



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of 23 September
2023 to 25 October 2023

Presented at Policing Board
Meeting:

2 November 2023



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Unless otherwise stated the statistics in this report are unvalidated management information sourced from administrative systems and are subject to change.

Foreword



Throughout my career, I have held a deep admiration for the officers and staff who work tirelessly to make Northern Ireland safe. I have worked with the PSNI and numerous local stakeholders over a number of years building relationships now based on the highest levels of trust and confidence. I have a reputation across UK policing for successfully tackling the most complex of challenges both organisationally and operationally.

A key to my success is the fair and independent approach I take to policing issues and the strong relationships I build to instil confidence in the incredibly hard working men and women of the Police Service. Equally importantly, I am known for actively engaging those communities we are here to serve, keeping them safe from harm and listening to and addressing their concerns.

In my first two weeks I have taken the opportunity to meet many of my colleagues, especially rank and file officers and staff. It is clear to me that, despite our immense challenges, we have some of the most dedicated people I have encountered in my long career in policing. It has been a privilege to meet each one of them.

The challenges we face are, of course, very significant but each is surmountable. This year we have a residual budget shortfall of a little over £50m, with officer numbers projected to fall further to 6,358 by 2024. We are already at our lowest levels since the formation of the PSNI. Next year the projected gaps are even greater. It is evident that these significant issues need addressing. It is undisputable that policing in Northern Ireland needs additional funding for both recruitment and for business as usual to be delivered. However, there are a number of issues within the organisation that need tackling to ensure we are at our most efficient and productive. Never more so than now does the organisation require experienced, credible and clear leadership.

I have made no secret of my determination to rebuild confidence both internally in the PSNI and with our communities. I began by taking a decision not to appeal a judicial review linked to the Ormeau Road critical incident and I have offered to meet those officers. I have also taken steps to fill the post of Temporary Deputy Chief Constable.

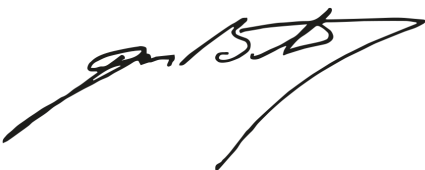
Our everyday policing stance will be founded on a problem solving approach, delivered through world class neighbourhood policing, and a policing style focused on meaningful community engagement and pragmatism. Events in recent days perhaps demonstrated the nervousness felt by some officers and staff to properly do their job. I wish to be very clear to everyone that moving forward the PSNI will police all communities equally and in a manner that ensures law abiding communities can have absolute confidence in the organisation, whilst groups or

individuals who seek to intimidate or threaten our society or commit serious crime can expect the full force of the law to be applied against them.

Through my recent work I am acutely aware of the history of Northern Ireland and the various perspectives of communities who have endured unimaginably difficult times. I am reminded of the Patten report which set out that ‘the rule of law binds together a healthy democratic society.....that independence is rightly prized as a defence against the politicisation of policing and the manipulation of the police for private ends. The police do not serve the state, or any interest group, they serve the people by upholding the law that protects the rights and liberties of every individual citizen.’

In the time that I am allowed to continue as Chief Constable I very much look forward to working with the Board for the betterment of policing and to lead the exceptional men and women of the PSNI.

This update report highlights the outstanding work that continues 24 hours a day to deliver against our Policing Plan. We all have the responsibility to advocate for policing in our communities and to work together to ensure we have the resources we need to keep Northern Ireland the safest place to live in the UK.



Jon Boutcher QPM
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Finance and Resource Update

As at the end of September, the projected over spend against budget for the full year is estimated 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.

Funding for the additional policing costs of £2.5m incurred with supporting the commemoration of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, remains to be resolved and the costs are included in the total projected pressure.

The Service has also had to respond to the critical incident of a material data breach in August and this has incurred costs of £2.4m to date. A bid has been submitted through the Department of Justice and Department of Finance for additional funding. This bid has now been formally submitted to the Treasury as a claim on the Treasury Reserve.

