



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland

# Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland  
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of 25 July 2024  
to 29 August 2024

Presented at Policing Board  
Meeting:

5 September 2024



**we care  
we listen  
we act**

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# Foreword

Much has happened since my last report in August to the Board. We have witnessed some appalling scenes of violence and disorder across Northern Ireland, with members of our ethnic minority communities and police officers attacked, damage caused to property, instances of racist graffiti, erection of posters and cowards hiding behind their keyboards spewing forth vile and abusive social media posts. Similar to that seen across the United Kingdom, this activity was carried out with the singular intent of terrifying our communities and inciting hatred. I would challenge the overwhelming majority of people involved in the disorder to know the names of Alice da Silva Agular, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe, those poor young girls whose lives were so cruelly taken as they attended a dance class in Southport on 29<sup>th</sup> July. They and their families should be in our thoughts, along with those that survived and everyone affected by this unspeakable attack. Events such as these, which are life changing for so many victims and their families, provide some much needed perspective to so many issues that many in society view as important.

Everyone across society in Northern Ireland needs to call out the resulting intimidation and violence that we witnessed on our streets. There is no place for it. Since my appointment I have met a number of leaders from our Muslim communities. In light of the riots in England our Strategic Community Engagement Team and Neighbourhood Policing officers held frequent meetings with our Muslim community and other ethnic minority communities who were incredibly fearful because of what was happening. These engagements intensified as tensions and then violence erupted here.

Having met with many representatives from our diverse and Muslim communities during the awful days of disorder, I was struck by the abject fear that they were experiencing, the like of which I have never seen in over 40 years of policing. This is simply inexcusable. These are people who have come to Northern Ireland to add value to our society. They provide a positive contribution and bring a richness to our society. They should hold their heads high not bowed to avoid being noticed. As a Police Service we stand with them. We will not tolerate the despicable criminal intimidation and violence targeted at them.

To date we have made 44 arrests, charging 35 people to Court. Almost 300 hours of video evidence has been examined. 19 images of suspects have been released to the media leading to the identification of seven suspects. These statistics increase almost every day. It was incredibly disheartening to see so many young people involved, sadly their futures will likely be impacted by their criminal acts. I do not want to criminalise young people, that's the last thing I want to happen, however, attacking defenceless victims, committing arson attacks that could easily cause loss of life and life changing injuries, petrol bombing and assaulting police officers, committing crimes of hate, will be dealt with as robustly as the law allows whilst I am Chief Constable.

I want to personally thank the public for their support and assistance in identifying those responsible. With thousands of hours of video evidence still to be reviewed, I am confident more arrests will follow. The PSNI



will do everything that can be done to bring those responsible to justice.

Then in Derry/Londonderry we witnessed further scenes of disorder and violence from individuals who were intent on attacking police, and who exploited an increased police presence in the city in connection with the Apprentice Boys of Derry parades. Again, worryingly, many of those involved in this disgraceful behaviour were even younger children and young people than those involved in the earlier racist disorder. I repeat, the last thing we want to do is to criminalise young people. However, when they take part in the level of disorder where masonry, petrol bombs and fireworks are thrown at police officers, they will be arrested and dealt with through the criminal justice system. We will not tolerate these acts, they are criminal and unacceptable and everything that can be done to identify and prosecute those responsible is being done. Some of the scenes we witnessed, with adults directing these children, is child criminal exploitation and as a society we all need to call this out for what it really is. To parents and guardians of young people, I make this appeal, know where your children are, especially during periods of disorder and unrest. Be responsible for them. Act before we have to.

I want to especially commend the incredible men and women of the PSNI who throughout this period repeatedly put themselves in harm's way to keep our communities safe. They have worked bravely and tirelessly to protect people and property. In so doing, they have faced a level of violence that is not normal in any society and will not be accepted. Some 40 police officers have been injured as a direct result of this disorder. Yet, I detect an undercurrent that it is viewed as acceptable to attack the police. Let me be clear, it is not acceptable. It is a serious criminal offence. We will pursue those involved in the violence, and those inciting and encouraging it, with every piece of legislation,

every resource and every tactic available. I will be seeking maximum sentences for those convicted of such attacks. We will not simply stand here and accept this. We need to ask ourselves, what sort of society do we want?

