



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of 30 March 2023 to
27 April 2023

Presented at Policing Board Meeting:

4 May 2023



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Unless otherwise stated the statistics in this report are unvalidated management information sources from administrative systems and are subject to change.

Foreword



I begin this month's Accountability Report with the good news that our colleague DCI John Caldwell has been discharged from hospital. Our thoughts and well wishes remain with John and his family as he enters the next phase of his recovery. I have written to the hospital trust thanking them for his care. The family now require some time, space and privacy, and I ask that this be respected. Be assured, we will continue to relentlessly pursue those responsible.

This is a time of unprecedented demand for policing, with increased activity against Paramilitary crime and Organised Crime Gangs, together with increasing levels of domestic and sexual offences. All of which is set against the backdrop of an increasing threat from violent dissident republicans.

During April we initiated Operation INSPIRE following the raising of the threat level to SEVERE. This included officers from across Local Policing being placed on 12 hour shifts, supported by colleagues from across the organisation.

In addition to the high footfall of visitors attending the various beauty spots over the Easter holidays, the period saw over 90 notified, and a number on un-notified parades, take place across the weekend. Thankfully the majority of these parades took place without incident. However, officers coming under attack during an un-notified parade in Derry/Londonderry, and the subsequent recovery of viable pipe bombs in the area, serve as a continued reminder that a small minority still have the capability and desire to cause harm.

Operation RONDELETTO, the policing operation to provide protection and security across a range of events marking the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, along with the state visit to Northern Ireland by US President Biden, took place between the 3rd and 21st April. The largest operation in over a decade, it involved 5,140 officers, including 309 from 40 Police Forces across Great Britain.

It is with a sense of great pride that I am able to report that, with the eyes of the world upon us, and in the face of a myriad of competing pressures, the operation has been widely praised for its professionalism, style and success, with that praise coming from Presidents, Ministers, Civic Leaders, Faith Leaders, and of course, the public.

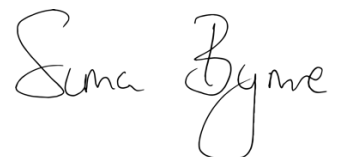
I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the dedication and contribution of our police officers, police staff and Mutual Aid officers, and thank the public for their understanding and cooperation throughout this period.

Once again, and set against this unprecedented operational context, I am obligated to highlight my concerns regarding our precarious financial position. An already stark situation for the year ahead, has now in my opinion, the potential to become an impossible one. This follows the provision of an 'indicative Resource DEL budget' representing a further cut of 4.75%, or £35m. This equates to an initial funding gap of £141m for the Police budget in 2023-24. Even with significantly reduced recruitment, leaving officer numbers at just 6,459 by March 2024, and further non pay cuts, this gap can only be reduced to around £85m. In my view, it is simply not possible to reduce our cost base by this residual amount given the timeframe available, contractual commitments and the lack of invest-to-save funding or practical delivery mechanisms.

We will continue to do all that we can to reduce costs this year, including

commitments to minimal recruitment only, cuts to non-pay areas and progressing our transformational programmes to drive out improvements in efficiency, demand management and costs. However, these measures alone will not balance the budget.

Furthermore, I have recently commissioned an exercise to consider still more cuts in areas of spend that in some way could be described as variable or discretionary, to the extent that the costs are not yet committed. This will inevitably include items such as a total recruitment freeze, further cuts to overtime, closing police stations and enquiry offices, grounding some of our fleet, leaving IT systems unsupported and so on. All of these measures will impact frontline delivery and carry some variable risks.



Simon Byrne
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Finance and Resource Update

2022-23

After a somewhat tumultuous financial year, I am delighted that our hard work and resolve was rewarded by reporting a provisional breakeven position in both Resource and Capital spend. The provisional outturn was an underspend on Resource of £507k (or 0.06 of 1%) and on Capital of £271k. This position was only achievable by a combination of additional in year funding and with cuts to both headcount and non-pay. Police officer numbers at year end had fallen to just 6,688. So, although we demonstrated a measure of financial discipline, it has come at a cost to the organisation and the services we can provide.

2023-24

The budget outlook for the year ahead was already daunting. However, the Department of Justice recently issued an indicative budget which represents a further 4.75% cut (or £35m) on top of existing pressures. The result is that we are entering the year with a funding gap of some £141m that can only be reduced to £85m by imposing further cuts to headcount and non-pay.

