



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of 23 October
2023 to 30 November 2023

Presented at Policing Board
Meeting:

7 December 2023



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Foreword

It is with a sense of pride that I present this month's Accountability Report, the last of 2023, as the new Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

I've been getting around the organisation over the past two months and observing for myself the exceptional job that rank and file officers and staff are doing, these include, for example, the arrest of four armed suspects by Response Officers for an aggravated burglary in Belfast, and the heroic lifesaving efforts of TSG officers when they administered Narcan and performed CPR on an unresponsive male in Belfast City Centre. The lengths that our staff go to, day in, day out, continue to impress me. We are protecting people from harm every day.

As 2023 draws to a close, I reflect upon the achievements of the Police Service this year. There are numerous examples, too many to list here, but to highlight a few, we have completed a baseline exercise to assess demand, capacity and capability and will seek to embed this to support further strategic planning, service performance and resource allocation. Operationally, our staff policed the prestigious and historic events celebrating the Belfast Good Friday Agreement and the visit of President Biden. Reassuringly, we have also seen Northern Ireland described as one of the safest places to live in the United Kingdom.

Uplifting as these achievements are, it is not lost on me that our successes have come in a year when the Police Service has experienced unprecedented challenges. In February, we had the monstrous and calculated attempt to murder our colleague, Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell. The threat level from terrorist attack in Northern Ireland has been increased from substantial to severe, meaning an attack is highly likely.

We have also faced one of the largest crises in the Police Service's history when information on all officers and staff was leaked into the public domain following the publication of a Freedom of Information request. The implications of this, not only for our officers and staff, but equally as important, their families, should not be lost on anyone.

All of this has been set against the backdrop of our stark and precarious financial position. Our pressures are well documented, and it was with interest that I read Lady Chief Justice Siobhan Keegan's 'Opening of Term Address' where she articulated the scale of budgetary pressures across the Justice system, which has seen a 3% growth over the last 12 years, compared to 70% and 45% for health and education respectively.

A confident and prosperous society is dependent on a safe Northern Ireland. I continue to engage and advocate for the Police Service at the highest levels. However, the more I examine our strategic and financial position, and meet with officers and staff at the coal face, the clearer it becomes to me that we are walking into a position where the delivery of our services is increasingly untenable. If we continue as we are we will not be able to meet our requirement of keeping people safe.

Police Officer numbers have now fallen to their lowest level since the formation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Patten Report in 1999 recommended an organisation of an approximate size of 7,500 officers. The New Decade New Approach agreement in 2020 reaffirmed commitments to this figure and the Department of Justice accepted our Strategic Outline Case for 7,500 officers. Plans were put in place to initiate growth, however, due to lack of funding, numbers have fallen sharply and are projected to reach 6,358 by March 2024, and if left unchecked, 5,954, by March 2025. The numbers could potentially be even lower, as many are coming to find that they cannot afford to be police officers.

We are at a tipping point. It is my professional assessment that police officer numbers should not, and cannot, be allowed to fall below the anticipated level of 6,358. Work has commenced to establish what our service delivery will look like with these numbers. It is inevitable that it will look and feel different. National security and tackling

the threat posed by Violent Dissident Republicans will have to be undertaken with fewer resources. Similar to those decisions taken by a number of police forces in Great Britain, we will be unable to assist partner agencies in Health, particularly for those calls relating to mental health crises. This is not our core business and we are neither specialists nor sufficiently trained.

Undoubtedly we will lose officers from Response and Neighbourhood Policing. Prioritisation will require us to place uniform resources in our Contact Management Centres to answer our emergency calls. This is not the way to professionally deliver policing services. It merely shifts demand from where interventions can occur, through neighbourhood policing with partners, to later down the line and results in those issues becoming more serious because they are not addressed at an earlier stage.

We continue to see officers leave the organisation in significant numbers. The reasons for this are varied, but it is my firm intention to stop this decline.

The absence of a pay award and parity with colleagues in England and Wales provides real concern that we will continue to see high levels of leavers and increasing challenges in recruiting. I am determined to progress a pay award of 7% to officers and I'm actively engaging with the Department of Justice. I welcome the Board's support in this endeavour.

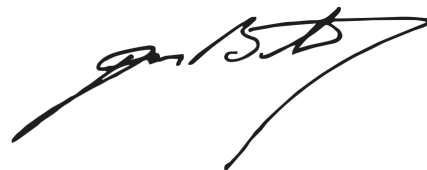
Earlier in the year we conducted our 'Your Service Your Voice' survey. This month we shared the full Cultural Audit report with the organisation. I am committed to acting on its findings and delivering change and will do so in collaboration with all officers and staff. I have already met with Senior Leaders, Staff Associations and Minority Support Networks and will continue with this engagement as we move into 2024. The audit is merely one tool in enabling the organisation to understand our culture. This work will be mainstreamed moving forward.