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August, I met with the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn, at the PSNI's Police College. I was proud to be able to introduce Sir Keir to a number of officers who had suffered injury during the disorder and for him to hear their stories first hand. During his visit, Sir Keir met with leaders from a number of organisations representing those ethnic minority communities most affected by the disorder. I was heartened to listen to repeated tributes and accolades towards the PSNI from those leaders and for their overwhelming support for our policing response. The views of these key community leaders was extremely positive. Many of these representatives have suffered negative and racist abuse. We have to call this out.

Since becoming Chief Constable, I have continually outlined the challenge of delivering policing services in the face of a crippling funding position. This has not been hyperbole. It has been an honest professional assessment shaped by years of policing experience. From the beginning, I have highlighted the risk to operational capability and capacity that a prolonged period of disorder would bring. So it has proved. It needs to be understood that while policing disorder and unrest and supporting those people and communities affected, my officers and staff continued to provide the fantastic policing services that the public have come to expect. From supporting large scale events such as the Féile Festival and Apprentice Boys of Derry parades, through to investigating murders, making arrests in connection with terrorism and child abuse offences, responding to fatal and serious



injury road traffic collisions and delivering local community policing, they have continued to focus on meeting the needs of victims and communities. All of this set against a unique national security backdrop of dissident republican threat towards PSNI officers and staff, and indeed to democracy in Northern Ireland, that requires a specialist and dedicated resource.

The PSNI can no longer stand up to the policing challenges we now face without support from elsewhere. In order to police the recent disorder I had to mobilise the organisation and take the difficult decision to increase shifts to 12 hours for many officers, cancel rest days and stand up Public Order Support Units. The additional impact this has on an already exhausted workforce and their families is not lost on me. In addition, I had to request support from other GB Police Services. 80 specialist public order officers from Police Scotland volunteered to come to Northern Ireland and were deployed here between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August. I met them all upon their arrival and had the opportunity to meet many of them during their deployments. They were a fantastic group, a credit to Police Scotland, and I take this opportunity to publicly thank them and the Chief Constable of Police Scotland for the support they have shown.

A letter from the Department of Justice Permanent Secretary to myself is being widely commented upon in the media. I have been absolutely clear that I will do everything possible to secure a better funding settlement for the PSNI and I disagree strongly with any rebuke about my approaching the Prime Minister. This is something that I was entitled to do and it did not breach any protocol or principle. The funding and effectiveness of the PSNI engages the interests and responsibilities of both the devolved and Westminster Governments. I can, and will, communicate with both as necessary, and do not consider that I need the authority or approval of either one in order to do so.

The resourcing and funding of the PSNI have continued to worsen over a number of years and I am duty bound as Chief Constable to highlight the impact this is having on victims, the community and the workforce. The current budget is simply inadequate and the pressures on the Service are unsustainable. These are issues I have raised repeatedly.

My responsibilities as both Chief Constable and Accounting Officer are at the forefront of my decision making at all times. I am fully aware of the importance of my operational independence and my obligations as Chief Constable, as well as my Accounting Officer responsibilities in relation to the funding allocated to the PSNI. Everyone can be assured that I will continue to do all that I can to keep the people of Northern Ireland safe and, at the same time, fulfil my obligations as an Accounting Officer.

We continue to work at pace with officials from the Department of Justice preparing the requested business case to begin the recovery of police officer numbers. I will be clear again, we cannot lower our numbers any further. The recent challenging events have shown the reality of deployable police officer numbers, which are now in the region of 4,500 when we take into account sickness absence and duty restrictions. I will be preparing a recovery plan to address this. Through maximising the training capacity of the Police College and commencing direct officer entry to the PSNI, we aim to achieve circa 7,000 Police Officers by the end of the plan's third year.

Alongside planning to uplift officer numbers, we will continue with the important work of transforming how we deliver our services, with our Service Operating Model and Right Care, Right Person programmes well advanced.

I am delighted that the long-standing issue of an uplift in the Revised Environmental

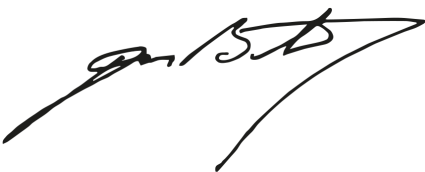


Allowance (REA) for Police Staff has now been negotiated. I want to thank the Staff Associations and Trade Unions for their positive engagement. Police Staff have received an interim payment in August and we are working with the Department to conclude this matter in September.

