



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Accountability Report

Presented at Policing Board Meeting:
6 November 2025



**we care
we listen
we act**

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Chief Constable's Foreword



As we approach the end of the calendar year, I reflect on the challenges we continue to face and the progress we have made toward delivering a policing service that is trusted, resilient and capable of meeting the needs of all communities in Northern Ireland. When I addressed the Board one year ago, I highlighted the interdependent challenges of financial uncertainty, historically low police officer and staff numbers, pressure on morale, and the urgent need to address the harms caused by violence against women and girls and hate. Those issues remain at the forefront today. While there has been progress in our response, the core risks I identified twelve months ago continue to shape the landscape of policing in Northern Ireland and require our collective, sustained attention.

Protecting women and girls from violence and harm remains one of the most urgent priorities for society in Northern Ireland. Following the introduction of our Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Year Three Action Plan, we have strengthened our partnership and operational response

over the past year, recognising both the scale of the problem and its profound impact on confidence in policing. My focus remains on preventing harm, relentlessly pursuing offenders, and building an organisation in which women and girls, whether seeking our help or serving as part of our workforce, can have absolute confidence. To ensure our approach remains robust and trusted I commissioned an independent review led by Rachel Langdale KC, the findings of which will inform the next phase of our strategy. To deepen organisational understanding of the drivers of gendered harm, I recently co-hosted with partners PricewaterhouseCoopers, a keynote presentation by Dr Sajjan Gohel on “Misogyny - the Antechamber to Terror and Repression”, which is helping raise awareness across the Service of the link between misogyny, radicalisation and public safety. I will continue to promote the need for both organisational and public awareness of the threats that exist to the safety and well-being of women and girls.

I welcome the recent launch of the Board's consultation on the revised PSNI Code of Ethics. This represents the most significant reinforcement of ethical and behavioural standards since the first Code in 2003. The revised Code sets out the standards of behaviour and accountability we expect across the Service, reinforces the duty of candour, a principle to which I attach considerable importance, clarifies responsibilities around conflicts of interest, and seeks to strengthen the ethical foundations on which public confidence depends. This is an important opportunity for everyone with an interest in policing - colleagues, partners and the public, to shape the standards that guide our work. I encourage participation from all quarters to help us build a stronger, more accountable and trusted police service.

During the summer we witnessed serious racially motivated public disorder and hate driven incidents that caused real fear and harm to our minority ethnic communities. These events demonstrated the evolving nature of the threat we face, one that targets not only individuals but also our shared values of inclusion, tolerance and the rule of law. The PSNI responded decisively, but these incidents, fuelled by extremism and misinformation, underline the increasing operational demands placed on policing at a time when capacity is already stretched. Protecting vulnerable communities from intimidation and hate remains central to our purpose and reinforces the need for a resilient police service

capable of responding swiftly and upholding public confidence across all parts of our society.

Our ability to protect the public is fundamentally tied to the strength and sustainability of our operational capacity. We continue to operate under severe financial pressure and are projecting a £23m shortfall this year, which includes the cost of an anticipated police officer pay award. There have been positive indications of support in the forthcoming Monitoring Round towards the Recovery Business Case of £7m and a provisional first call of £6.7m contribution (approximately 50%) towards the police officer pay award. There is no question that my officers are deserving of this award, continuing as they do, to serve all the people of Northern Ireland with dedication through one of the most challenging periods in the history of policing in Northern Ireland and against the backdrop of a continued terrorist threat. The payment of this pay award is non-negotiable, yet until our broader funding deficit is fully addressed, planning remains constrained, recruitment and retention are at risk, and our ability to sustain frontline services is uncertain.

I have provided ample evidence of the unacceptably low funding provided by the Executive, resulting in our lowest ever number of officers and staff, together with the lack of any provision for increasing Troubles legacy costs that have not been funded by Westminster. This provides a double whammy against delivering the policing services Northern Ireland

communities deserve and that colleagues in police services in Great Britain and An Garda Síochána are able to provide.

I have written personally to the Secretary to the Treasury highlighting the various funding failures towards the PSNI and asked that he reconsider his decision not to permit a call on Treasury Reserve to fund the data breach liability, requesting that he further engage with the Minister for Finance. I have shared my letter with No. 10 Downing Street and the NI Executive. The continued support of the Board will be essential in securing the financial stability required to protect policing both now and in the future.