The challenges we face are real and stark and need to be set out to our partners and communities. However, as my report this month highlights, we are blessed to have dedicated professional people who continue to perform to exemplary standards. It is their work that has helped to secure Northern Ireland's reputation as one of the safest places to live in the United Kingdom. If such high accolades are to continue, the organisation must not carry on haemorrhaging staff. Recruitment needs to be funded from April 2024. There is an uncomfortable direction of travel for the Police Service if we are not supported with the resources to do the job, and those resources properly paid.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has a unique and demanding policing role within the United Kingdom context. We provide resilience to other public and emergency services when they are unable to respond to their core functions. In the coming months I will be setting out what we can do moving

forward with what we have, and equally importantly, what we cannot do.

There will be uncomfortable conversations, but I will not shy away from having them. Everyone knows the importance of safety for Northern Ireland. In order to maintain the excellence that has been achieved, the organisation must be properly funded. This is my strategic priority moving forward.



Jon Boutcher QPM
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Finance and Resource Update

As at the end of October, the projected over spend against budget for the full year stubbornly remains at some £52.5m. This reflects our initial projected deficit, as previously set out in our Resource Plan, together with some emerging pressures, including operational costs in the first half of the year, additional pay pressures and rising depreciation costs. In mid-November, the Department of Finance provided an additional £2.65m for Ring-fenced Resource DEL after the summer exercise. Although this new funding is welcome, the gap is still measured at £50m.

The Service continues to respond to the critical incident of a material data leak in August and this has incurred costs of £2.6m to date. A bid to assist in our response and recovery has been formally submitted to the Treasury, as a claim on the Treasury Reserve, and we are awaiting the outcome. Pressure remains on Overtime costs, which are £3.2m over budget at the end of October. This includes almost £1m spent in direct response to the data breach.

Although a form of In-Year Monitoring exercise took place in November, it is anticipated that this will largely be a technical exercise rather than an opportunity to redistribute funding, on the basis that most Departments are reporting overspends. When reported, the outcome of this exercise will set the final budget for the year.

As advised last month, the Department of Justice commissioned a planning exercise to help identify inescapable pressures facing the Service next year i.e. 2024/25. The estimated funding gap based on a flat budget is both significant and undeliverable.

If nothing else, the exercise helps to demonstrate the need for a fundamental consideration of the resources and prioritisation given to policing here.