In October, 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

HMICFRS Police Efficiency, Effectiveness & Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

On Tuesday 10 October, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) published its report into an Inspection of the Effectiveness, Efficiency, Vetting and Standards of the Service. This followed field-work which was completed by HMICFRS Inspectors in January and February of this year.

We were assessed against the following core questions:

- **How well does the PSNI investigate crime?**
- **How well does the PSNI identify and protect vulnerable people?**
- **How effective are the PSNI's arrangements for strategic planning and organisational management?**
- **How well does the PSNI prevent those unsuitable to serve the public from joining and remaining in the service?**
- **How well equipped is the PSNI to detect and deal with misogynistic, prejudicial and improper behaviour, and predatory behaviour?**

We consider the report positive about our performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime, in particular the "Good" ratings received for Investigating Crime and our determination to address misogyny and improper behaviour in the workforce.

The report also notes the challenges arising from our annual funding arrangements and

the current stark budgetary situation. It highlights the impact of this on our ability to make medium to long term strategic plans, and the risk to service delivery from a shrinking workforce.

We will now consider the detail of the report's findings and recommendations, and how these can be taken forward as part of wider improvement planning.

We are currently preparing for an HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Inspection scheduled to take place later next month (13-17 November).



Key Statistical Updates

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.psnl.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 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

- There were 109,158 crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 106 (-0.1%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 57 police recorded crimes per 1,000¹ population, the same number as the previous 12 months.
- Higher crime levels were seen in sexual offences, robbery, theft offences, drug offences, possession of weapons and miscellaneous crimes against society.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person, burglary, criminal damage and public order offences.

(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 October 2022 to 30 September 2023:

- There were 46,646 anti-social behaviour incidents in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 3,126 (-6.3%) on the previous 12 months. This is the lowest 12 month figure since the data series began in 2006/07.

Police Recorded Drug Seizures and Arrests

Drug Seizures

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

- There were 8,777 drug seizure incidents, an increase of 433 (5.2%) on the previous 12 months when 8,344 were recorded.
- There was a rise in the number of Class A, Class B and Class C seizure incidents.
- Cannabis (Class B) was the most commonly seized drug, followed by cocaine (Class A), benzodiazepines (Class C) and pregabalin (Class C).
- The trend in drug seizure incidents is similar to that seen for the number of drug offences recorded by police over the same time period. Please note that as seizure incidents continue to be processed, this will lead to an increase in the number of drug seizures recorded since April 2023.

Drug Related Arrests

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

- There were 3,416 drug-related arrests, an increase of 269 (8.5%) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Generally speaking the trend in drug-related arrests is fairly similar to that seen for the number of drug seizure incidents and drug offences recorded by police over the same time period.



Motoring Offences

In the 12 months from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023:

- There were 40,931 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% (876) resulted in the completion of a speed awareness or safer driver course.
- Total detections decreased by 3% on the 42,050 detections recorded in the previous 12 months, with a notable reduction in mobile phone offences (20%).
- Conversely, insurance offences increased by 8% over the year, making them the largest offence group recorded (7,282), which along with speeding (6,289) accounted for one-third of the total detections.
- The highest speed detected by PSNI officers in the latest 12 months was 144mph, on the M2, Belfast.

These statistics cover the number of motoring offences detected by police in Northern Ireland from 1 September 2022 – 31 August 2023. They do not include any detections by the NI Road Safety Partnership.

Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties

Between 1 January 2023 and 31 July 2023:

- There were 2,754 road traffic collisions recorded compared with 2,854 between January and July 2022 – a decrease of 100 collisions (3.5%).
- There were 40 fatalities, 473 people seriously injured and a further 3,767

people slightly injured. While the total casualties was broadly similar year on year, there were 17 additional fatalities between January and July 2023.