It is hugely important that our workforce feel valued and engaged and that the work they do for all of our communities is suitably recognised. In this regard, resolving issues such as REA matters. In a similar vein, how we value and support each other within PSNI matters. September sees the start of our 'Team PSNI' events, the aim of which is to create a positive work culture by building trust and confidence directly with our staff, they are an important part of delivering on the outcomes of the Your Service, Your Voice Cultural Audit.

In August, I was privileged to host a reception for those officers and staff who received Sovereign Honours in the 2024 New Year and Birthday Honour list. This was a wonderful occasion, with guests including the Board's Chair and Vice Chair. It was a pleasure to meet and spend time with the recipients and their families.

Finally, following what has been another incredibly challenging period for policing, I would like to thank the Board for their unequivocal support for our policing response to the recent violence and disorder and their continued backing and advocacy in securing appropriate levels of funding for the PSNI.



**Jon Boutcher QPM**  
**Chief Constable**  
**Police Service of Northern Ireland**

# Finance and Resource Update

Since taking up post, I have made it clear that PSNI has been under funded for a protracted period, leaving the community with a smaller and less resilient Police Service.

The funding position in the current year is again very difficult, but so is the role of policing. I am determined to fulfil my primary statutory responsibility to keep the people of Northern Ireland safe and to prevent further deterioration to the Service, despite some criticism of ongoing recruitment.

Our Draft Resource Plan 2024/25 will be considered by the Board's Resources Committee in September. The figures are stark, with a total funding shortfall of £239m. This gap is inflated by the inclusion of anticipated costs in response to the Holiday Pay Judgement and Data Leak just last year. These costs will crystallise at some point but are so significant that they cannot be absorbed by the budgets within the Service or the Department of Justice. Our underlying shortfall on running costs is better estimated at £34m, after some internal cost reductions. Importantly, the Plan still includes recruitment of both officers and staff, simply to prevent overall numbers falling yet further. Having reviewed all our costs, we are not in a position to close a funding gap of this size. It simply reflects an unrealistic budget settlement.

I will therefore be seeking the continued support of the Board to do all that it can to improve the funding position this year, at least to stabilize the Service and provide a basis for future planning.

# 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<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024:

- There were 99,828 crimes recorded, a decrease of 11,027 (-9.9%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 52 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population<sup>1</sup> in the 12 months August 2023 to July 2024 compared with 58 in the previous 12 months.
- While shoplifting has increased by 721 (8.9%), the majority of crime classifications have recorded lower levels. Stalking and harassment shows the largest fall (-2,848, -22.4%).<sup>2</sup>

## Anti-Social Behaviour

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024:

- There were 44,030 anti-social behaviour incidents, a decrease of 3,512 (-7.4%) on the previous 12 months.
- Each month August 2023 through to July 2024 recorded the lowest levels of anti-social behaviour for those months since the start of the data series in April 2006,

with the exception of March 2024 and May 2024, which recorded their second lowest levels in the data series.

- The latest month (July 2024) was 187 incidents higher than June 2024. Levels in July have been higher than those in June in each year since 2011, with the exception of 2023.

## Domestic Abuse

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024:

- There were 31,931 domestic abuse incidents recorded, a decrease of 1,277 (-3.8%) on the previous 12 months.
- The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded fell to 19,262, a decrease of 2,605 (-11.9%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 17 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population<sup>3</sup>, compared with 17 domestic abuse incidents and 11 domestic abuse crimes recorded during the previous 12 months.
- Changes in recording practice have had an impact on levels, particularly in respect of malicious communications offences, with fewer such offences required to be recorded. In the 12 months ending 30 June 2024 there were 370 Malicious Communications offences, compared with 1,141 in the previous 12 months.

(<sup>1</sup> 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). <sup>2</sup> Full details are available in points to note on page 3 of The Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin. <sup>3</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 there were four homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded, compared with six homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in the previous 12 months<sup>4</sup>.

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

## Hate Motivation

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024:

- The number of **incidents** recorded fell across three of the six hate motivations (sexual orientation, sectarian, and disability) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- The number of **incidents** with a race motivation reached the highest 12 month level since the recording of these motivations began in 2005/06.

The number of **crimes** recorded decreased across three of the six motivations (sexual orientation,

- sectarian, and disability) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Incidents with a race motivation and crimes with a faith/religion motivation showed the largest increases.
- Incidents and crimes with a sectarian motivation showed the largest decrease, with 254 fewer incidents and 317 fewer crimes.

