



OFFICIAL - PUBLIC

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT TO NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD 4 JUNE 2020

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of key annual performance information to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The COVID pandemic will have had only a slight impact upon the figures for 2019/20, as lockdown restrictions took effect in mid-March.

The lockdown measures introduced in response to COVID 19 led to an overall reduction in recorded crime of 27% between 23 March 2020 and 17 May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

1. PERFORMANCE

1.1 Trends in police recorded crime since 1998/99 (as per official statistics published on the PSNI Website 15 May 2020)

Police recorded crime moved in a generally downwards direction between 2002/03 and 2016/17, falling by nearly 30 %. Increases have been seen over the last three years and the level recorded in 2019/20 is 23 % lower than the peak in 2002/03. When considering the overall reduction in crime, falls in property crimes such as burglary, robbery, criminal damage and vehicle offences have contributed to this. Other crimes against society have moved in an upwards direction, with drug offences contributing to the majority of this rise, which is a reflection of police enforcement activity. Changes in 2018 to crime

recording practices regarding harassment offences also contributed to a recent rise in recorded crime.

The following crime classifications showed their highest levels in the 12 months to March 2020 (financial year 2019/20) since the start of the data series in 1998/99.

- **Violence against the person:** At 41,329 this is 4,904 (13.5 %) higher than the previous 12 months (2018/19) and, following a generally upwards trend throughout the data series, is more than twice the level recorded in 1998/99.
- **Violence without injury:** A change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules means that violence without injury is comparable from 2003/04 onwards. Since that year, violence without injury has increased by 88.7 % to reach 17,652 offences recorded.
- **Harassment:** The Harassment time series has been impacted by the introduction of malicious communications recording which started on 1 April 2017 and also a change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules in April 2018 requiring harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes have seen levels increase, particularly over the last 12 months where there was an increase of 4,788 (90.8 %) to 10,062 crimes recorded. The Harassment classification is the main contributor to the increase in overall police recorded crime in 2019/20.
- **Sexual offences:** Sexual offences increased by 22 to reach 3,588, three times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2000/01. Rape offences have shown a fall in the last 12 months to 1,013 offences, the first decline in the level since 2012/13. However, the number of rape offences recorded in 2019/20 is more than four times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2000/01 (232 offences).
- **Drug offences:** The number of drug offences recorded increased by 793, to reach 7,843, more than seven times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2001/02. This is undoubtedly indicative of the growing presence of drugs in society, but also of increased police enforcement activity.
- **Possession of weapons offences:** The number of possession of weapons offences increased by 42 to 1,103, three times higher than the level recorded in 1998/99.

- **Miscellaneous crimes against society:** Offences within this classification rose by 143 to 2,964, nearly twice the level recorded in 1998/99.

The following classifications recorded their lowest levels in the 12 months to March 2020 (financial year 2019/20) since the start of the data series in 1998/99.

- **Violence with injury:** As with violence without injury, a change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules means that this classification is comparable from 2003/04 onwards. The latest figure of 13,431 shows a fall of 25.6 % when compared with the highest level of 18,042 which was recorded in 2006/07.
- **Burglary:** Levels of burglary were at their highest in 2002/03 with 18,531 offences recorded. There has since been an overall downwards trend and the latest figure of 6,078 is a third of the level seen in 2002/03.
- **Vehicle offences:** As with burglary, vehicle offences were at their highest in 2002/03 with 20,850 recorded. This peak was also followed by a mainly downwards trend and the latest figure of 3,272 is one sixth of the level recorded in 2002/03.

Other main classifications have shown the following trends:

- **Robbery:** The number of robberies recorded in 2019/20 is the second lowest level in the data series and around one fifth of the level recorded in 2002/03.
- **Criminal damage:** Levels of criminal damage were at their highest in 2001/02 with 39,748 offences recorded. Following a sustained downwards trend since 2006/07 the latest figure of 18,701, which has risen almost 6 % from 2018/19, remains less than half of the peak experienced in 2001/02.

1.2 Overall recorded Crime 2019/20 (as per official statistics published on the PSNI Website 15 May 2020)

In 12 months from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- There were 106,585 crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 5,731 (5.7

%) compared with the previous 12 months (2018/19) and continuing the increase seen over the last few years. This trend is consistent with the rest of the United Kingdom.

