



**CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT
NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
7 MARCH 2019**

INTRODUCTION

As Chief Constable, it is pleasing to see that all of the accountability structures of the Policing Board are now fully operational. With the Policing Board Committees of Performance, Resourcing and Partnership now functioning, we have the ability to highlight our successes, be held to account and explore future opportunities to make policing even better, with the support of Board members.

The special Board meeting, on 26 February 2019, gave us the ability to make ourselves fully accountable and transparent around our failings in the disclosure of legacy documents to the Police Ombudsman. It also provided the unique opportunity to create political and public discourse which will serve to highlight the complexity and breadth of the challenges the PSNI face around legacy issues.

Despite the challenges of the past, the PSNI continues to Keep People Safe in the present and be there for them in their hour of need. Every day we receive an average of 1,552 calls for service of which 36% relate to vulnerability, investigate 269 crimes, arrest 77 people, prepare 112 prosecution files, locate 33 missing people and receive 15 referrals for safeguarding support for children.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Serious Crime

With four murder investigations since the start of the year, it has been a challenging time for our Serious Crime Branch, C2, who are a branch of Crime Operations Department, headed by ACC Barbara Gray.

Like most areas of business within the PSNI, budget reductions have also impacted on Serious Crime Branch. In our Priority Based Resourcing review in 2017, the number of our Major Investigation Teams (MIT) was reduced from eight to five; albeit the new MITs have slightly higher staffing levels.

Despite these reductions in capacity, we have worked hard to maintain the capability of our serious crime response and have implemented more efficient practices and stronger collaborative working with partners such as the Public Prosecution Service. This has been hugely successful and has seen our backlog of serious crime cases reduce from 131 to 92 (down 30%).

The next strategic step for faster criminal justice outcomes is the implementation of legislation to remove the Preliminary Inquiry stage from the most serious offences and revert them to the Crown Court at the earliest opportunity. Unfortunately, there can be no progress on this issue in the absence of our devolved Government.

MITs are responsible for the investigation of serious crime offences such as homicide, kidnap and other major and complex criminal investigations. All Detectives in MITs are highly trained in a number of specialist areas. Senior Investigating Officers (Detective Chief Inspector) and Deputy Senior Investigating Officers (Detective Inspector) will have completed the Senior Investigating Officers Development Programme, which is nationally accredited and will also have achieved a Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) Level 3.

Detective Sergeants and Detective Constables within the team also have expertise in a number of specialist areas, such as Tier 3 Interviewing, Interview Coordination, House-to-House Coordination and Telephone Liaison. Detailed below is a snapshot of the progress of Serious Crime investigations since the start of the year:-

Wayne Boylan - The investigation into the murder of Wayne Boylan on 20 January 2019 is ongoing and we are still working hard to establish a motive for this attack. Our CCTV enquiries are ongoing. Two persons have been arrested and released on bail and several house searches have been conducted. The other victim of this shooting has been released from hospital and has sustained life changing injuries.

Ian Ogle - The investigation into the murder of Ian Ogle on 27 January 2019 continues at pace and to date 14 arrests and 21 searches have been conducted. One person has been charged with murder and is remanded in custody. A number of other persons are being actively sought for arrest. More than 600 houses within the community have been visited and we have taken time to provide community reassurance, whilst gathering evidence.

Pat Ward - Pat Ward was killed on 9 February 2019. He was socialising in a house with friends in the hours before he died and went to a small cul-de-sac on the outskirts of Clogher where he was brutally attacked. A motive for this murder is still not clear. Mr Ward was repeatedly stabbed and left to die in an alleyway, some fifty yards away where he was found the next morning. Two persons were subsequently arrested, interviewed and charged with the murder of Mr Ward. They are currently remanded in custody. One other person was arrested and charged with withholding information and distributing the images in relation to CCTV material which appeared on social media.

David Murphy - The investigation into the murder of David Murphy on 19 February 2019 is at an early stage. Mr Murphy was killed at home in his kitchen and sustained a fatal shot to the head. The investigation has been pursuing several lines of enquiry; however the remote rural location of this murder provides limited opportunities for CCTV recovery and house to house enquiries. No arrests have been made to date. Family Liaison and community engagement are ongoing.

While Serious Crime Branch continues to carry a constant heavy case load, their efforts are not without considerable success, with high detection rates for murder and related offences.

Some recent examples of this can be evidenced following the murders of Colin Horner in Bangor in March 2017 and the murder of George Gilmore in Carrickfergus just six days later. To date six individuals have been convicted in relation to Mr Horner, four for murder, while three individuals are currently standing trial for the murder of Mr Gilmore. In February 2019, one person was also convicted of attempting to murder a PSNI officer by placing a bomb under their vehicle.

Likewise at the end of last year, following the murders of Pauline Kilkenny on the 13 November 2018, Edward Meenan on the 25 November 2018 and Pdraig Fox on 8 December 2018, Detectives have charged five individuals with murder and a further two with connected offences. In an analysis of eight murders that occurred between March 2017 and December 2018, 17 individuals were charged with murder, nine of whom have already been convicted, while others await trial.

Domestic Abuse Campaign

The PSNI Public Protection Branch has worked closely with the Department of Justice and our Corporate Communications Department over the past year and utilised social media to highlight the harm caused by Domestic Abuse.

Over Christmas and New Year, the PSNI Christmas Domestic Abuse Campaign ran on Social Media from 13 December 2018 - 5 January 2019. This complemented the very successful TV and radio campaign focussing on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme, led by the Department of Justice. The PSNI campaign focussed on the 'walking on eggshells' message with video, graphics and the staged release of a number of pre-recorded messages over the Christmas period.