This budget must also be set against the current operational context. The threat from Violent Dissident Republicans (VDR's) has now increased to SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely across Northern Ireland. The

main focus of these attacks continue to be police officers and we assess an increase in their intent and capability to cause serious harm in the next six months. This comes at a time of unprecedented demand for policing. With the reduced resources available, I have expressed grave concerns about the level of threat, risk and harm facing communities.

The funding position means that I am I am now increasingly likely to face the dilemma of balancing the requirements of Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and obligations as the Accounting Officer for the Police budget. These are serious concerns and I have been engaging with the Permanent Secretary and others to stress the significance of the challenges we face.



Our Performance

Publication of National and Official Statistics

The following 2022/23 finalised statistics will be published at 9.30 am on Tuesday 16th May and can be accessed at <https://www.psnl.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics>

- Recorded Crime and Outcomes
- Domestic Abuse motivated incidents and crimes
- Hate motivated incidents and crimes
- Anti-social Behaviour incidents
- Security Situation



Outcome 1

We have a Safe Community

Operation Rondeletto



Operation Rondoletto was our overarching policing operation to provide protection and security across the range of events marking the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. Our largest policing operation since 2013, we were supported by 309 officers on mutual aid from 40 different UK police forces providing a range of specialist resources including, search, specialist firearms, dogs, counter drone, CBRN and close protection.

The operation commenced with the state visit to Northern Ireland by US President Biden on 11th and 12th April and concluded with a gala dinner hosted by UK Prime Minister Sunak at Hillsborough Castle on 18th April.

During the course of the operation we deployed 5,140 police officers. A range of duties were carried out across a host of different events and venues visited by current and former Heads of State, civic leaders and other dignitaries. A total of 32 defensive venue searches were conducted.

Multi agency command arrangements and effective partnership working were central to the policing operation, ensuring clarity of role, purpose and joined up working through this very complex operation.

During the policing operation a total of three arrests were made for minor offences.

Feedback from all stakeholders, both domestically and internationally, has been overwhelmingly positive.

A structured debrief process is now ongoing and will ensure that organisational learning is captured and acted upon for future events.



(l-r) visiting the Gold Room at Police Headquarters: Chief Operating Officer Pamela McCreedy; Chair of NI Policing Board, Deirdre Toner; Assistant Chief Constable Alan Todd and Edgar Jardine, Vice Chair of NI Policing Board

Easter Policing Operation

Over 90 notified parades and events took place across the Easter weekend. In the vast majority of cases these took place without incident and, where there were Northern Ireland Parades commission determinations in place, with no breaches of a determination.

Belfast hosted a number of Republican Easter Rising Parades or Commemorations across the city. The most significant of these were in West Belfast on the 8th and 9th April. A focused, preventative, engagement and evidence gathering operation was deployed on both days. The majority of parades and commemorations passed off without incident, however, a small number of events required an evidence gathering deployment. These are currently being reviewed to identify any potential offences.

In Derry/Londonderry on Monday 10th April an un-notified parade took place in the Creggan area of the City. Officers were in attendance as the organisers had not complied with their legal obligations to submit notification to the Parades Commission. Extensive engagement took place in the lead up to the event and a proportionate policing operation put in place. Shortly after the parade commenced, petrol bombs and other objects were thrown at one of our vehicles. Evidence gathering resources were deployed and the footage obtained will be examined to identify offenders.

The following day, four viable pipe bomb style devices were recovered from inside the grounds of the City Cemetery. It is believed that these pipe bombs were connected with Monday's un-notified parade and intended to be used to attack and cause injury to our officers. An investigation is ongoing, and at this time, the main line of enquiry is that the pipe bombs are attributable to the New IRA.

More widely, the Easter weekend was a really busy period for policing, not least on the North Coast. Working with partners including Causeway Coast and Glens Council, Translink, Driving & Vehicle Agency (DVA) and the Ambulance and Fire and Rescue Services, an operation was put in place to ensure that everyone got to and from Portrush safely, and that residents and visitors alike, were happy, reassured, and free to enjoy themselves.

Over the course of the weekend there were three arrests for public order offences and one fixed penalty notice and five Community Resolution Notices issued. This is a welcome reduction on last year.