- A number of road user groups showed a decrease in Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) collisions between January to July 2022 and January to July 2023, most notably passengers and motorcyclists, which decreased by 13 and 9 respectively.
- Single vehicle collisions accounted for 14.5% 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' (73) and 'wrong course/position' (50).

Security Situation

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

- There was one security related death, the same number as during the previous 12 months.
- There were 7 bombing incidents, compared to 4 during the previous 12 months and 35 shooting incidents, compared to 26.
- There were 33 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 29 in the previous 12 months.
- There were 19 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, nearly three times the number that occurred during the previous 12 months (7). There were 5 casualties of such attacks in September, the most in a



month since June 2016. All 19 casualties were aged 18 years or older.

- There were 120 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 119 during the previous 12 months.
- 28 persons were subsequently charged, twice the number that were charged during the previous 12 months (14).



Outcome 1

We Have a Safe Community

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

Investigation:

- Detectives continue to explore the use of technology in the supply of illegal drugs, particularly that of social media messaging Apps.

Horizon scanning has identified the nationally recognised and innovative approach of issuing mass protective text messages, targeting those individuals who may have previously been involved in drug possession.

During October, Organised Crime Branch Detectives used this approach as part of an investigation into a case of possession and supply of controlled drugs and issued approximately 1800 text messages to individuals who may have been involved in the possession of controlled drugs at some point in the past. This messaging highlighted that possession of drugs was a criminal offence and also signposted details of support services for drug addiction issues.

This approach was conducted in parallel with targeted action against those engaged in the most serious criminal drug related activity and included eighteen search operations and the seizure of quantities of Class A, B and C controlled drugs, along with cash and high value assets.

Fourteen arrests have been made to date with nine people charged and enquiries ongoing into the others.

This approach reflects our commitment to tackling this significant public health issue through collaborative working with our Organised Crime Task Force partners, including the Department of Health and Public Health Agency.

- During October, Detectives arrested and subsequently charged a male on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of controlled drugs and possession of Class B controlled drugs with intent to supply. This followed the seizure of suspected cannabis with an estimated street value of £1.7m during the search of a lorry in the Cookstown area.



Suspected cannabis with estimated street value of £1.7 million

- Detectives arrested a male for possession of a Class C controlled drug and possession with intent to supply, following the seizure of Pregabalin with the street value of £8,400 during a search of a premises in North Belfast. He was also arrested for attempted possession of a Class C Controlled Drug with intent to supply. This relates to a separate seizure of Zopiclone with a potential street value in excess of



£80,000. Drugs similar to these have been a factor in a number of deaths in recent times. Enquires are continuing in this case.

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

On 6 October Detectives from Bangor CID and the Paramilitary Crime Task Force investigating criminal activity linked to a feud between groups in North Down, carried out a search of a property in the Weavers Grange area of Newtownards. Two men were arrested for a number of offences, including carrying an article in support of a proscribed organisation and arson with intent to endanger life. One was also arrested in relation to an arson attack on 22 August 2023 in Newtownards. A report will now be submitted to the Public Prosecution Service.

Ending the Harm Campaign



This is a campaign from the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime, to raise awareness of illegal money lending.

The cruel reality of this harm is the illegal money lending, coercion and intimidation that victims experience from paramilitary groups.

The Police Service are committed to working with communities and partners in tackling this criminality. As part of the campaign we are taking the opportunity to stress the importance

of victims reporting these crimes to us. We have specially trained officers who will help and support them, which includes referring to other local agencies for specialised support.

Cyber Crime Centre

On the 4 and 5 October, Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau hosted officers from our Cyber Crime Centre along with colleagues in the National Cyber Security Centre and UK Law Enforcement partners, to carry out a cross border cyber attack simulation exercise.

Cyber Crime is rapidly growing in complexity and frequency and the event aimed to test the resilience of responses to a major cyber incident and identify learnings around closer cooperation and coordinated actions in investigating the growing threat from transnational cyber criminals.



Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan speaking at the cross border cyber-attack simulation exercise

Public Protection Branch

Stalking Protection Orders

New legislation was introduced to Northern Ireland in April 2022 which criminalised stalking and harassment behaviours for the first time. Since then, and up until the 30 September, there were 230 arrests where a person was processed through custody for at least one offence of stalking, and this has resulted in 119 charges.

On the 19 October, further police powers to tackle stalking behaviours were made operational with the introduction of Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs). These new orders, which officers can now seek from Magistrates, are an important development in helping to better protect victims, or anyone connected with them, in stalking cases. They will support officers in taking swift and decisive action, enabling them to put restrictions in place and enforce breaches, treating them as criminal offences.

Op TARLAC

The current conflict in the Middle East is having an impact throughout the United Kingdom, including here in Northern Ireland.

Tensions have been raised locally in both the Jewish and Muslim communities and there have been a number of public events, parades and protests. A number of hate crimes have also been reported. Social media and public commentary demonstrate that some local communities are aligning themselves in support of one side or the other.

Op TARLAC is the National policing operation to respond to tensions across the country linked to the conflict. Locally we have a 'Gold Group' command structure in place, through which incidents and events are being monitored.

When appropriate, we will attend protests or other events to ensure that the rights of all concerned are upheld. Our primary objective in any policing operation is always to keep people safe. We may identify issues of concern e.g. potential criminal offences or unacceptable impact on the rights of others. We may issue advice, warnings or lawful instructions to those involved to ensure any protest or parade remains lawful. If any offences take place, we will take lawful and proportionate action in response.

To date we have received 37 reports relating to the conflict, ranging from persons concerned about increased tensions, to reports of flags, protests, criminal damage (graffiti) and complaints about statements on Social Media channels.

We have reached out across Northern Ireland to identify those communities impacted by the conflict and are engaging with the Muslim and Jewish communities at local and strategic levels to provide reassurance, support and offer any appropriate advice. We are also engaging with a number of partners at a national level.

Reducing Road Deaths

As the number of people killed on our roads continues to increase, reducing the numbers Killed and Seriously Injured (KSIs) has been identified as a priority for the remainder of this financial year.

A Gold Commander has been appointed and a detailed control strategy has been developed which is framed around the DFI strategy of "Safe People, Safe Roads, Safe Vehicles", and includes both internal actions and those with partners. Some of the actions being progressed include:



- The introduction of a Road Safety Co-Ordination Group (RSCG) which will seek to drive activity across partner organisations;
- The launch of specific operations to target, speeding, careless driving, drink driving and the main causes of KSI's;
- The delivery of specific cross border operations to tackle road safety matters;
- Improved engagement with local PCSP's;
- The implementation of roadside drug testing (conversations with Department for Infrastructure are ongoing); and
- A peer review of Roads Policing here in Northern Ireland.

Road Safety education continues to be a vital part of the work we are taking forward.

Our Strategic Communications and Engagement Department are in the process of finalising a new Road Safety Media Strategy which will focus on the fact that road deaths are not just statistics but are personal.

Following Government agreement that the Northern Ireland Road Safety Partnership (chaired by the Police Service) can expand how it spends the fees gathered as a result of fixed penalty notices, an Investment Plan has been drafted and approved in principle. This will include expenditure on additional education for the general public and for new drivers.

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry report, local emergency services and Government Departments have agreed that the vast majority of recommendations from the report should be implemented here in Northern Ireland.

As a result, we have been allocated ownership of 62 recommendations. In partnership with other emergency services, those recommendations which relate to our response plans, command availability and information exchange/interoperability with partners, are being prioritised.

A review of our likely response to such major incidents has commenced with a focus on command resilience, training, on-call rotas and the functionality of our control rooms during such an incident.

A benchmarking exercise with other police services has commenced, consultation will take place internally in the coming weeks and a report with clear recommendations will be presented in due course.

Outcome 2

We Have Confidence in Policing

Op SANUKITE

On the 18 October 2023 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) carried out personal interviews with staff involved in Op Sanukite.