## Overall summary of hate motivated incidents and crimes

	Incidents Jul'22 -Jun'23	Incidents Jul'23-Jun'24	Incidents Change	Crimes Jul'22-Jun'23	Crimes Jul'23-Jun'24	Crimes Change
Race	1,267	1,411	144	889	891	2
Sexual	417	378	-39	277	230	-47
Sectarian	1,221	967	-254	923	606	-317
Disability	122	89	-33	83	48	-35
Faith/Religion	36	94	58	25	60	35
Transgender Identity	61	73	12	40	41	1

(<sup>4</sup> Homicide consists of the offences of murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter.)



## Stop and Search

In the 12 months between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024:

- 22,752 persons were stopped and searched/questioned, 12% fewer than the previous 12 months.
- 70% of stops were conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act\* and 12% of stops were conducted under the Police and Criminal Evidence Order\*.
- 14% of stops were conducted under the Justice and Security Act Section 24\* and 2% under Section 21\*.
- There was a decrease in the use of the more commonly used powers. Justice and Security Act\* decreased by 27% (from 4,991 to 3,656) and the use of Misuse of Drugs Act\* decreased by 12% (from 18,154 to 15,971). The Firearms Order and other less frequently used powers also decreased. Conversely, the use of the Terrorism Act\* increased by 264% (from 164 to 597) and the use of the Police and Criminal Evidence Order\* increased by 6% (from 2,620 to 2,777).
- 23% of stops resulted in some form of outcome. The arrest rate was 7%, compared to 5% in the previous 12 months.
- 8% (1,911) of those stopped were aged 17 and under. Of these, 66% were stopped and searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act\*.
- 85% of those stopped were male, while 37% were aged 18 to 25.
- There were 12 persons stopped for every 1,000 people in Northern Ireland.

## Security Situation

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024:

- There was one security related death, the same number as during the previous 12 months.
- There were 5 bombing incidents, compared to 7 during the previous 12 months and 20 shooting incidents, compared to 33.
- There were 25 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 30 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (9). Of the 25 casualties, one was under 18 years old.
- There were 10 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 12 during the previous 12 months. Belfast experienced the greatest number of shootings (4). All 10 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 83 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 118 during the previous 12 months.
- 13 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 26 during the previous 12 months.

(\* alone, or in combination with other powers.)

# Outcome 1

## We Have a Safe Community

### Operation Alefnull

Operation Alefnull is our policing response to the protest activity, unrest and violent disorder that took place following the tragic murders that occurred on 29 July 2024, when three young children were killed in a knife attack at a 'Taylor Swift' themed dance class for school children in Southport, England.

Locally, we witnessed protests that involved the disruption of the road network across Northern Ireland and large scale protest activity in Belfast, mostly centred on Belfast City Hall. The most significant violence and disorder took place in the Belfast area. On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, a large crowd attacked police officers with missiles and set fire to a number of premises and cars in the Sandy Row area of South Belfast. One of the shop premises set on fire formed part of an occupied apartment block, which created a significant risk to life and apartments had to be evacuated.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August, we saw further violent disorder in this area, with approximately 100 people attacking officers with petrol, paint, masonry and other missiles during a four hour period. Roads were blocked and a premises previously targeted and damaged by fire was again set alight. A male walking in the area was subject to an unprovoked attack and sustained significant injuries.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August, disorder occurred in the Shankill Road/Woodvale area of Belfast and saw a number of homes attacked, an estate agency business damaged by a stolen car, which had been taken from a female motorist in a hijacking a short time earlier, and again, missiles were thrown at police.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August saw pockets of disorder occur in East Belfast and a peaceful

demonstration take place in the vicinity of the Chimney Corner Hotel, Mallusk.

A large anti-racism demonstration and small counter protest took place on 9<sup>th</sup> August outside Belfast City Hall. This passed off largely without incident.

A mosque on Greenwell Street in Newtownards was attacked at around 1am on 10<sup>th</sup> August. A petrol bomb was thrown but failed to ignite and racist graffiti was daubed on the building. Cars were set alight in Tavanagh Street and Sandhurst Gardens in Belfast.

Throughout this period we have been engaging with those communities most impacted. Vulnerable premises have been identified and reassurance patrols introduced. Our Strategic Community Engagement Team, who have developed strong relationships with ethnic minority communities from across Northern Ireland, have been embedded within the Operation Alefnull structure to provide feedback on the operation and community tensions. This engagement, which includes real-time updates, has been welcomed by the wider community, but significantly within the Northern Ireland Muslim community, who have expressed their deep gratitude for our policing response in keeping their communities and places of worship safe.