A vehicle safety operation, launched in conjunction with the DVA, led to 40 vehicles being issued with an immediate prohibition, meaning that the vehicle was unroadworthy and not permitted to continue. A number of drivers were issued with fixed penalty notices for a range of motoring offences, including, excess speed, mobile phone use and unsafe vehicle modifications. Footage submitted by members of the public via the Major Incident Policing Portal (MIPP) has also been used in prosecutions against five drivers.

Safety Camera Vans deployed at locations across the North Coast made 635 detections for excess speed. This is a worrying increase on the 518 detections last year.

As always, we remain grateful for the support of residents, businesses and visitors during peak periods such as these.

Operation INSPIRE 2023

Following the raising of the threat level to 'severe' and in the face of unprecedented demand over the Easter and the Belfast Good Friday Agreement anniversary periods, Operation INSPIRE was enacted and went live on 5th April across all Policing Districts.

12 hour shifts were initiated across Local Policing and the operation supported by officers and staff from across the Service.

Duties undertaken included, conducting Vehicle Check Points (VCP's), the provision of

reassurance patrols and the use of stop and search where appropriate and proportionate.

Between 5th April and 23rd April, Operation Inspire outcomes have included:

Stop & Search	2,213
Arrests	237
Search warrants executed	82
Warrants Executed (other)	107

Ards and North Down

Tensions remain in Ards and North Down borne from rival loyalist factions, personal disputes and a desire to secure drug dealing and criminal territories. During this period of unrest, rival factions have carried out a number of violent acts against each other. There have been more than thirty reported incidents ranging from petrol bomb attacks on homes, criminal damage and intimidation. Regrettably, there have been occasions where innocent members of the public have been targeted through a case of mistaken identity.

We continue to provide a significant policing commitment to the area to disrupt criminal activity and keep people safe. Local Neighbourhood and Response teams are being supported by specialist colleagues from across the Service.

To date there have been 16 arrests and 8 persons charged. Engagement continues with local and elected representatives and feedback from the public has been largely supportive.



Outcome 2

We Have Confidence in Policing

Crime Department

Economic Crime Unit (ECU)

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA).

A Police Officer or Accredited Financial Investigator can seize cash under POCA legislation if they suspect that it is recoverable property or intended by any person for use in unlawful conduct. Recoverable property is property which has been obtained through unlawful conduct, for example, the profits of drug supply or tax evasion. Unlawful conduct is any criminal activity including tax evasion i.e. undeclared income. The total value of the cash must be known to be, or estimated to be, in excess of £1,000. It does not need to be counted.

Once seized, the cash can be retained for 48 hours, after which an application must be made to the Court for further retention to enable an investigation into the origin of the money.

Cash can be retained under POCA for a maximum of two years. If enquiries conclude that the cash is recoverable property then an application is made to the Court to forfeit the money. This may proceed to a contested hearing at which evidence will be produced. Both cash retention and forfeiture are civil matters, heard by a Judge.

A forfeiture order can be made for the whole or part of the money seized, for example, if the

Judge considers that the respondent has shown evidence that some of the money was lawfully obtained then they can order the return of this amount and forfeiture of the remainder.

- On 19th April at Newry Crown Court, a Confiscation Order was granted against two defendants to the value of £138,487.55. This followed proceedings linked to the discovery of a large quantity of cash located during searches carried out in connection with a 2021 investigation into a number of fraud and drug related offences.

The defendants were given three months to pay and will serve five years imprisonment if they default.

- On 12th April 2023, detectives successfully applied for an Account Freezing Order for approximately £21,000 at Belfast Magistrates Court. This followed information that a named bank account had received multiple cash deposits which were rapidly moved.

Examples of POCA Cash Seizures in the period 31 March 2023 to 24 April 2023

Location	Circumstances	(Estimated) Amount seized
Glenavy	£11,000, was located in the front foot well of a vehicle searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The driver did not provide a reasonable explanation of cash and it was seized under POCA.	£11,000.00
Maguiresbridge	Person searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act, approximately £1000 made up of sterling and euro along with a quantity of cannabis was found. The driver was arrested for Possession of Class B and Possession of Criminal Property, and the Cash was seized under POCA.	£1,205.00
Belfast	Vehicle searched and approximately 1kg of Cocaine, 250 Diazepam tablets and approximately £30,000 in cash recovered. Both occupants were arrested and charged and the cash seized under POCA.	£30,000.00
Belfast	During the search of a property under Misuse of Drugs Act, cash in excess of £1,000 was found on a person present. The cash was subsequently seized under POCA after the suspect having been provided with the opportunity failed to provide evidence of its legitimate origin.	£1,340.00
Strabane	Vehicle searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act. A large amount of cash and some evidence of drugs was found. No credible explanation for the cash was provided and it was seized under POCA.	£3,700.00
Newtownards	Search of property and vehicle following arrest. Bundles of cash were found which totalled in excess of £76,000. The money was seized under POCA.	£76,605.00
	Total value:	£123,850.00