Work continues on the devaluation of the breached data set. This month saw the commencement of our programme to provide new shoulder numbers for officers, with our Sergeant cadre first to receive theirs.

Financial support has commenced for some officers and staff to support security enhancements at their homes.

Transition to the recovery phase (Op SAPHENAL) continues and a paper outlining a case for additional resources in support of our response has been prepared and shared with partners.

Op SUBREFERENCE

On Monday 16 October, as part of our continued focus on tackling crime and keeping the public safe, we enlisted the support of partners for a holistic day of action. The day was designed to maximise senior officer and staff visibility with the aim of addressing human trafficking and reducing cross border crime.

Numerous partners supported the operation, including the National Crime Agency, Border Force, Harbour Police, Home Office Immigration Enforcement, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and An Garda Síochána.

The first phase of the day saw Organised Crime Branch, with the support of district officers and partner organisations, tackle the

very real issue of modern slavery and human trafficking. This co-ordinated approach marked the start of Anti-Slavery Week.

Key figures

Officers teamed up with partners for a day of action, known as Op Subreference, on Monday 16 October. The first phase tackled **modern slavery and human trafficking**.

83

visits to estate agents to raise awareness of use of properties to house victims

40

visits to hotels to make staff aware of signs of human trafficking

36

safeguarding exercises at 'at risk' locations, including car washes

27

vehicle checkpoints carried out

The second phase was a cross border anti-crime operation carried out at border locations with colleagues in the Joint Agency Task Force, including An Garda Síochána. This involved use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology.

Key figures

Officers teamed up with partners for a day of action, known as Op Subreference, on Monday 16 October. Working with colleagues on the Joint Agency Task Force, the second phase tackled **cross-border crime**.

95

Automatic Number Plate Recognition alerts actioned

11

Vehicles seized

130

Vehicle checkpoints carried out

37

Searches carried out

Further 'Op SUBREFERENCE' events focusing on road safety and crime are being planned and will include the support partner agencies, including our colleagues in An Garda Síochána.



Online Reporting

As part of ongoing improvements to our Digital Citizen Services, we launched a new Crime Reporting Module on 31 August 2023. This service enables the public to step through the required elements of the crime they are reporting. Automatic integration takes place directly with our control room operating system, creating a record of contact. 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.

Since the inception of the new online reporting mechanism we have received more than 3,938 reports.

October saw testing begin on a module for Road Traffic Collisions. Further modules for domestic related incidents and antisocial behaviour are being prepared, with the aim of having them all completed by March 2024.

Body Worn Video

Staff from Justice Department attended the National Body Worn Video (BWV) conference on the 10 and 11 October 2023 in Bristol. The conference saw the launch of the refreshed National Police Chiefs' Council BWV Guidance. Notable changes surround the use of BWV in occurrences involving mental health, children and young persons, prisoner transport and include a significant recommendation regarding the UK wide adaption of 'pre-record'.

We begin procurement for new BWV cameras in 2024, aiming for delivery by January 2026.

Legacy Bill

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill was announced on 17 May 2022, received Royal Assent and entered into legislation on 18 September 2023 as the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023.

Under this legislation, from 1 May 2024 a new body, to be known as the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), will assume responsibility for all 'Troubles' related legacy investigations relating to deaths occurring between 1969 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) on 10 April 1998. The ICRIR will also assume responsibility for the review and investigation of 'Troubles' related serious injuries. The ICRIR are now developing processes that will enable reviews and investigations to be commenced.

In addition, the Legacy Act will bring to a close legacy inquests in Northern Ireland unless they are at the verdict stage of proceedings by 1 May 2024.

A PSNI programme board has been established to manage the required transition processes as we prepare for the establishment of the ICRIR and our ongoing obligations to deliver operational outcomes for those matters that remain the responsibility of the Police Service.

Planning for the transition is focused on three primary areas;

1. How we will continue to discharge our statutory, judicial and organisational legacy responsibilities during the transition period.

