS 4-Step Approach



Step 1 has now been completed and involved the collection of data from across the organisation. A data validation exercise is now underway.

This is an important step for the organisation as it will inform the subsequent assessment of organisational capacity and capability to meet identified demand, as well as further steps in the FMS process.

This is our foundation year, the lessons learned will be critical to further embed the process within the organisation.



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Corporate Services

Despite the budgetary challenges, we are still driving forward with our Estate Strategy where we anticipate seeing longer term savings.

However, utility price rises continue to create pressures on the ability to deliver fundamental estate maintenance and improvement works in line with the key objectives of the Estate Strategy. Following on from the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy, a draft Carbon Reduction Plan is in development to assist in reducing the overall cost of utilities, but also to meet the legislative obligations as set out in the Climate Change Act 2022.

To aid our approach to rationalisation, an optimisation exercise of the existing estate is underway. This will involve a range of asset disposal to reduce the overall estate cost and reduction of the carbon footprint. There will also be opportunities to explore how to improve the energy efficiency of existing facilities through a range of externally funded energy schemes.

Other aspects of the implementation of the Estate Strategy include station perimeter improvement designs, workplace modernisation and strategic asset management planning to create a balanced and manageable schedule of works for the future.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

On 26 October Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan and Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Hill gave evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. This was in relation to the Committee's Inquiry into the Effect of Paramilitaries on Society in Northern Ireland.

This was an opportunity to highlight the progress the Police Service has made, alongside partners, in tackling the profound harm caused by paramilitaries in communities across Northern Ireland. A comprehensive written submission was also provided prior to the submission of oral evidence.



Outcome 1

We Have a Safe Community

Security¹

There is a continued downward trend for security related statistics.

During 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022:

- There was **one security related death**, the same number as during the previous 12 months.
- There were **fewer bombings, shootings and paramilitary style attacks** than during the previous 12 months.
- There were **4 bombing incidents**, compared to 7 in the previous 12 months and **25 shooting incidents**, compared to 34.
- There were **29 casualties of paramilitary style assaults**, compared to 39 in the previous 12 months. **All 29 casualties were aged 18 years or older.**
- There were **7 casualties of paramilitary style shootings**

compared to 19 during the previous 12 months. **All 7 casualties were aged 18 years or older.**

- There were **119 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000**, the same number as during the previous 12 months.
- **14 persons were subsequently charged**, compared to 17 during the previous 12 months.

Crime

There have been some significant successes in the Serious and Organised Crime Arena since our last report:

Serious Crime

Investigation update

- A 39 year old male charged with murder of Damien Heagney and has been remanded in custody.

¹ NISRA



- A 33 year old female charged with murder of Tony Browne and has been remanded in custody.
- A 20 year old male charged with manslaughter of Paul Brown, attempted murder, possession of an offensive weapon and has been remanded in custody.
- 24 year old male charged with murder of Ryan McNab and was remanded in custody.

Court update

- Two females have entered guilty pleas regarding the manslaughter of Daniel Guyler in 2018.
- A male has been sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of John Paul McDonagh in 2020.
- A male has been sentenced to 12 years for a serious assault with a machete which resulted in the victim receiving permanent/life changing injuries.
- A male has been sentenced to 2 years for sexual assault and

robbery of a family within the Belfast Area.

Organised Crime

Officers from the Police Service's Organised Crime Branch have continued to tackle the supply and misuse of controlled Drugs across Northern Ireland. Notable successes since the last update to the Board include:

Arrests

- Working in collaboration with Belfast Harbour Police, detectives conducted an operation in the Belfast Harbour area where a vehicle was stopped and searched and approximately 27 kilograms of cannabis, with an estimated street value of £400,000, recovered. A sum of cash was also recovered during the operation.





Image shows cannabis seized by officers from Organised Crime Branch

A man was arrested and later charged to Court for drug related offences

- Detectives arrested two men for drug related offences following searches of eight properties across Northern Ireland during which suspected Class A drugs and a number of other items, including cash, five high value watches, designer handbags and shoes with an estimated value of over £90,000 were recovered.

Both were charged to Lisburn Magistrates Court.



Outcome 2

We Have confidence in Policing



Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing Update

During the summer we launched our Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing. These set out a framework for a set of consistent, high-quality standards that local communities can expect from us.

To promote continuous improvement within our teams and help identify, develop and understand best practice in Neighbourhood Policing and progress against our Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing, the Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) Self-Assessment Survey for Year 2 took place between Monday 5 September and Friday 14 October.

This is the second year that the Police Service has carried out the NPT Self-Assessment Survey and as a result the findings can now be compared to

the Year 1 baseline figures. The process of analysing the results in detail will follow over the coming months; however interim high level results are encouraging.

Once the survey findings have been fully analysed, a full update will be provided to the Northern Ireland Policing Board Partnership Committee.

Problem Solving Awards

The Police Service recognises that effective problem solving skills are a critical part of decision-making. They allow for the early identification of options, leading to more informed, professional and positive outcomes that better address local priorities.



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To recognise and celebrate the effective problem-oriented crime prevention and problem solving projects that have been undertaken across our organisation, a Problem Solving Awards event, held in partnership with the Northern Ireland Policing Board, took place on 20 October 2022.

There were 27 submissions across five categories:

- Probationer
- Neighbourhood Policing
- Partnerships
- Investigations
- Business Support

Category winners were recognised in each area, with Lisburn City Neighbourhood Policing Team selected as overall winner with their 'City Centre Crime and Harm Reduction Project'.