Organised Crime Branch

- On 15th April, detectives arrested two people on suspicion of possession of a Class B Controlled Drugs with intent to supply after a van was stopped and searched at Larne Harbour. A large quantity of suspected herbal cannabis, with an estimated street value of approximately £120,000 was seized during the search of the vehicle.

Both were charged to appear at Coleraine Magistrates Court.



- During April, detectives acknowledged the sentencing of a man to 14 months in custody and 14 months on licence for possession of Class B Controlled Drugs with intent to supply. This followed the search of a property in Belfast in August 2022, where 2kg of vacuum packed herbal cannabis was recovered.

A sum of cash was also recovered and the forfeiture of this money was awarded to 'Addiction Northern Ireland'.

Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)

- On 3rd April, detectives conducted a search operation at two properties in the Carnlough and West Belfast areas. Suspected cocaine and cannabis with an estimated street value of £300,000 were seized, along with mixing

agents, cash and designer watches. Two people were arrested as part of the operation. One has subsequently been charged to Laganside Magistrates Court and the second released pending the outcome of further enquiries.

- On 3rd April, detectives investigating suspected criminal activity linked to the ongoing feud in the Ards and North Down area, conducted searches at properties in North Belfast and Millisle.

During the search in Millisle a number of items were seized including a quantity of suspected Class C Controlled Drugs and suspected weapons including a stun gun and hatchet.

During the search in North Belfast, a further quantity of suspected Class C Controlled Drugs and a balaclava were recovered.



- As part of an ongoing investigation into the activities of the South East Antrim UDA, detectives used an Account Freezing Order to freeze a bank account containing a total of £36,931.92

The origins of the money are being investigated and, if shown to be criminal proceeds, the money will be subject to a forfeiture order.



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Account Freezing Orders involve using legislation to restrict bank and building society accounts where balances exceed £1,000 if police suspect the funds to be either the proceeds of criminal conduct, or intended for use in unlawful conduct.

Money recovered from the use of Account Freezing Orders will be used in a positive way, to support important work in our communities and to further fund vital police services.

- On 20th April, Belfast Magistrates Court awarded the forfeiture of £16,100 as a result of a PCTF proceeds of crime investigation.

The money was seized by detectives following the search of a caravan in Millisle on 22 October 2019, as part of an ongoing investigation into suspected criminality of West Belfast UDA.

Criminal Justice Branch – Working Together

We have been working with partners in the Public Prosecution Service to create new working arrangements governed under a proposed Working Together Programme, co-chaired by ACC Justice and the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions.

This programme is intended to provide strategic governance and direction in respect of joint service delivery, justice reform initiatives and related innovation projects.

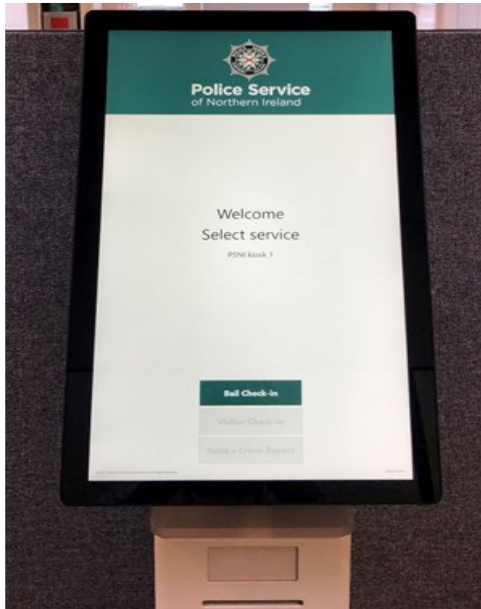
Initially, this work will focus on key areas such as disclosure improvement; file quality and timeliness; reducing demand; operational effectiveness; and modernisation

and transformation. This will assist in delivering relevant criminal justice reform, enhancing standards and speeding up justice.