- There were 56 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population, compared with 54 per 1,000 population in the previous 12 months.
- Increases were seen across violence against the person, sexual offences, criminal damage and other crimes against society :
 - Violence against the person increased by 13.5 % (4,904 offences). Within this overall classification violence with injury fell by 4.8 % while violence without injury rose by 4.6 %. An increase of 90.8 % (4,788 offences) in the harassment classification accounted for the majority of the overall increase in violence against the person offences. This should be seen in light of changes in recording practice within the harassment classification.
 - Sexual offences increased by 0.6 % (22 offences). Within this classification rape offences fell by 7.4 % (81 offences) and other sexual offences increased by 4.2 %.
 - Shoplifting increased by 1.9 % (121 offences).
 - Criminal damage increased by 5.9 % (1,043 offences).
 - Drug offences showed an increase of 11.2 % (793 offences), the majority of which relates to an increase in drug possession offences.
- Crime levels fell within most theft classifications, and also robbery:
 - The all other theft offences classification showed a fall of 9.3 % (1,210 offences) and vehicle offences fell by 10.6 % (389 offences).
 - Burglary fell by 0.8 % (48 offences).
 - Robbery offences fell by 8 (1.3 %).
 - The lockdown measures introduced in response to COVID 19 led to an overall reduction in recorded crime of 27% between 23 March 2020 and 17 May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

1.3 Crime Outcome Rates 2019/20 (these figures are operational figures taken from the PSNI Saturn Management Information System and should not be treated as official statistics)

- The overall outcome rate for all recorded crime has decreased marginally from 28.7% in the financial year 2019/19 to 28.5% at the end of the financial year 2019/20.

1.4 Policing Plan Strategic Outcome 2.1: Harm caused by crime and ASB is reduced with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable, including repeat victims

Domestic Abuse (as per official statistics published on the PSNI Website 15 May 2020)

In the 12 months from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- There were 31,817 domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, an increase of 135 (0.4%) on the previous 12 months and the highest financial year figure recorded since the start of the data series in 2004/05.
- The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police reached 18,640, an increase of 2,476 (15.3%) on the previous 12 months and the highest financial year figure recorded since 2004/05.
- There were 17 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population, compared with 17 domestic abuse incidents and 9 domestic abuse crimes during the previous 12 months.
- Domestic abuse crimes represented 17.5% of all police recorded crime, increasing from 16.0% during the previous 12 months.
- Increases were seen across all the main crime types except for sexual offences and theft (including burglary).
- There were five murders with a domestic abuse motivation, compared with four during 2018/19.
- The largest increase in domestic abuse crimes was seen in offences of harassment which rose by 1,929 (115%). Much of this increase is related to changes in recording practices, giving a more accurate representation of the extent of this type of offending.
- Domestic abuse crimes involving violence with injury and criminal damage both

increased by 303 offences (5.3% and 17.5% respectively).

Outcome rates for crimes with a domestic motivation (*these figures are operational figures taken from the PSNI Saturn Management Information System and should not be treated as official statistics*):

- The overall outcome rate for crimes with a domestic motivation reduced slightly from 26.8% in 2018/19 to 26.1% at the end of 2019/20.
- The overall outcome rate for domestic abuse crimes with injury has increased from 29.7% in 2018/19 to 32.6% 2019/20. This has been a particular priority of the Chief Constable this year.

Hate Crime (as per official statistics published on the PSNI Website 15 May 2020)

In the 12 months from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- The number of incidents recorded fell across four of the six hate motivations (racist, homophobic, disability, and faith/religion) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- The number of crimes recorded decreased across three motivations (racist, homophobic, and faith/religion) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Incidents and crimes with a racist motivation showed the largest fall (188 incidents and 73 crimes).
- Incidents and crimes with a transphobic motivation showed the largest increase (31 incidents and 22 crimes).