2. How we will support the ICRIR in its delivery of their statutory functions and responsibilities.
3. The design and implementation of a new legacy operating model that will continue to facilitate those statutory, judicial and organisational legacy responsibilities that will remain after 1 May 2024, whilst also supporting the ICRIR.

Programme board members are conducting critical pathway analysis and demand modelling to establish options for our future legacy operating models. The aim is to present these options to the Service Executive Team by the end of this calendar year.

Safe Access Zones

As we reported at September's Policing Board, Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act (Northern Ireland), came into effect on Monday 8 May 2023. We can now advise that the Department of Health have designated Safe Access Zones (SAZ) at eight Trust premises where abortion services are available. These zones went live on 29 September 2023.

Protest activity has continued at these premises throughout the month of October, with a pattern of weekly protests observed at certain locations and expected to become routine.

Our 4E approach of Engage, Explain, Encourage, with Enforcement as a last resort, is proving successful, with the majority of protesters removing themselves from zones following engagement with our officers. To date there has only been one incident where enforcement activity has been required, following the refusal of two protesters to move outside the SAZ boundary. This matter has been reported to the Public Prosecution Service.

Outcome 3

We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

Board visit to Derry City & Strabane



On the 19 October the Policing Board's Partnership Committee visited Derry/Londonderry as part of a visit hosted by Justice Department and the Senior Leadership Team in Derry City and Strabane.

During this visit the committee toured the new 21 cell Waterside Custody Suite which will become fully operational in November. Members asked about the treatment of detained persons, the application of custody procedures, including strip searching, and how staff respond to issues such as vulnerability and those with mental health challenges. They also heard about the nurse led provision in the new suite.

The Committee moved across the City to Strand Road in the afternoon, where they met and heard from officers involved in the policing operation and subsequent disorder following searches in Creggan on 7 September.

Key Campaigns

Hate Crime Awareness Week

On Saturday 14 October, in partnership with the Policing Board, Police and Community Safety Partnerships and the Hate Crime Advocacy Service, we launched a new campaign to highlight the devastating impact that hate crime has on victims and to encourage everyone to report hate crime when they see it.

The campaign, which was launched on the first day of Hate Crime Awareness Week (HCAW), has been developed to prompt the public to 'put yourself in their shoes' and think about how they would feel if they were on the receiving end of hate crime.

During the week we ran a range of events, many together with the local Police and Community Safety Partnership, in support of the campaign to raise awareness locally. The campaign will run beyond HCAW and we are grateful to the Board for financially supporting a targeted social media outreach.



Michael Avila, Hate Crime Advocacy Service, Superintendent Sue Steen, Police Service of Northern Ireland Hate Crime lead and John Blair MLA, Northern Ireland Policing Board Partnership Committee Chair.

ScamwiseNI



valuable service delivered there is fundamental in enabling us to police our communities and keep people safe.

Monday 9 October saw the launch of the new ScamwiseNI campaign aimed at older people and those not regularly online. The purpose of the campaign is to increase awareness and educate the public on how they can protect themselves and avoid falling victim to scammers.

Advertising reaches across the full range of media and is staggered across the six month period between October and March 2023.

International Control Room Week



International Control Room Week took place during October and provided the opportunity to celebrate the contribution of emergency services' control room staff around the world, alongside highlighting the incredible lifesaving work they carry out each and every day.

Across our Service we have three Contact Management Centres in Castlereagh, Maydown and Gough, staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. During the past year colleagues in Contact Management answered nearly 235,000 999 calls and over 498,000 101 non-emergency calls from the public. The

Our People, Your Service

Duty Adjustments Project

Approximately a thousand of our officers and staff have duty adjustments, some minor and temporary, others significant and permanent. With a view to better managing adjustments and, importantly, to maximise available resources, the Absence Management Group (AMG) has commissioned a complete review of duty adjustments for both officers and staff. The project has five key work streams including:

- Language, terminology and the categorisation of duty adjustments;
- Feedback from users, especially line managers;
- Benchmarking against other police services and other public organisations;
- Processing and Information Technology; and
- Available data for senior management.