Outcome 3

We have Engaged and Supportive Communities

Digital Self-Service Counter



Over the last 18 months we have been working with our technology partner to improve the bail signing process at our police stations. Building on our learning from industry, we have developed a self-service kiosk which we are moving to pilot in a police station in Belfast in the coming months.

Currently, functionality is focused on bail, however, the kiosk provides an ability to offer a range of self-service options to people at police stations, including victims and multi-lingual options, to better service our communities.

National Stalking Awareness week

Legislation was introduced to Northern Ireland in April 2022 which criminalised stalking for the first time. Since its introduction approximately 177 incidents have been reported. This has

resulted in 88 arrests and 47 charges for stalking/threatening and abusive behaviour.

Throughout w/c 24th April we worked with partners to raise awareness of this crime type and encourage more victims to come forward.

Whilst stalking can happen to anyone regardless of gender/gender identity, it is a gender based crime and currently we see under 10% of our victims identifying as male. We are also noting that approximately 70% of the cases have a domestic/interfamilial link.

Red flags of a stalker include:

- Regularly following someone and tracking their movements
- Repeatedly going uninvited to their home or workplace
- Checking someone's internet use, email or other communications
- Hanging around somewhere they know the person often visits
- Interfering with their property
- Watching or spying on someone
- Identity theft (buying things in someone's name)

We are working closely with the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, the Public Prosecution Service and the Department of Justice to introduce Stalking Protection Orders later this year.

Autism Acceptance Month



(l-r) Strategic Autism Advocate ACC Bobby Singleton; Police Autism Support Group Chair T/Supt Finola Dornan & Chief Constable Simon Byrne

We recognise that it is crucial that policing is accessible and responsive to autism, both in how we work with people in local communities, and also in our day to day working environment.

Autism Acceptance Month provided us with the opportunity to increase an understanding of autism across our organisation, along with the different challenges that people with autism may face. Engagement activity took place throughout the month and included social media posts and internal communications that shared, amongst other things, personal stories relating to autism and promoted awareness and good practice local initiatives.

This activity was coordinated by our Police Autism Support Group, who represent over 250 officers and staff across the organisation. They promote the unique perspectives, talents and contribution of autistic people and positively influence the policing response to autism in our service policies, working environment, and policing practice.



Our People, Your Service

Cultural Audit



As an organisation we know that getting our culture right is key to our success.

The start of every culture change journey is to find out what our culture is like today, so, in December 2022, we commissioned Inspiring Change, a consultancy that specialises in organisational culture change and internal communications, to run a culture audit, 'Your Service, Your Voice'.

Your Service, Your Voice is sponsored by ACO Clare Duffield who, along with a dedicated project team, has been working with Inspiring Change to co-design and roll out a culture audit across our organisation.

The project is being run in three phases. In Phase One, we co-designed the audit

approach with Inspiring Change, a key part of which was working with our Service Executive Team to start to understand the culture required within the organisation. During this phase the team agreed the survey design and the use of employee focus groups and workshops to further understand the data collected.

Phase Two is currently ongoing and is focused on carrying out the culture research. An online survey, open to all across the organisation was conducted between the 27th March and 12th April. 4,163 took part, a sample size of nearly 46%. This provides us with a strong picture of what our staff think it's like to work in the Police Service of today.

Qualitative research is now underway. This includes interviews with all Service Executive Team members and approximately 20 workshops and focus groups with staff, which will delve further into some of the themes from the survey results. Root Cause Analysis workshops will follow to further investigate some of the issues raised and start to look for ways to address them.

In Phase Three, the data collected will be analysed and a full audit report with findings and recommendations will be created. This report will be delivered by mid-June.

Promotion Process

During April the Inspector Promotion Appointments Panel (PAP) met and ratified 61 promotions to Inspector. Allocations to roles were based upon community and organisation as key priorities, as well as maximising key skills and qualifications within specialist areas. These appointments will take effect from 15 May 2023.

A Chief Superintendent promotion process for 2023 is in the initial preparation stage with a view to conclusion by the end of July.

A promotion process to Executive Officer II grade is currently ongoing with the Stage 2 Interview element commencing on Monday 24 April 2023. There are approximately 60 candidates progressing to this stage.

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