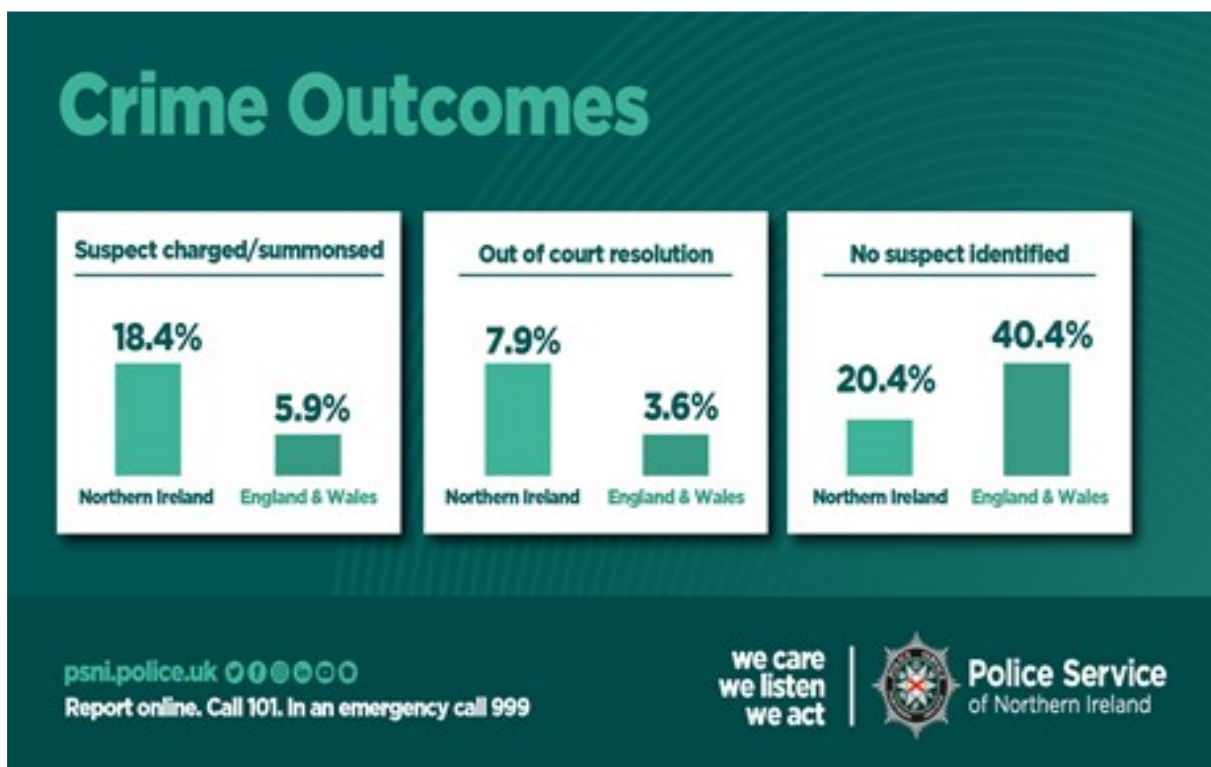
Our Performance

Police Service of Northern Ireland Website - 'Our Performance' page

We have created a new 'Our Performance' page on our external website, the aim of which is to provide more proactive messaging on a range of core crime performance topics, in addition to highlighting some of our best news stories.

This month we have provided information on crime rates and police recorded crime outcomes. A link is provided to the most recent review by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, whose view is that Northern Ireland is one of the safest places to live in the UK, due to the high standard of Police Service investigations:

<https://www.psnl.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/our-performance>



The information in this section is extracted from our Official Statistics published reports. The full reports can all be accessed from the following link.

<https://www.psni.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics>.

These are in-year provisional figures and may be subject to change.

Recorded Crime

In the 12 months from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023:

- There were 108,662 crimes recorded, a decrease of 636 (-0.6%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 57 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population¹ in each 12 month period.
- Higher crime levels were seen in sexual offences, robbery, theft offences, burglary, drug offences, possession of weapons and miscellaneous crimes against society.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person, criminal damage and public order offences.

¹ Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the NISRA website ([opens in a new window](#)).

Anti-Social Behaviour

In the 12 months from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023:

- There were 46,233 anti-social behaviour incidents, a decrease of 2,873 (-5.9 %) on the previous 12 months.
- This is the lowest 12 month figure since the data series began in 2006/07.

Domestic Abuse

In the 12 months from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

- There were 33,229 domestic abuse incidents recorded, an increase of 126 (0.4%) on the previous 12 months.
- The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded fell to 21,182, a decrease of 1,113 (-5.0%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 17 domestic abuse incidents and 11 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population², compared with 17 domestic abuse incidents and 12 domestic abuse crimes recorded during the previous 12 months.
- The largest volume decrease in domestic abuse crimes was seen within violence against the person which fell by 1,024 (-5.8%). The fall was seen principally within the Stalking and Harassment sub-classification which fell by 634 (-12.6%).

² Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the NISRA website ([opens in a new window](#)).



Domestic Abuse Homicide

In the 12 months from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023

There were four homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded, compared with nine homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in the previous 12 months³.

Two of the victims were female and two were male, compared with four female and five male victims during the previous 12 months.

Hate Motivation

In the 12 months from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

- The number of incidents recorded fell across five of the six hate motivations (sexual orientation, sectarian, disability, faith/religion and transgender identity)
- The number of crimes recorded decreased across five of the six motivations (race, sexual orientation, sectarian, disability, and faith/religion) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Incidents with a race motivation and crimes with a transgender identity motivation showed the only increases (16 more race incidents and 9 more transgender identity crimes).
- Incidents and crimes with a sexual orientation motivation showed the largest decrease, with 72 fewer incidents and 89 fewer crimes.

Security Situation

In 12 months from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023:

- There were no security related deaths, compared to two during the previous 12 months.
- There were 7 bombing incidents, compared to 4 during the previous 12 months and 36 shooting incidents, compared to 27.
- There were 29 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, the same number as during the previous 12 months. All 29 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 19 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, nearly three times the number that occurred during the previous 12 months (7). All 19 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 123 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 112 during the previous 12 months.
- 27 persons were subsequently charged, nearly twice the number that were charged during the previous 12 months (14).

³Homicide consists of the offences of murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter.

Motoring Offences

In the 12 months from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

- There were 40,283 detections for motoring offences in Northern Ireland, of which 98% were dealt with by means of a fixed penalty notice or referral for prosecution.
- The remaining 2% (866) resulted in the completion of a speed awareness or safer driver course.
- Total detections decreased by 5% on the 42,557 detections recorded in the previous 12 months, with a notable reduction in mobile phone offences (25%).
- Insurance offences increased by 4% over the year, making them the largest offence group recorded (7,196), which along with speeding (6,011) accounted for one-third of the total detections.

These statistics cover the number of motoring offences detected by police in Northern Ireland from 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023. It does not include any detections by the NI Road Safety Partnership (NI RSP).

Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties

Between 1 January 2023 and 30 September 2023:

There were 3,553 road traffic collisions recorded compared with 3,765 between the same period in 2022 – a decrease of 212 collisions (5.6%).

There were 49 fatalities, 607 people seriously injured and a further 4,942 people slightly injured. While there were 11 additional fatalities between January and September 2023, the number of seriously injured fell by 68 (10.1%) since the previous year.