Our Strategic Partnerships and Prevention Branch Team will be working to ensure that good practice identified from all submissions is appropriately shared across the organisation.

We look forward to further expanding the Problem Solving Awards in the years ahead in conjunction with partners at the Northern Ireland Policing Board.



Outcome 3

We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

Web Page Launch – Advice on Processions and Protests



A new 'Processions and Protests' page has been published on our Police Service of Northern Ireland external website. This resource provides advice and includes step by step guidance in circumstances where:

- A public procession is being organised
- A public procession is being participated in
- A protest against a public procession is being organised
- Participation in a protest against a public procession is being planned

Additionally the page details:

- The crucial role of stewards/marshals and their responsibilities
- The actions and measures police may take to ensure safe and lawful processions and protests

Alongside offering our own guidance, the page helps direct those seeking further information to other useful resources and relevant organisations, such as the Parades Commission website, their Code of Conduct and the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.



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Key Events and Campaigns

As usual we had a busy month, with a number of key campaigns being supported by our Strategic Communications and Engagement Team.

Key Highlights:

National Hate Crime Awareness Week took place during the period 8 to 15 October 2022.

Policing teams from across the Police Service took part in engagement activity to promote the message that

“Northern Ireland is no place for hate”. They took the opportunity to speak directly to those affected by hate crime and to encourage everyone to embrace and understand culture and diversity.

The Chief Constable attended a conference organised by Victim Support Northern Ireland to highlight the work of the Hate Crime Advocacy Service (HCAS). He was joined by the Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA, and partners from the HCAS on a Hate Crime panel discussion.



Chief Constable pictured with Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA, Janice Bunting CEO Victim Support NI, Michael Aviva HCAS Co-ordinator and Jolena Flett Victim Support NI. (Further information and support can be obtained from the Hate Crime Advocacy Service - <https://hcasni.com/>).

National Week of Action on Business Crime

During the week of 17 to 24 October 2022, the Police Service took part in the national week of action against business crime. Teams from across the Service undertook various crime prevention activities and initiatives, including the Safer Business Action Day.

In addition to addressing crime deterrence and anti-social behaviour, we sought to raise public and business sector awareness, build relationships with local businesses and encourage



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the uptake of existing crime prevention tools.

The Police Service's Strategic Communications and Engagement Team supported this activity by developing and delivering a proactive media and social media campaign, which included highlighting The SafeShop initiative and Retail Crimewatch schemes.

Northern Ireland Confederation Conference and Exhibition 2022

In October, the Deputy Chief Constable attended the annual NICON Conference and joined health care professionals and partners in a panel discussion on *'Integrated Care Planning - through the mental health lens'*.

He paid tribute to the work of the Health Service in recent years and expressed a determination to work more closely and collaboratively with partners to develop an enhanced and consistent approach to tackle the increasing mental health calls for service received by police across all Health and Social Care Trusts.



Our People, Your Service

People and Budget Outlook

Disappointingly and as previously highlighted, October has seen the last of our planned recruitment for the medium term, with 49 Student Officers enrolling in the Police Service.

It was also a month during which it was critical to engage internally with our workforce and their various Staff Association representatives, as we respond to the uncertain budgetary position and impact on our people.



The Chief Constable and the Service Executive Team held a number of local and senior leader engagement events, the purpose of which was to keep

everyone in the organisation informed and included in discussions about the challenges faced and to encourage ideas from officers and staff.

The current challenges highlight the importance of our plans to better equip front line supervisors and managers. We have commenced work to establish a new Leadership and Management Faculty as part of our Police Service College Learning and Development Portfolio. The framework for our future leadership and management development products has been approved by the People and Culture Board.

Furthermore, we recognise the impact that the cost of living crisis may be having on officers and staff. In response we have a renewed focus on all aspects of wellbeing and in parallel we continue to advocate for timely decisions and processes in relation to pay and conditions.



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Looking ahead we will continue to build upon and proactively utilise our “Your Voice” and “Stronger Together” fora as we work with colleagues to discuss, face and respond to financial challenges, emerging or new demands and increasing public expectation that face our Service.

The recently published independent review by Baroness Casey on misconduct in the Metropolitan Police Service is timely to our on-going programme of work, on workplace culture, professional conduct, Code of Ethics and organisational values. We will ensure the broad themes and learning from this report are adequately and fully appraised in our own context and against the work already underway, as previously shared with the Board.



Forward Look

- At the time of writing we await to see whether a Power Sharing Executive is restored or whether we will face elections, both of which will have an impact on policing.
- As this report has outlined, the Police Service remains under significant financial pressure. In the coming weeks and months, we will be working hard to understand the detailed impacts on the service to our local communities. We will continue to engage with the Board and the Department of Justice to establish resource priorities including how we protect 999 response and Neighbourhood Policing.
- Following the recent launch of our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan, our attention has turned to implementation. We are planning proactive policing operations to coincide with the 16 Days of Action international campaign (25 November to 10 December) to demonstrate our commitment to tackling these crimes and raise awareness of the help and support available to all women and girls.
- The Strategic Communications and Engagement Department has a range of campaign activity in place for November:
 - White Ribbon Day followed by 16 Days of Action against gender-based violence
 - Remembrance Day
 - Remembrance Sunday
 - Guru Nanak Gurburab (founder of the Sikh Faith)
 - International Men's Day
 - Black Friday and Cyber Monday



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