

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S WRITTEN REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD MEETING 7 MAY 2020 - COVID 19

The purpose of this report is to supplement the weekly reports that have been provided to the Policing Board, and provide Board Members with the up to date information.

1/ **Organisation resilience and capability**

- a) PSNI continues to be able to deal with all calls for service. Officer and Staff COVID related absence within PSNI is **below** the UK policing average at present.

2/ **Demand for Service** *(the following figures are not official statistics, they are operational figures only, and should be treated as such)*

- a) **Calls for service** - Between 29 April 2019 and 5 May 2019 there were 14,925 calls for service compared to 11,016 for the same period in 2020. This represents a 26% decrease.
- b) **Domestic abuse calls** - Domestic abuse calls over the latest week have decreased when compared with the previous week (falling from 659 to 603) but still remains higher than the expected weekly average. From March 19 to Feb 20, the weekly average number of Domestic Abuse (DA) calls was 570. This has however increased to an average of 637 calls per week since the start of the COVID pandemic.
- c) **Anti-social behaviour** (non-Covid related) over the latest week has decreased by 163 reports compared to the previous week and was lower than the weekly average over the previous 12 months.
- d) **Custody** detentions have shown an increase over the past week. They are at approximately three quarters of the expected weekly average.
- e) Overall **traffic** movements continue to increase on our roads. The upward trend has been reported to the Department of Health and the Civil Contingencies Group Northern Ireland (CCGNI).

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- f) We have witnessed 494 arrests for **drink driving** related offences since 1 March 2020. 14 of those arrests were a second incident involving the same driver within that period. The amount of arrests is consistent with non Covid periods, despite the reduction in overall traffic movements. The highest offender groupings are those involving people with identified alcohol problems and those who drive whilst disqualified or uninsured.

3/ Official Crime Statistics - 23rd March 2020 to 26th April 2020

- a) On the 6 May 2020 PSNI published an exceptional release presenting police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, covering the changes in crime levels experienced since Covid-19 lockdown measures were introduced on 23 March. This release will be published on a weekly basis until 25 June 2020 when the normal monthly publication schedule will resume. The release can be found at <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/>. A copy has been provided with this report.
- b) The report can be summarised as follows:-
- When compared with the same period the previous year, in the five weeks since lockdown measures were introduced on 23 March 2020:-
- Overall crime has fallen by nearly one third.
 - Violence against the person has fallen by more than one fifth.
 - Violence with and without injury have both fallen by around one third.
 - Six homicides have been recorded, compared with two in the same time period the previous year.
 - Harassment: Crimes recorded within the harassment classification during the five weeks 23 March to 26 April 2020 are lower when compared with what has been recorded during an average five week period over 12 months to 22 March 2020.
 - Sexual offences have fallen by half.

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- Robberies have fallen by more than two fifths. Personal robbery has more than halved, while robbery of business property has fallen slightly from 14 to 12.
- Theft offences have fallen by nearly half.
- Burglaries are nearly two fifths lower.
- Shoplifting is three fifths lower.
- Vehicle offences have fallen by more than two fifths.
- Criminal damage has fallen by more than one third.
- Drug offences have fallen by nearly half and public order offences have fallen by more than one third.

3/ Update on Covid related issues

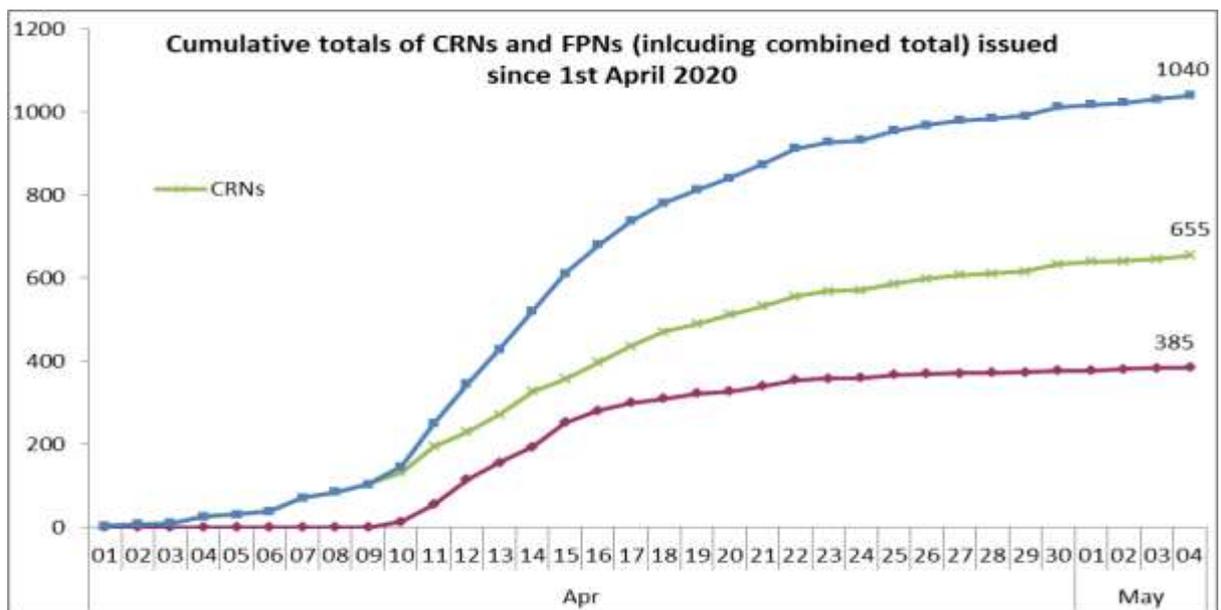
a) The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 (**the Regulations**) were amended on 24 April for two purposes:-

- i) To enable the opening of **cemeteries/burial grounds**, with social distancing maintained
- ii) To provide clarification about the issue of **travel for exercise**. The addition to the Regulations reads, *“(5) A person who leaves the place where they are living does not do so with reasonable excuse under paragraph (2)(b) unless any associated travel that is not in itself exercise is reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances including the nature of the exercise to be taken.”*

PSNI welcomed this amendment in anticipation of receiving further Departmental Guidance from the Department of Health. At the time of writing this report the issue of Guidance remains under consideration by the Department of Health, and as such the temporary direction of the PSNI Gold Commander that all usage of Fixed Penalty Notices will be subject to authorisation by the Silver Commander remains in place.

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- b) The Police Ombudsman advises that overall **complaints** against police are down by almost 50% since the commencement of the Covid period. Of the 138 complaints received by her office as of 5 May, only 24 were Covid related, and all are described as meeting Category C status (the least serious). *(Please note that these figures are not official statistics, and should not be treated as such)*
- c) 11 uses of **Spit and Bite Guards** have been recorded between 27 March 2020 and 5 May 2020.
- d) **Testing** – 438 officers and staff have been tested as of 6 May 2020.
- e) **PPE**- Current stock levels are positive, but supply chains remain a little fragile, an experience shared by all public services.
- f) 385 **Fixed Penalty Notices** have been issued (at 4 May 2020). Given the ongoing deliberations by the Executive as to the Regulations and associated Departmental Guidance, the temporary direction that all usage of Fixed Penalty Notices will be subject to authorisation by the PSNI Silver Commander remains in place.
- g) 655 **Community Resolution Notices** have been issued (at 4 May2020).



Ends