The campaign had a total reach of 193,143 people actually seeing the posts and 4,600 proactively engaging by sharing, commenting or liking the posts. Our provisional figures indicate that during the time period of the campaign there was an increase of 10% in the number of incidents reported last year.

Releasing Funds back into Communities

In recent weeks, the Department of Justice announced that £1.8 million which was recovered from proceeds of crime will go towards helping 50 local projects under the Assets Recovery Community Scheme. Much of these funds were as a result of assets seized by PSNI from criminal gangs and will now be used to go back into helping keep communities safe, to reduce crime and the fear of crime and to address the underlying causes for offending behaviour.

On 22 February 2019, the National Crime Agency (NCA), working within the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF), announced that they had obtained a Recovery Order on a Carrickfergus property under the Proceeds of Crime Act. This investigation related to the home of an alleged senior member of the paramilitary group South East Antrim UDA in Carrickfergus.

PSNI will use any and all lawful means at our disposal to bring paramilitaries to justice. Whilst this latest seizure is significant, we have a great deal more to do in conjunction with the wider Tackling Paramilitarism Program.

We have been encouraged in recent weeks by the increase in persons coming forward to police with information about paramilitary activity. It takes courage to do so, but does make a huge difference to removing the blight of paramilitarism from our communities.

LEGACY

Failure to Disclose Information to Police Ombudsman

We were grateful for the opportunity to explain our actions and be accountable for our failure to disclose information to the Police Ombudsman at the special Policing Board meeting, on 26 February 2019.

Since that meeting, I have met with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice Inspection in Northern Ireland (CJINI) to discuss his requirements as he prepares Terms of Reference for his independent review.

As I advised the Policing Board at the special meeting, we are continuing with our own internal review to ensure that any remedial action is affected as soon as possible. We had undertaken to update the Policing Board on the timescales of the various actions within our internal review, which have now been shared with the Board alongside this report.

These actions and timescales may need to be revised when we understand the scope and phases of the CJINI review, however we will keep the Policing Board fully updated as to our progress and any changes.

I would welcome support from the Policing Board and encourage them to engage with the UK Government, in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive, to create the mechanism for the removal of legacy investigation and disclosure from PSNI to a more appropriate body.

FINANCE UPDATE

With only a few weeks of the financial year remaining, I am pleased to report that PSNI should again deliver a breakeven budget position. This discipline should not however be used to conceal the real financial and operational stress faced by the organisation in delivering within a reduced budget. Indeed, it has only been possible to project a breakeven position due to significant additional funding received during the year from the Department of Justice.

Inevitably, the focus is now on our plans for 2019-20 and whilst we understand that an announcement is due imminently, there is still no clarity around the potential policing budget for the year. This is a significant concern for the organisation and has the potential to impair decisions about the allocation of resources, areas of cost reduction and service levels. Depending on the final settlement, it could directly impact confidence in policing and front line services in Keeping People Safe.

HUMAN RESOURCE UPDATE

Attendance Management and Wellbeing

Policing is primarily a public service which is delivered through our people, so our workforce is clearly our most important asset. It is therefore important that we maintain a workforce with good physical and mental health and ensure they are supported in the event of sickness or injury and encouraged to return at the earliest opportunity.

With ever reducing resources, PSNI faces significant challenges by the high number of those who are absent from work or not operationally deployable. The Average Working Days lost for police officers is projected at 14.09 days per year and for police staff it is 11.42 days per year. In January 2019, the number of police officers absent from work per day totaled 418 and the number of police staff was 123. The vast majority of sickness absence in the PSNI is musculoskeletal and trauma related.

In addition to sickness, a significant number of officers and staff also have duty restrictions, meaning that they are unable to perform the full range of duties due to injury or illness. Over 800 police officers have duty restrictions (551 permanent restrictions). There are also 80 police staff with duty restrictions.

The current risks posed by sick absence and duty restrictions are included within the PSNI Corporate Risk Register and we are continuing to urgently implement a number of remedial actions to reduce these numbers.

PSNI has also significantly invested in specialist resourcing within the Occupational Health & Wellbeing Department to provide an adequate service to our officers and staff who need it.

An Employee Engagement and Wellbeing group has been established under the governance of our Culture, Ethics and Diversity Board. Some of the workstreams which are being taken forward by the Head of Human Resources include implementing personal resilience and mental health awareness training; menopause

support; introduction of whole health programmes; introducing role specific psychological assessments, tenure, secondments for specialist roles and enhancing flexible working. A Wellbeing Coordinator has also been appointed, who is coordinating our wellbeing activity across the organisation.

We are also actively engaged in the 'Oscar Kilo' national project which captures best practice for emergency services wellbeing and have recently won an award in their 'Protecting the Workforce' category. This is important work for us, as from our benchmarking exercise we know the issues we are experiencing are not isolated to the PSNI, given the heightened levels of vulnerability and mental ill health in society.

Our progress on the wellbeing of the organisation is also regularly tested through our workforce surveys. The next launch of our workforce survey is scheduled for Autumn 2019. The response rate to the 2017 survey saw 2,859 police officers and police staff complete the survey (32.6%).

CONCLUSION

Whilst policing the past understandably continues to dominate the media headlines, we continue to positively respond to the many policing challenges of the present.

Amongst these challenges is our preparedness for EU Exit and with the date drawing ever closer, we still have limited information on which to develop firm plans. Our planning response therefore remains agile and flexible.

As we reported last month, our planning for EU Exit is broad in scope and encompasses everything from the potential impacts on police powers, such as European Arrest Warrants, through to ensuring that PSNI is operationally prepared with the right resources in place to provide police support and response to any emerging issues.

We anticipate being able to provide a more detailed update at next month's Policing Board, when there may be more clarity on likely EU Exit scenarios.