An investigative team has been set up under the guidance of an experienced Senior Investigating Officer. This is a blended team consisting of both detective and local policing officers.

To date we have made 44 arrests, charging 35 people to Court. Almost 300 hours of video evidence has been examined. 19 images of



suspects have been released to the media, leading to the identification of seven suspects.

80 specialist Public Order officers and a Mutual Aid Liaison officer deployed here from Police Scotland between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August. Under the direction of the Gold Commander they delivered confidence and reassurance patrols across Belfast and a number of other locations. In addition, several of their units supported our response to the World War II bomb in Newtownards. Their deployment provided a much-needed increase in our resilience and operating capacity.



Assistant Chief Constable Ryan Henderson with officers from Police Scotland who were part of the mutual aid deployment

On 19<sup>th</sup> August the Chief Constable hosted the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, at the Police College.

Following a private meeting with the Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable Melanie Jones, Sir Keir met and spoke with a number of our frontline colleagues who were injured as a result of the disorder in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

Personally addressing the injured officers, Sir Keir thanked them for their dedicated commitment and service. He also recognised the huge impact being injured in the line of duty had on their families.

## Crime Department

### Organised Crime Branch

- During July 2024, detectives working closely with Organised Crime Task Force partners, UK Border Force, seized Class B controlled drugs with an estimated street value of £75,000 and made an arrest following a search of a property in the Botanic Area of South Belfast. A 41 year old man has been charged to Court for a number of drug related offences, including possession of a Class B controlled drug and possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024, detectives conducted a search of a house in the Short Strand area of Belfast. The search was in connection with an ongoing investigation into drugs criminality linked to organised crime. Officers seized suspected cocaine with an estimated street value of £45,000 and suspected cannabis with an estimated street value of £2,000. Luxury watches, a high-value car, a large sum of cash, two imitation firearms, and other weaponry were also seized. A 36 year old man was arrested on suspicion of a number of offences including possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply and possession of criminal property. He has been released on police bail pending the outcome of further enquiries.



- On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, officers from the Auto Crime Team arrested a 43 year old man and seized Class B controlled drugs with an estimated street value of £75,000 after a vehicle was stopped on the M2 Motorway. Enquires are ongoing.

### **Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)**

- On 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024, detectives seized cocaine and other items and made an arrest during a search of a property in East Belfast. This was part of an ongoing investigation into suspected drugs criminality linked to the East Belfast UVF. A 29 year old man was arrested and later charged to Court with a number of drug related offences.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024, detectives charged a 28 year old man for a number of drug related offences following a house search in January 2024 where 640g of nitrous oxide was recovered along with a small quantity of herbal cannabis and suspected cocaine. He was also reported for Possession of fireworks without a licence.
- On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024, following the stop and search of a vehicle on Culmore Road, Londonderry, £20,000 of suspected herbal cannabis was recovered. A 38 year old man was arrested, charged and has subsequently been remanded into custody.

### **Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU)**

- On 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024, detectives from MSHTU, supported by Tactical Support Group officers, completed four searches in an operation focused on the activities of an organised crime group suspected of trafficking Romanian women for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Three searches were conducted in Ballymena and one in Omagh. Three men, aged 27, 31 and 52, and a 21 year old woman were arrested on suspicion of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, controlling prostitution for gain, brothel keeping and money laundering. All four have been charged and remanded into custody. A female victim has been identified and offered safeguarding services.

### **Cyber Crime**

During July 2024, the Police Services' Cyber Crime Investigations Unit led an operation to infiltrate a significant illegal cyber-attack website which has been responsible for tens of thousands of attacks every week across the globe. Our disruption targeted "**Digitalstress**", a criminal marketplace, and was carried out in partnership with the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The site targeted was responsible for "Distributed Denial of Service" (DDoS) attacks, which are designed to overwhelm websites and force them offline. This type of cyber-attack is illegal in the UK under the Computer Misuse Act 1990. Such attacks have the potential to cause significant harm to businesses and critical national infrastructure, and can prevent people from accessing essential public services, including the emergency services.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, detectives arrested one of the site's suspected controllers in Northern Ireland for Computer Misuse Act Offences. He was later released on police bail to allow further enquiries to be conducted. A further suspect was arrested in the USA by American authorities.

