



OFFICIAL - PUBLIC

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT TO NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

26 JUNE 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

I present this short report to Members in my last week as Chief Constable. It has been a huge honour to lead the officers and staff of our great organisation and I wish Simon Byrne every success when he commences his tenure on Monday.

As a full report was submitted only a few weeks ago at the previous meeting, I only intend to provide a summary of the end of year performance report and the recently published PEEL Inspection Report from HMICFRS.

2. Performance Report

At the end of the year 2018/19 100,995 crimes were recorded in Northern Ireland, equating to an increase of 2.9% or 2,875 crimes, compared to 2017/18. At the beginning of the year we set out to increase confidence in and increase the level of reporting in domestic abuse cases, sexual offences, hate motivated crimes and other crimes relating to vulnerability. Likewise we focussed upon tackling drug supply in our local communities. By doing so, we are consequently recording more crimes of this nature, which can be viewed as evidence of progress by the service, and enhanced confidence of the victims of such crimes to report them to us. Increases in these specific

crime types were:

- Hate Crime – up 11%
- Sexual Offences – up 3.3%
- Domestic Abuse – up 11.4%
- Drug Offences – up 10.3%

When considering crime trends over the past five years, the number of crimes recorded in 2018/19 remains below the average for the five previous years. For example in 2015/16 the number of recorded crimes was 104,925, this is 3,930 more than last year.

While the overall level of crime is forecast to continue to decline, more harmful crime types are increasing, many of which require complex investigations involving specialist skills. This demonstrates the changing demands facing the service. PSNI will continue to work to increase reporting in relation to these crime types, specifically sexual offences, domestic abuse, hate crime and cyber enabled crime.

I am proud that independent surveys continue to show confidence in policing remains high and complaints against the police remain at low levels. In a demonstration of the level of effective accountability that now exists in policing, we reported to the Board just last week on our Use of Force statistics for the last year. The fact that a fully armed Police Service has not discharged a single firearm in 12 months is notable and I think an indication of the careful human rights training that supports the split second decision making that officers on the front line are expected to make every day.

This increase in recorded crime can also be explained, in part, by changes in Home Office Counting Rules for Harassment and a change in policy for Making off without Paymentⁱ (MOWP) offences. If these offences were excluded, then we would have recorded a 0.4% (400 crimes) decrease.

The levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are at their lowest since the start of the time series in 2006/07. In the last financial year there were 56,503 incidents of ASB which is a

OFFICIAL - PUBLIC

7.7% decrease on the previous 12 months. In 2006/07 100,366 incidents of ASB were recorded compared to the 56,503 in 2018/19, a reduction of 43,863 incidents which equates to a 44% decrease. Nine out of the eleven Districts recorded a decrease in 2018/19 compared to the previous 12 months.

Burglary has fallen by 10.2% in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18. This is the lowest level recorded since the time series began in 1998/99. When Making off without Payment offences are excluded, Theft has decreased, again this is consistent with the longer term trends. Criminal damage is also at the lowest level recorded with a further reduction of 618 crimes (-3%) this financial year. These figures demonstrate that traditional, visible crime is decreasing. Previously these offences accounted for the majority of crime reported.

Whilst overall crime, across Northern Ireland, has increased by just under 3%, given the operational challenges, increasing complexity of crime, financial pressures and a £150m budget reduction over the past five years, this is still an encouraging outcome.

In the national context, the crime rate of 54 crimes per 1,000 of the population in Northern Ireland is lower than all our Most Similar Forces (MSFs) (Devon & Cornwall, Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Merseyside, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, West Midlands and West Yorkshire). Furthermore for the period January to December 2018 each of the police services (except GMP) recorded increases greater than PSNI. Northern Ireland continues to be one of the safest places to live in the UK.

3. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report

HMIC assessed PSNI's efficiency and effectiveness as good. They observed that there has been an improvement since their last inspection in 2017; that we have responded well to budgetary constraints; and have been able to make savings whilst continuing to improve our ability to keep people safe. The table below illustrates how well we have responded following their initial inspection in 2016.

OFFICIAL - PUBLIC

	2016	2017	2018
Effectiveness	Req Imp	Good	Good
Preventing crime & ASB	-	Good	-
Investigating crime	-	Good	-
Vulnerability	Req Imp	-	Good
Serious organised crime	-	Good	-
Strategic capability	-	-	-
Efficiency	Good	Good	Good
Understanding demand	Good	Good	Good
Use of resources	Req Imp	Good	Good
Planning for the future	Good	Good	Good
Legitimacy	-	-	-
Treat public fairly	-	-	-
Ethical workforce	-	-	-
Treat workforce fairly	-	-	-

Their report also states that we have demonstrated a good understanding of demand and are deploying our resources appropriately to meet priorities. They observed that we continue to maintain clear and effective governance, through appropriate structures.

Also encouraging was their assessment that PSNI is generally good at investigating crime and reducing re-offending, and noted that there had been a positive response to most of the areas for improvement identified during their 2017 inspection. They also noted that we are good at tackling serious and organised crime and responding to the demands of terrorism.

HMIC stated that we have improved our understanding of threat, harm and risk, applying the principles of THRIVE to assess vulnerability and deploy the most appropriate resources.

The Inspectors also stated that we have maturing partnership arrangements with social services, child safeguarding bodies, probation service and others. The inspection found evidence of good practice, particularly related to the development of multi-agency support hubs. This is a reassuring endorsement of our commitment to working collaboratively to keep people safe.

OFFICIAL - PUBLIC

Finally, this inspection has identified several areas for improvement related to ensuring sufficient future capacity and capability to meet investigative demand; and helping staff in their response to incidents of vulnerability, such as domestic violence. These will continue to be addressed in the coming year.