Even with increased recruitment, police officer numbers have declined to 6,247, a further reduction of 83 since last year, and remain well below the level required to deliver the policing service our communities need. We have now increased recruitment to 51 Student Officers each month; however, it will take time for students to complete training and join frontline duties. At the current pace, rebuilding capacity and resilience will progress gradually and is barely keeping pace with numbers leaving the Service. To address this we have developed a Workforce Recovery Plan to increase officer numbers towards 7,000 and police staff to 2,572 over the next three years. This Plan is a realistic and necessary path to stabilise core capacity if appropriately funded. Without this investment, policing in Northern Ireland will continue to

operate below safe levels and our ability to respond to calls for service, investigate crime and protect vulnerable people will be increasingly compromised.

The consequences of reduced officer numbers are visible across the Service. Neighbourhood policing, central to community confidence, prevention and the flow of local intelligence, is operating at significantly reduced capacity. Investigations are taking longer to conclude, delaying justice for victims and reducing satisfaction, particularly in cases involving vulnerability and high harm. Demand related to the management of dangerous offenders has seen a substantial year-on-year increase; our officer to offender ratio remains below recommended levels, increasing workloads and reducing our ability to monitor some of the most dangerous individuals, heightening the risk of reoffending. At the same time, demand linked to mental health crises and calls on behalf of other emergency services remains significant, with policing continuing to act as both a first and last resort in areas traditionally served by partners. These pressures are being felt in every community across Northern Ireland and underscore why rebuilding sustainable capacity is essential to maintaining public safety and confidence.

Morale across the organisation has shown improvement, supported by initiatives introduced to ensure our people feel properly recognised and valued. The Revised Environmental Allowance for police staff laid early

foundations for fairness, and this year has seen the continued growth of TEAM PSNI, strengthening our shared identity and reinforcing a culture of collective pride across all roles and ranks. The reconvened 'Long Service and Good Conduct Awards' ceremonies have been very well received. Hosting the latest ceremony in October was a privilege and an opportunity to recognise the dedication and exemplary commitment of officers and staff who have made a sustained contribution to policing. These awards remind us that behind every year of service lies a story of sacrifice, professionalism and public service.

The experiences and insights of our workforce are central to shaping this organisation's future and to delivering a policing service that is truly victim, community and workforce focused. I therefore welcome the strong engagement in the recent Inclusion Survey, with 50% of officers and staff contributing their views. The response level is extremely positive. I keenly await the findings, which should provide a clearer and more informed perspective on the experiences, both positive and negative, that matter most to our people and will inform the next phase of our organisational development.

However, these improvements co-exist with significant ongoing pressures. High demand, resource constraints and the enduring impact of the data breach continue to affect the organisation. While we have taken forward organisational learning in a spirit of openness and accountability,

the exceptional financial compensation consequences of the breach have not been met with dedicated funding.

Policing in Northern Ireland carries responsibilities unique within the United Kingdom. Legacy remains a deeply personal and defining issue for many in our communities. The emerging Legacy Framework brings renewed hope for victims and families who have waited far too long for information and resolution. Their pain is real and their determination justified. However, legacy activity currently costs around £24m annually, drawn from our core policing budget, diverting funding away from essential policing responsibilities and the protection of communities today. If this Framework is to succeed and victims are to receive a process they can trust, it must be supported through additional, dedicated funding as part of a whole-system approach.

Despite these significant challenges, the PSNI continues to deliver strong results for the public. We continue to tackle terrorism, disrupt organised crime, bring dangerous offenders before the courts and safeguard vulnerable victims. During October, the Close Protection Unit demonstrated exceptional professionalism in planning and delivering two significant visits. The first was a high-profile Royal engagement, during which I was honoured to meet and introduce the Prince and Princess of Wales to five outstanding PSNI officers who had each received Chief Constable's Highly Commended awards. These commendations recognised brave

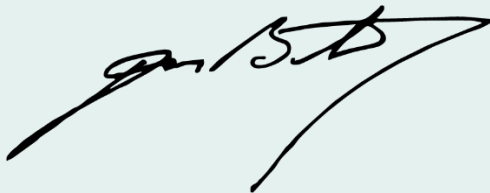
actions including tackling dangerous and armed suspects both on and off duty, resuscitating a baby, and responding to people intent on self-harm and violence driven by serious mental health issues. Each officer acted with humility, professionalism and a clear determination to safeguard others. The second was a summit in support of peace and co-operation, hosted by the UK Foreign Secretary and attended by 19 delegates from across the Western Balkans and the European Union. I am extremely grateful for the mutual aid provided by colleagues from across UK policing, which ensured these policing operations were delivered effectively and reinforced Northern Ireland's standing as a safe place to live, work and invest.