Motivation	Total number of incidents recorded			Total number of crimes recorded		
	Apr'18	Apr'19	Change	Apr'18	Apr'19	change
	to Mar'19	to Mar'20		to Mar'19	to Mar'20	
Racist	1,124	936	-188	699	626	-73
Homophobic	281	272	-9	201	195	-6
Sectarian	865	888	23	622	640	18
Disability	100	99	-1	53	72	19
Faith/Religion	56	41	-15	23	15	-8
Transphobic	33	64	31	12	34	22

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) (as per official statistics published on the PSNI Website 15 May 2020)

In the 12 months from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- There were 55,031 anti-social behaviour incidents in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 1,472 (2.6%) on the previous 12 months.
- While the monthly trend generally followed the same direction as that seen during the previous 12 months, levels have been lower since April 2019 when compared with the same months in the previous financial year.

1.5 Policing Plan Strategic Outcome 2.2: People are safe on the roads

- Unfortunately, the current COVID-19 situation has reduced the resource available for the processing of road traffic collision (RTC) data within the Service. As a result, we have no option but to delay the forthcoming publication - 'Police recorded injury road traffic collisions and casualties Northern Ireland, 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020' - which was due to be released on Friday 29 May 2020. The subsequent monthly updates have also been suspended for the foreseeable future.

- In the calendar year to 27 May 2020 there have been 23 fatalities on the roads, compared to 22 in 2019 and 16 in 2018. Children (Under 16) and Young People (16 – 24) account for 9 of these fatalities.

1.6 Drugs (*these figures are operational figures taken from PSNI Management Information System and should not be treated as official statistics*)

- Due to the impact of COVID-19 on working arrangements and data processing, the official drugs statistics report will not be published until Thursday 25 June 2020 at 9.30am.
- There is a 14.0% (+915 crimes) increase in drugs offences this financial year to date. The majority of the increase is in relation to possession offences (+866 crimes, 15.2%). There has been a steady increase in the number of possession offences over the past five years.

1.7 Security Statistics (as per bulletin published on the PSNI website 15 May 2020)

During 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- There was one security related death, compared to two in each of the previous two years. There was an increase in the numbers of bombings and shootings compared to the previous year, however current levels are markedly lower than 10 years ago. The figures show an increase in the number of paramilitary style assaults and a reduction in paramilitary style shootings in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19.
- There were 21 bombing incidents compared to 15 in the previous year. This increase follows three consecutive years in which there were decreases in the number of bombing incidents.
- There were 40 shooting incidents, a small increase on the 38 shootings incidents in the previous year.
- There were 13 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 19 in the previous year. This was the lowest number of such shootings since 2007/08, and is the third year in a row that the number of such attacks has fallen. Of the 13, 11 were

carried out by republicans. All 13 casualties were aged 18 years or older.

- There were 67 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 59 in the previous year. This is the highest number of such attacks since 2009/10 and a reversal of the small decline that was witnessed during 2017/18 and 2018/19. Loyalists were responsible for three out of every four assaults and of the 67 casualties, three were under 18 years old.
- There were 123 persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 146 during the previous year. The number of persons subsequently charged was 15 compared to 16 in the previous year.

1.8. Stop and Search Powers (as published on the PSNI website 19 February 2020)

During the 12 months between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020:

- The number of persons stopped and searched/questioned fell for the fourth consecutive year. During this period 25,450 persons were stopped, 9% fewer than the previous year.
- There was a decrease in the use of all legislative powers.
- 9 of the 11 police Districts saw stop and search powers used less than the previous year.
- 7% of stops resulted in an arrest. An additional 13% resulted in another form of outcome, e.g. Community Resolution Notice.
- 65% of stops were conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act (arrest rate 6%) and 13% of stops were conducted under PACE (arrest rate 20%).
- 19% of stops were conducted under the Justice and Security Act Section 24 and 4% under the Justice and Security Act Section 21 (with arrest rates of 1% for each power).
- 13% (3,211) of those stopped were aged 17 and under. Of these, more than two out of every three (70%) were stopped and searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- 88% of those stopped were male, while 42% were aged 18 to 25.

1.9 Action being taken

- A new crime prevention and problem solving strategy is nearing completion and will be used to refocus the service upon crime reduction.
- Development of a new corporate performance framework is ongoing. Greater scrutiny will be brought to performance accountability over the forthcoming year.
- Developing more timely criminal justice processes, with a greater focus upon wanted persons, named offenders and forensic conversions.
- Optimising our use of technology to help with crime fighting. This will include making more effective use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology.

Ends