A number of road user groups showed a decrease in Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) between January to September 2022 and January to September 2023, most notably passengers and pedestrians, which decreased by 28 and 12 respectively.

Mid Ulster district had the highest number of road deaths with 9 fatalities in the district, while Newry, Mourne and Down district recorded the highest number of serious injuries (84).

Single vehicle collisions accounted for 14.2% of all collisions recorded during this period.

The most common principal causation factors for KSI casualties during the reporting period were 'inattention or attention diverted' (91), 'wrong course/position' (62) and 'impairment by drugs or alcohol – driver/rider' (62).



Outcome 1

We Have a Safe Community

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

Operation PANGEA

Operation PANGEA is the global, Interpol coordinated, operational effort to disrupt the illicit online supply of medicines and raise awareness of the significant health risks associated with buying medicines from illegal websites.

The operation ran during October and, thanks to the joint efforts of the Organised Crime Task Force, resulted in the arrest of 12 people and led to the recovery of over 700,000 tablets and unlicensed medicines, with an estimated street value of approximately £785,000. These medicines included, pregabalin, diazepam, zopiclone and alprazolam (Xanax).

The volumes are a worrying sign of the demand for, and misuse of, prescription drugs, but they're also a reflection of our collective work to tackle drug misuse and supply across the country.



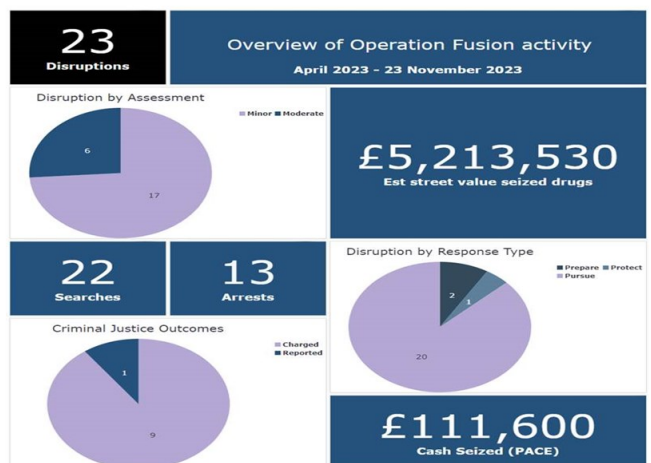
(l-r) C1 Head of Branch, D/C/Supt Andy Hill with Richard Pengelly, Permanent Secretary, Dept of Justice and Peter May, Permanent Secretary, Dept of Health

Operation FUSION

Organised Crime Branch and partner agencies have developed a capability to assess and identify current and emerging threats posed by those criminals seeking to exploit the Common Travel Area, following the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.

The operation focuses on drug importation, organised immigration crime and the smuggling of other illicit goods across the borders, namely, alcohol, tobacco and counterfeit goods.

Reportable outcomes for 01 April – 20 November 2023 include:



The illegal drugs seized as a result of this operation, including cocaine and cannabis, have an estimated street value of over £5m.

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

Investigation:

On 14 November 2023, Detectives investigating suspected criminality linked to the East Belfast UVF, conducted searches at six properties in East Belfast and Newtownards. A significant quantity of suspected cocaine with an estimated street value of £4,850, herbal cannabis with a street value of approximately £15,000, and a quantity of cash, were recovered.

One man was charged with a number of offences, including possession of a Class A controlled drug and possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply.

Sentencing:

- A 29 year old man was convicted of the offences of being concerned in the supply of Class A controlled drug and possession of a Class C controlled drug and sentenced to two years, half to be served in custody and the remaining 12 months on licence. This was a result of an ongoing investigation into the activities of West Belfast UDA.
- A 41 year old man was convicted for possessing criminal property and being concerned in the supply of a Class A controlled drug and sentenced to three years, half to be served in custody and the other on licence. This followed the investigation into drugs criminality in the Carrickfergus area.
- Two men aged 52 and 64, were convicted of the offences of possession of a Class B controlled drug and being concerned in the supply of a Class B controlled drug. They

were sentenced to a total of 18 months in custody with a further 18 months on licence.

- One man aged 23, was convicted for offering to supply a Class B controlled drug and being concerned in an offer to supply a Class B controlled drug. He was sentenced to six months in prison, which was suspended for 18 months.

This stems from the investigation into drugs criminality linked to the South East Antrim UDA in December 2019, and follows the recovery of 100 cannabis plants and cultivation system during the search of a premises in the Carrickfergus area.



Cannabis cultivating operation.

Illegal Money Lending

On 14 November 2023 the Paramilitary Crime Task Force held a multi-agency conference to explore the issue of illegal money lending. This is an under-reported crime but one that causes significant harm in communities.