## **Serious Crime Branch**

### **Recent Successes**

- Detectives from Major Investigation Team have charged a 32 year old man and a 35 year old woman in connection with the murder of Kevin Davidson in Belfast during July 2024.
- Detectives from Criminal Investigation Department have charged a 46 year old man with conspiracy to commit murder in relation to the shooting of a man in Banbridge area on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### **Court Outcomes**

- A 41 year old man was sentenced to two years imprisonment (half on licence) in relation to a burglary at commercial premises in Londonderry in April 2023.

## **Public Protection Branch**

- An intelligence led operation has resulted in the arrest of a Registered Sex Offender. A number of charges have been secured in connection with breach of a Sexual Offences Protection Order and devices secured that would otherwise have been prohibited as part of their management conditions.
- Following the report of sexual abuse made by a 10 year old child against their grandfather, a male has been arrested, charged and remanded into custody.

The investigation was managed under the U13 Protocol, with papers submitted to Public Prosecution Service within four weeks of the initial report to police.



# Outcome 2

## We Have Confidence in Policing

### Waterside Custody Suite

The new 21 cell custody suite has now been completed at a construction cost of £15m. The suite became fully operational on 30 August 2024, having previously operated at a reduced capacity since opening at the end of December 2023 while contractual issues and a number of required amendments were addressed.

The suite will provide provision for the whole of the North West, from Coleraine to Strabane. As the Services newest custody suite, it has a dedicated sight-link court room which supports detainees remotely appearing at court, and has been designed to provide for detainees who are vulnerable, in particular, those with disabilities and specific neurodiversity needs. Four cells have been fitted with LED screens to assist with communication and all cells have windows to provide as much natural light as possible.

There is an extension of the nurse lead health model in place. Six specially trained Custody Nurse Practitioners, who from an acute care background triage detainees and can assess, treat and, when necessary, refer them to other services as appropriate.

### Facial Recognition Technology

In August, the use of Retrospective Facial Recognition was implemented within the Service. Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) is a valuable method of identifying unknown suspects. It involves the use of an algorithm to compare an image of an unknown individual with national custody images to establish if their identity is known.

This technology is playing a vital role within the investigative strand of Operation Alefnall, and its use is being prioritised.

### Digital Witness Statement App

An application that enables a statement to be recorded, signed and uploaded directly onto our NICHE Record Management System, became operational during August. This App supports our drive to speed up criminal justice processes and is a further example of our commitment to make best use of technology to improve our capability, capacity and overall service delivery.

# Outcome 3

## We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

### Ethnic Minority Reference, Engagement and Listening Event

Since its formation in 2021, our Strategic Community Engagement Team (SCET) has been developing strategic relationships with ethnic minority communities. In August 2024, the engagement intensified following an escalation in Anti-Muslim and Anti-Immigration sentiment across the United Kingdom. SCET embedded itself within the Operation Alefnull command structure to provide two-way feedback on the operation and community tensions.

Throughout this operation and the weeks that followed, SCET took the lead in community engagement, advising on community tensions. On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the team hosted a Reference, Engagement and Listening event with representatives from across the Ethnic Minority community in Northern Ireland. Fear of further violence and hate crime continued within the Ethnic Minority community with plans for protests and counter protests circulating on Social Media. To address this, SCET hosted a further Reference, Engagement and Listening event with ethnic minority representation from all of Northern Ireland on Thursday 8 August 2024. This event provided attendees with the opportunity to outline their communities' concerns. During the event, one Muslim mother highlighted that her community were too afraid to leave their homes and had cancelled a summer scheme for Muslim children as a result.

SCET worked with this group of Muslim women to host a three day summer scheme at Newforge, where young people were provided a safe space to enjoy the

remainder of their summer break. This not only provided the group with the confidence to return to normality, and leave their homes, but also gave the Police Service an opportunity to engage closely with this community.