A 'week of focus' on duty adjustments took place from Monday 9 to Sunday 15 October, with the objective of raising awareness of roles and responsibilities for those with duty adjustments, line managers of those with duty adjustments and senior managers. During the week, various resource articles were produced and shared across the Service and 243 managers joined a bespoke Webinar on this subject.

The project is a major piece of work, has the support of the various staff associations and will seek to improve our organisational approach. It is due to report by the end of the financial year.

Injuries on duty

Sadly during the month of October, the often grim reality of what officers face each and every day as they work to help people and keep our communities safe was evidenced when, during a 24 hour period, 17 from across the country found themselves victim of an assault.

Whilst officers and staff come to work knowing they could be faced with difficult and dangerous situations, assaults are never acceptable and must never be tolerated as being 'part of the job'.

This is a long-standing matter of concern. In an attempt to tackle the issue, Operational Support Department have developed and implemented an 'Injury and Assault Reduction Strategy', the aim of which is to reduce the number of assaults on our officers and staff and better manage the aftercare of those who have been assaulted.

Work to date has included the commissioning of an internal survey, the results of which revealed that overall 43% of respondents reported having been assaulted on at least one occasion in the preceding twelve months. For Response Officers the figure was much higher at 68%, with Neighbourhood Policing Officers 52% and Custody Detention Officers 50%.

Our Personal Safety Training programme has been updated to reflect and provide more realistic scenarios. Changes have been made to our IT systems to support line managers in carrying out effective reviews of assaults post incident and training on how to manage assaults on officers and staff has been



included in the First Line Supervisors Development Course.

Ongoing work includes a review of the personal protective equipment on issue to custody staff and establishing a mechanism for identifying those officers who are repeat victims with a view to bespoke Operational Health & Wellbeing support.

The following table, taken from the internal mechanism for officers and staff to self report accidents/incidents/near misses to Health and Safety Branch, provides further information on assaults:

Assaults	Jul – Sept 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan – Mar	Apr-Jun 2023
Police – Injury	258	258	257	254
Police – Near Miss	155	154	164	130
Police – Ill Health	-	-	-	2
Staff - Injury	5	4	7	11
Staff – Near Miss	3	-	4	5
Contractor – Near Miss	-	-	2	-

Forward look

Criminal Justice Branch are working with partners in the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) on a 'speeding-up justice' initiative that will see Police Inspectors take decisions on those cases where the evidential test has not been met. Currently we share in the region of 8,000 of these 'no-prosecution' case files with PPS, so this initiative has the potential to deliver faster decisions for victims and suspects, reduce administration burden and free up capacity for front-line officers and prosecutors enabling increased focus on those cases which are progressing through the justice system. A pilot is scheduled to commence in November 2023.

The international campaign '16 Days of Action' is an international campaign that runs from 25 November to 10 December and gives us the opportunity to provide the public with an update of successes to date and reaffirm our commitment to tackling this societal issue. The date of this year's campaign also coincides with the introduction of further offences under the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. Elements of our campaign will include social media and proactive media.

Our Christmas campaign will launch at the end of November and will include creative visuals, social media strategy, news releases, photography, proactive placing of media interviews and video. The themes this year, will include Safe Socialising Safe Shopping and Safe Roads.

Also running throughout November will be Op CORIN– Sextortion, amplified by social

media messaging as well as Road Safety Week taking place from 19 to 25 November.

Senior officers from Public Protection Branch will represent the Police Service at a number of upcoming events. These include an event in Foyle Family Justice Centre on the issue of Non-Fatal Strangulation, and a Domestic & Sexual Violence Awareness Conference in Newcastle.

Engagement days include Armistice Day, Guru Nanak Gurpurab, International Men's Day and Diwali.



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