This is not something that the Police Service can tackle alone. It requires a range of organisations to work together, sharing information and best practice. The conference provided attendees the opportunity to share insight and knowledge



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and promote a greater understanding of the problem and its impacts.

Serious Crime Branch



(l-r) D/C/Inspector Avine Kelly, PCTF; Emma Wells from 'Stop Loan Sharks'; D/Superintendent Emma Neill, C1 Organised Crime Branch, Carolyn Mada from Communities in Transition and Pete Wray of Alternatives NI

Investigation:

- A number of suspected firearms, including one assault rifle, two shotguns, three revolvers, seven handguns and a significant amount of ammunition were recovered during a search operation of agricultural land in Monog Road area of Crossmaglen on 30 & 31 October 2023.
- A suspected firearm was recovered from commercial premises following a search in Derry/Londonderry on 3 November 2023.

Conviction:

- A 29 year old man pleaded guilty to manslaughter of Brian Coulter in October 2021. He will be sentenced on 4 December 2023.
- A 44 year old man pleaded guilty to manslaughter of Andrew Thompson and arson with intent to endanger life in May 2021. He will be sentenced at a later date.

Sentencing:

- A 38 year old man was sentenced to a minimum of 11½ years imprisonment for the murder of Nigel Orr-McAuley in July 2021.
- Two males aged 40 and 42 years were sentenced to seven years and nine years respectively (half to be served on licence) in relation to a number of armed robberies at commercial premises (Ormeau/Rosetta area, Belfast) during October/November 2021.
- A 50 year old woman was found guilty of Fraud by Abuse of Position and Theft and received a six month custodial sentence. The fraud had been committed over a number of years and approximately £100,000 was stolen from a local charity's bank account. A confiscation order was granted to the value of £119,779.88 which has gone towards reimbursing the charity.

Public Protection Branch

Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) (SOTV) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

This legislation has already saw the introduction of a number of new offences and powers, most notably those of non-fatal strangulation and asphyxiation. During November, further offences came into effect in respect of voyeurism (up skirting and down blousing), cyber flashing, threats to disclose private images and new grooming offences. These are welcome as they cover specific but very niche gaps in current legislation.



We will be raising awareness of this new legislation as part of our activity connected with the international campaign, 16 days of action to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which began on Saturday 25 November and marked White Ribbon Day.



Chief Constable Jon Boucher signs the White Ribbon pledge, reaffirming our collective commitment to never commit, condone or stay silent about VAWG.

Rape Myths Training

Nexus has been facilitating 'Rape Myths Training' to officers, with sessions continuing through to December 2023. Whilst open to everyone, there is a focus on detectives in Rape Crime Units, wider Public Protection Teams, Professional Standards Department and First Responders. The training is aimed at increasing the knowledge and awareness of existing societal myths and beliefs around rape and sexual assault, and understanding the impact on victims and potential responses of victims.

Road Safety – The Fatal Five

As we continue to tackle the high number of deaths on our roads, a number of important interventions have been progressed during the last month.



Following analysis of road-related fatalities over a number of years, we have identified the 'Fatal Five' reasons why people are dying on our roads. A hard-hitting education programme aimed at outlining the consequences of poor decision making associated with each of these 'Fatal Five' will be introduced during December.

In recognition of the number of road deaths across the entire island of Ireland, we have also been work closely with colleagues in An Garda Síochána. On Monday 20 November we met to agree further collaborative opportunities for road safety and a number of joint operations are now being planned for the coming months.

International Slow Down Day

The first of these joint operations took place on Thursday 16 November when officers deployed on both sides of the border in an International “Slow Down” event. The aim was to carry out anti-speed detection operations in certain high harm locations, along with safety education vehicle check points to remind motorists of the need to slow down.

Our Road Safety Camera vans made 284 detections during the operation, and officers distributed one thousand leaflets to motorists about the consequences of speed.



Chief Superintendent Sam Donaldson

Operation Subreference

A day of action took place on Thursday 23 November focussing on speed detection and prosecutions. This joint operation took place across all Policing Districts with support from An Garda Síochána in border areas.

Op Subreference Return	
Activity	Totals
Speeding Operations	226
Fixed Penalties Issued (Speeding)	841
Prosecution Reports	23
Arrests	7
Vehicle Check Points	217

Careless Driving Fixed Penalty Notices

As mentioned earlier, careless driving has been identified as one of the ‘Fatal Five’. In May 2023 we launched our Careless Driving Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) with the overarching objective of reducing bureaucracy and sending a strong message to motorists that careless driving causes death and injury on our roads. Since the launch officers have already distributed 415 FPNs.

Operation SEASON’S GREETINGS

Operation SEASON’S GREETINGS will have a strong focus on “safe roads” again this year and Operation LIMIT, our anti drink driving operation, will also be launched before Christmas.

Strategic Road Safety Board

Strategically, there is a requirement to ensure a collaborative approach to road safety, especially with reduced Public Sector budgets and resources.