The engagement and approach taken by the Police Service has been welcomed by the wider ethnic minority community, but most significantly, within the Northern Ireland Muslim community who have expressed their deep gratitude for the actions taken to keep their communities and places of worship safe. The broad feedback is extremely positive with reports that attendance at mosques across Northern Ireland for Friday prayers is returning to normal. It is significant that the sentiment from the Muslim community has changed from one of concern around the Police Service' ability to keep them safe, to one that is now openly advocating support for Policing. The following is feedback from the Muslim Mothers' Collective regarding the summer scheme:

*"I can't express in words how grateful I am for all your efforts. These days have had a huge impact on the children and their families. Over the course of three days, you brought joy and happiness to the hearts of 85 children. The staff was amazing, smiling and cheerful all the time, working with love and dedication. The place was beautiful. Everything helped make this event a success, even the weather, which was amazing and special, unlike usual.*

*I am ready to help you in anything you need and I hope that we will cooperate in everything that helps the Muslim community, especially the children, to help them integrate into society and make them interactive in schools and activities which provide them with a safe and effective environment."*





## Key Campaigns and Events

### Student Safety campaign



The Student Safety campaign launches in September aiming to encourage safe and respectful behaviour and provide an opportunity for students to learn more about their local police.

Working with partners from further and higher education, Police and Community Safety Partnerships and local Councils, the campaign includes social media messaging, web content and engagement activity.

Useful information will be shared on a range of issues including how to stay safe on nights out, home security, scams, sextortion and how to contact police, with focus on online reporting.

A dedicated webpage has been created [www.psnipolice.uk/student-safety](http://www.psnipolice.uk/student-safety)

September is also national Preparedness month and the Police Service will be participating in the multi-agency 'Be Ready NI' social media campaign, sharing useful safety messaging for members of the public.



# Our People, Your Service

## Statement of intent

In August, an updated Statement of Action on Conduct and Standards was issued to all police officers and staff across the organisation.

The highest standards of behaviour are expected from all police officers and staff, both on and off duty, and this refreshed Statement of Action reemphasises our commitment to upholding those standards and underpins our pledge to hold accountable those few who would bring disrepute to our Service and undermine public confidence in policing.

Our communities and our organisation deserve the best from all of us and it is our core aim that the Police Service of Northern Ireland remains a world-class Police Service that everyone can be proud of.

# Statement of Action on Conduct and Standards August 2024

The conduct and standards expected of police officers in the United Kingdom remains the subject of intense publicity and scrutiny. The Angiolini Inquiry into the murder of Sarah Everard has further reinforced the tragic consequences of failure to uphold these standards.

We will continue to deal with the unacceptable conduct of a small minority who bring disrepute to our Service and undermine the public's confidence in policing.

Our communities and our organisation more than ever deserve better, and need to be reassured that we abide by the highest standards expected of those whose job it is to uphold the law.

We are determined to learn from our experiences and that of other police services to improve trust and confidence. To do so we will continue to identify and promote organisational learning and strive to prevent and detect corruption, dishonesty and unethical behaviour.

The law, the Code of Ethics and the Police Staff Handbook are very clear on what behaviour is acceptable by members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. It is timely to reaffirm our position on allegations of sexual misconduct, domestic abuse, harassment, bullying and discriminatory behaviour.

There is **no tolerance** for sexual violence, abuse of position for sexual gain, sexualised commentary, harassment and downloading of illegal images. There is **no tolerance** for domestic abuse, harassment or bullying in any of its forms. There is **no tolerance** for behaviour that is misogynistic, homophobic,

transphobic, racist, ageist, sectarian or discriminatory towards persons with disability or due to their religious beliefs. This includes the use of social media or messaging platforms to spread this type of inappropriate behaviour.

Officers **will not** engage in personal relationships with victims, witnesses or suspects or other members of the public who come to us for help.

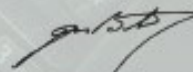
Where criminal or misconduct allegations are made, they will be fully investigated by the Police Service or by the Police Ombudsman. Conviction in court may lead to a custodial sentence; dismissal from the Service will be robustly pursued where allegations are proven to the required standard.

As officers and staff are held to higher standards of behaviour and accountability than members of the public, their right to privacy can, in certain circumstances, be fettered. This is to ensure that members of the police are accountable for the unique powers entrusted to them.

It is the duty of all officers and staff to challenge and report any inappropriate behaviour so that we all reflect the highest standards to which we have all committed, and are rightly expected by the public.

Any colleague who is concerned about inappropriate behaviour can have the confidence to report wrongdoing via systems and processes which are fair, empathetic and effective. They can have the confidence that they work in a safe, supportive and inclusive working environment.

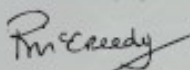
Our aim is simple, to be a Service that everyone can trust and be proud of.



Jon Boucher, Chief Constable



Chris Todd, Deputy Chief Constable



Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer

we care  
we listen  
we act



Police Service  
of Northern Ireland

[psni.police.uk](https://psni.police.uk)