A Strategic Road Safety Board for Northern Ireland has recently been established. Chaired by the Department for Infrastructure this brings government departments, emergency services, other partners and, in due course, voluntary agencies together. The Board will agree a strategy, identify priorities, share resources and develop external communications. The first meeting will take place on 17 January 2024.

Outcome 2

We Have Confidence in Policing

Op SANUKITE

New Police Identification Number

One of the main aims of Operation Sanukite was to devalue the leaked data set and make it as worthless as possible to those who would seek to use it to cause harm to any of our officers and staff.

Compromised data included police officer service numbers and police staff numbers. In order to devalue this loss, all officers and staff will be assigned a new public facing Police Identification Number (PIN). The PIN will be introduced on Tuesday 5 December 2023 and will be used on all correspondence, statements and official paperwork. For police officers, it will replace their current shoulder numbers.

Current police officer service and staff numbers will be for internal use only going forward.

Independent Review

The Independent Review Team (IRT) have shared a draft copy of their review report and it is currently undergoing a fact checking exercise. Once completed, the IRT will finalise their report and share with ourselves and the Board. Receipt is anticipated in early December and officers and staff will have an opportunity to view prior to its public release.

We will consider the findings of the report carefully and fully engage with staff associations.

Operation Saphenal

The transition from Operation Sanukite to Operation Saphenal which oversees the completion of our recovery work, will be contingent on additional funding. Our official request for a financial support is currently being considered by HM Treasury.

Operation TARLAC

Last month we reported on our policing response to the tensions associated with the conflict in the Middle East.

This month we can update that our Strategic Community Engagement Team has undertaken a range of strategic level engagement, aimed at improving confidence in policing and monitoring any tensions, including with eight groups across a range of communities linked to Op TARLAC. Feedback is being used to inform our monthly Strategic Community Impact Assessment and is designed to ensure that Police Commanders have a broader understanding of community sentiment when planning operations and taking key decisions.

To date, we have seen some 211 reports in relation to the conflict, with 88 protests taking

place. These have passed off without incident and there have been no arrests. Fourteen reports so far relate to Anti-Semitic hate crimes or incidents and four to Islamophobic hate crimes or incidents. There have been three related arrests.

During November, 27 of our officers travelled to London to support the Metropolitan Police Service. Our officers acted in support of colleagues in British Transport Police and were part of a pro-active policing operation to prevent public order issues emerging around the city. This was linked to ongoing protests connected to conflict.

Operation AGNOSIA

There has been a recent increase in reports of hate incidents and crimes connected with the issue of migrant housing.

We have established a Gold Group to manage our response, which includes monitoring the increased tension and tasking and analysing intelligence and other reports. To date there is no intelligence to suggest this is a coordinated campaign of activity planned by paramilitary groups

Local engagement continues with elected representatives and we are represented on the Department of Justice led 'Community Safety Response Group'.

Online Reporting

As part of the continued development of our digital citizen services, and online reporting capability, November saw the launch of the ability to report road traffic collisions online. This service enables the public to step through the required elements of reporting road traffic collisions, and supplements the ability to report crime online introduced back in August.

Benefits for the user include not having to wait to get through to an operator or the requirement to stay on the call to provide all of the necessary details. They can also obtain a reference number through this self-generated form when reporting lower level collisions, for example, when reporting for insurance purposes.

Further extensions to our online reporting capability, including for domestic related incidents and anti-social behaviour, are being prepared and the aim is to have this completed by March 2024.

Outcome 3

We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

Board visit to Seapark



(l-r) Trevor Clarke NIPB, ACO Aldrina Magwood; Joanne Bunting NIPB; Mukesh Sharma NIPB; Gerry Kelly NIPB

ACO Magwood and Police Service colleagues met with members of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Resource Committee on Tuesday 31 October 2023 at Seapark Police Station.

During the visit, members were able to view for themselves the scale of building works currently being undertaken on site, the extent of recent roof damage and see around the transport and legacy stores. They also took the opportunity to visit co-existing services on site, for example, Forensics Services, Scientific Services, Occupation Health and Wellbeing and our Procurement and Logistic Stores.

Student Safety

Each year thousands of students begin their academic journey at Queen's University Belfast. This can be a daunting time for many and the Police Services' wish for them

is to have every success, stay safe and be good neighbours.

Following the success of Freshers' Week, we continued with our support for students by hosting a 'drop in' session at One Elmwood Student Centre on Thursday 16 November.

Officers and staff from Crime Prevention, Economic Crime Unit (ECU) and Lisburn Road Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) gathered with partner agencies to meet with students, many of whom are international, to provide crime prevention advice. Topics covered included, Crimestoppers, fraud, money mule avoidance, sextortion and staying safe. We used the session to reassure students that we are approachable, friendly and here to support them if they ever need our services, and explained the methods on how we can be contacted.

Hundreds of students were greeted during the two hour drop in session.

Journalist Safety

The Police Service takes the safety of journalists very seriously and has led the way across the United Kingdom in terms of improving our service. Journalists have a human right to perform their role and quite simply they should not tolerate some of the threats and crimes to which they are subjected.

Significant engagement and collaboration has been progressed over the last 18 months with representatives from the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and all local news editors. A joint strategy has been developed and a Journalist Safety Plan agreed and implemented. The overarching objective is to provide journalists with the confidence to report incidents, threats and crimes to police.

As a direct result of the Journalist Safety Plan, we have appointed two Journalist Safety Officers (JSO), established a Journalist Safety Group (JSG), which includes representatives from across the organisation and provides advice and support to the JSO's, implemented a new approach at Contact Management to identify and support any journalist who is the victim of a crime as a result of their role as a journalist, and updated our website to provide advice and guidance to journalists (<https://www.psni.police.uk/personal-safety-journalists>).

In addition, a new policy has been implemented and any journalist who is the victim of a threat or crime as a result of their role will now have their case investigated by a detective. Every report, whether it be an incident, threat or crime, is followed up by the JSO who makes personal contact with the journalist to provide advice and support.

Two on-line seminars on 'safety and wellbeing' have been delivered to journalists and two lectures have been delivered to media students at Ulster University. Bespoke crime prevention advice has also

been provided on a number of occasions. furthermore, new instructions have been provided to our officers and staff on how to recognise NUJ members via their passes.

A number of offenders have already been identified and their cases forwarded to the Public Prosecution Service.

In terms of challenges, it is clear that incidents are increasingly "played out" on the internet, especially those involving harassment and abuse. Whilst the UK Government's Online Safety Act 2023 will certainly have a positive impact, "policing" the internet from both a journalistic and non-journalistic perspective will remain difficult.

We have been recognised nationally for our recent interventions, and have provided input to a national "master class" and delivered a briefing to the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists.

Whilst great progress has been made and confidence amongst NUJ, Editors and journalists appears high, we will continue to ensure that our professional approach to journalist safety is maintained.

Key Campaigns and Events

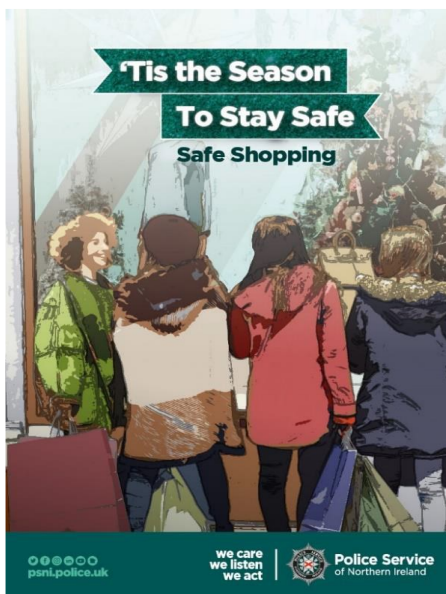
Operation SEASON'S GREETINGS

This year's Operation Season's Greetings launched on Monday 27 November 2023 and runs until midnight on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

The objectives of this campaign are to:

- Increase police visibility during the Christmas period
- Empower the public to take preventative steps to enhance their personal safety and protect their property
- Empower businesses to take preventative steps to protect their staff and property
- Reduce the number of road traffic collisions
- Increase awareness of police activity to protect the vulnerable (victims of domestic abuse and victims of sexual assault) and wider community
- Increase reports of domestic abuse and sexual assault
- Encourage people to report crime and share information about criminal activity

This year's themes are:



Safe Shopping:

Activity includes engagement with retail and town/city centre management, the implementation of crime prevention initiatives and surgeries around high footfall locations. With a specific focus on shoplifting, we will have a visible presence in and around key locations to prevent crime, provide reassurance and ensure all reported incidents are progressed in a timely and proactive manner.

Safe Roads:



Our primary focus this year is preventing and detecting drink/drug driving. This will include high visibility patrols at key locations and full and effective use of Preliminary Breath Testing and Authorised Check Point Breath Testing under the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995. In addition to drink driving, our officers will pay attention to other road traffic collision causation factors including speeding, careless and dangerous driving and maximise detections and appropriate removal of uninsured vehicles from our roads.

Safe Socialising:



Our officers will engage with Night Time Economy providers with the aim of developing a collaborative approach to creating a safer environment for people to socialise. We will provide a visible presence around night-economy areas and related premises to prevent crime, reassure the public and deter anti-social behaviour.

Work in this theme will cover areas outlined in our Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan, and include specific covert and overt operations aimed at detecting predatory behaviour. We will continue to be proactive in our response to reported violence, harassment and stalking incidents – with the aim of safeguarding victims and bringing offenders to justice.

No File Decision pilot

The Police Services' Justice Department recently co-hosted an external engagement event with the Public Prosecution Service, briefing key stakeholders on the 'No File Decision' Pilot.

This pilot, which commenced on 29 November, seeks to reduce delay in the broader system by returning decision making to police in specified cases where the evidential test is not met. Key partners from Women's Aid, The Victims Commissioner's Office, Victim Support NI, Nexus, Mindwise and others, attended the event to hear details of the pilot, the drivers for change, and also had the opportunity to ask questions and provide useful feedback. Stakeholders will be part of the evaluation of the pilot after 12 months to measure effectiveness and ensure the victim's voice is heard.



L-R (Peter Luney, Assistant Director PPS; Lisa Rocks, DoJ; Michael Agnew, Deputy Director PPS; ACC Ryan Henderson; Marianne O'Kane, Senior Assistant Director PPS; Chief Superintendent Gary McDonald; Chief Inspector Bob Blemmings)

Restorative Justice Forum Northern Ireland

On 20 November 2023, an open meeting hosted by the Restorative Justice Forum Northern Ireland at Ulster University marked the commencement of Restorative Justice Week in Northern Ireland. This event, which was open to the public, officially launched a week dedicated to restorative practices across the globe.



ACC Ryan Henderson speaking at the Restorative Justice Forum Northern Ireland event

At the event BBC Newsline's Catherine Morrison moderated a panel featuring Assistant Chief Constable Ryan Henderson, alongside Linsey Farrell, Deputy Secretary for Education Policy and Children's Services; Steven McCourt, Director of Rehabilitation for the Northern Ireland Prison Service; and Chris Quinn, NI Commissioner for Children & Young People.

Each speaker offered insights into the potential expansion of restorative justice, responding to the central query: "If you had the resources and political support, what would your offices contribute to restorative justice across all areas of society?"

Their contributions sparked a lively question and answer session with the audience, leading to rich discussions that underscored the collaborative spirit of restorative justice.

Our People, Your Service

Cultural Audit

As part of our People Strategy 2025 we made a commitment to deliver a programme of organisational culture audits to provide our Service with evidence-based insights into workplace culture, to help understand the experience of what it is like to work in the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The 'Your Service Your Voice' survey closed on Wednesday 12 April 2023 with a total of 4,163 responses, 45.64% of the entire organisation. The wider audit, run by our external partner Inspiring Change, included focus groups, interviews and workshops with colleagues of all ranks, grades, areas and departments.

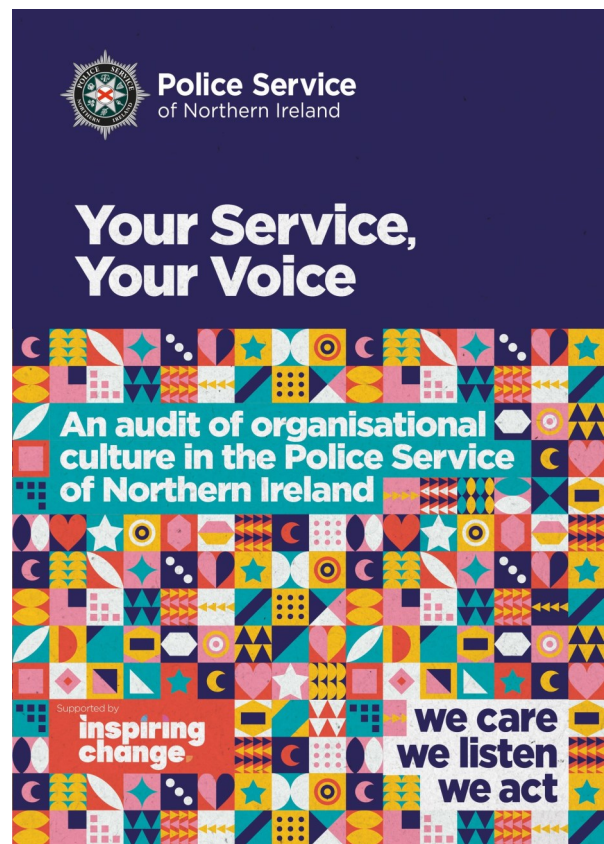
On 21 November 2023 the full Cultural Audit report, along with a high level results summary, was made available to officers and staff. Members of the Service Executive Team provided a briefing on the high level results and next steps to the Policing Board's Resources Committee on Thursday 23 November 2023.

Communication of the results will continue, with the Chief Constable and Service Executive Team members meeting with Senior Leaders, Staff Associations and Minority Support Networks to provide them with the opportunity to consider the findings and discuss next steps.

Commitment remains to deliver a programme of change based on the findings of the Audit.

Moving into 2024, the intention is to identify and prioritise recommendations for change, define our cultural ambition and determine what action we take and how.

This will be a collaborative process and engagement will continue with our workforce, Staff Associations, Minority Support Networks and external partners as we move forward.



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