Officers working in and with communities are also reducing harm through targeted prevention initiatives such as Sport Changes Life, supporting community led efforts to address violence against women and girls, and enhancing capability through trauma-informed training delivered by partners. At the same time, our Service continues to modernise, with innovations such as the new digital firearms licensing platform improving accessibility and efficiency for the public. These achievements, delivered under sustained pressure, reflect a Service that is resilient, forward-looking and focused on supporting victims, protecting every community and empowering our workforce to do so.

To close, I want to acknowledge the wider network of organisations and charities whose support complements our internal welfare and community work and helps sustain families affected by policing related loss. I was honoured to attend the Rupert Fund's 50th Anniversary Widows and Parents Reception at the Guildhall in London. Established to support the families of RUC GC/PSNI officers who have lost loved ones in the line of duty, the Fund remains a vital source of welfare and practical assistance. Its renewed emphasis on locally based services in Northern Ireland will deliver more accessible, tailored support to bereaved families and strengthen the wider network of care that underpins morale and resilience across our Service. The Fund's continued work is an important complement to our organisational support and recognises the lasting sacrifice made by members of our Service and their families.

This remains a pivotal era for policing in Northern Ireland. Where the right support has been in place, we have delivered meaningful outcomes for the public; where that support has not yet materialised, the risks highlighted last year have not diminished, indeed, many have now crystallised. The choices made in the coming months will shape whether policing can fulfil its mandate to keep people safe, uphold the rule of law and maintain public confidence. Working with the Board, I remain resolute in my commitment to deliver a policing service that the people of Northern Ireland can trust, value and depend upon. However, I cannot do so without the means to

match the scale of the challenge. There is no doubt that the budget available for public services is under great strain and this is only likely to increase into the next financial year. Therefore, it is more important than ever that the case for policing is well made. I urge the Policing Board, Ministers, Politicians, Civic Leaders and those in Westminster to do all that they can to ensure policing is adequately resourced. With the right support and investment, we will continue to enhance safety, strengthen public confidence and deliver a policing service that every community across Northern Ireland deserves. If that support is not forthcoming, the consequences for policing – and for public confidence – will be severe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Boutcher', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jon Boutcher
Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland

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.psnl.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics>. These are in-year provisional figures and may be subject to change.

Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

In the 12 months from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025:

- There were 93,922 crimes recorded, a decrease of 4,430 (- 4.5%) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 49 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population¹ in the 12 months October 2024 to September 2025 compared with 51 in the previous 12 months.
- When compared with the previous year, crime levels have been lower in all of the months since October 2024 with the exception of August. The level has decreased by 550 offences in September 2025, (-7.0%).
- All crime classifications have recorded lower levels, with the exception of an increase in sexual offences (+297), robbery (+10) and an increase in

homicide from 16 to 20. Criminal damage offences fell by 1,228, with decreases also seen in violence without injury (-682), theft offences (excluding burglary) (-668), stalking and harassment (-628)², drug offences (-555), violence with injury (-538) and burglary (-324).

- All policing districts experienced a lower level of crime.
- Lower crime levels were seen in violence against the person. The largest volume decrease was seen in violence without injury whilst the largest percentage decrease was in stalking and harassment.
- Lower crime levels were also seen across burglary, theft, criminal damage, drug offences, public order offences, possession of weapons offences and miscellaneous crimes against society.
- Higher crime levels were seen in sexual offences and robbery.

¹ Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,920,382 for 2023, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. [Mid-year population estimates are available from the NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#). ² Full details are available in points to note on page 3 of The Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin,

which describes the changes in the recording of these 'behavioural offences' since April 2017 with the latest change from May 2023 requiring fewer such offences to be recorded.

Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents

In the 12 months from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025:

- There were 44,689 anti-social behaviour incidents in Northern Ireland, an increase of 885 (2.0%) on the previous 12 months. Despite the increase, this remains one of the lowest 12-month figures since the data series began in 2006/07.
- Between October 2024 and September 2025, six of the months recorded lower levels of anti-social behaviour when compared with the same month in the previous year: October 2024, and January, February, May, June and September 2025.
- When comparing the current and previous 12 months, seven policing districts showed higher levels of anti-social behaviour. Ten policing districts showed lower levels in September 2025 compared with August 2025.
- The six months that recorded lower levels of anti-social behaviour when compared with the same month in the previous year recorded the lowest levels of anti-social behaviour for those months since the start of the data series in April 2006. November 2024 and April 2025, each recorded their second lowest levels in the data series, while December 2024, and March, July and August 2025 recorded their third lowest levels in the data series.
- The latest month (September 2025) was 645 incidents lower than August 2025. Levels in September have been lower than those in August in each year of the data series, with the exception of 2023 and 2024.

Police Recorded Drug Seizures and Arrests

Drug Seizures - In the 12 months from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025:

- There were 7,082 drug seizure incidents, a decrease of 571 (7.5%) on the previous 12 months when 7,653 were recorded.
- When comparing the current and previous 12 months, eight policing districts showed a decrease in drug seizure incidents.
- There was an increase in the number of Class A seizure incidents and a fall in the number of Class B and Class C seizure incidents.
- Cannabis (Class B) was the most commonly seized drug, followed by cocaine (Class A), and pregabalin (Class C).
- Drug seizure incidents and drug offences recorded by the police generally track each other closely in both volume and trend. Please note that seizure incidents since April 2025 can continue to be processed until figures are finalised for the annual publication and may lead to an increase in the number of drug seizures recorded.

Drug Related Arrests - In the 12 months from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025

- There were 3,118 drug-related arrests, a decrease of 276 (8.1%) when compared with the previous 12 months
- When comparing the current and previous 12 months, seven policing districts showed a decrease in drug-related arrests. Belfast City showed the largest decrease of 166 (12.0%) when compared with the previous 12 months. Belfast City accounted for around two fifths of all drug-related arrests during the latest 12 months.
- 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.
- There were 386 drug-related arrests in July 2023, the highest monthly figure seen during the time period April 2021 to September 2025.

Police Recorded Security Situation

During 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025:

- There were no security related deaths, compared to one during the previous 12 months.
- There were 9 bombing incidents, compared to 6 during the previous 12 months and 11 shooting incidents, compared to 16.
- There were 22 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, the same number as during the previous 12 months. Half of these assaults occurred in Belfast (11). All 22 casualties were aged 18 years or older.

- There were 5 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 4 during the previous 12 months. Ards and North Down and Causeway Coast and Glens experienced 2 such attacks, while Derry City and Strabane experienced one. All 5 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 19 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 75 during the previous 12 months.
- 5 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 9 during the previous 12 months.

Finds of Firearms, Explosives and Ammunition; *these refer to the seizure or recovery of all illegal firearms, ammunition, explosives, rocket/mortar launchers, detonators and bomb making material/equipment. Replica/blank firing firearms, petrol bombs and petrol bomb making materials, grenades and munitions from World War 1 or World War 2 found on the beach or in attics etc. are not recorded as finds.*

Firearms Finds

There were 5 firearms found during the past 12 months, compared to 14 during the previous 12 months.

Explosive Finds

There were 0.01kg of explosives found during the past 12 months compared to 0.83kg during the previous 12 months.

Ammunition Finds

There were 269 rounds of ammunition found during the past 12 months compared to 696 rounds found in the previous 12 months.

Motoring Offence Statistics for Northern Ireland

In the 12 months from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025:

- There were 33,138 detections for motoring offences in Northern Ireland, of which 97% were dealt with by means of a fixed penalty notice or referral for prosecution.
- The remaining 3% (982) resulted in the completion of a speed awareness or safer driver course.
- Total detections decreased by 14% on the 38,441 detections recorded in the previous 12 months, with notable reductions across a number of offence groups including insurance, speeding and failing to stop / remain / report collision offences.
- Only two of the 19 offence groups showed an increase in detections over the year, the most notable being construction and use offences which rose by 16% to 3,256, representing an increase of 450 detections.
- The largest offence group was insurance offences with 5,300 which, along with speeding (4,340) accounted for under one-third of the total detections.
- The highest speed detected by PSNI officers in the latest 12 months was 143mph, on the M2 Rathbeg Southbound, Antrim.

Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland

Between 1 January 2025 and 31 July 2025:

- There were 2,720 Road Traffic Collisions recorded by police compared with 2,605 between January and July 2024, an increase of 115 collisions (4.4%).
- There were 27 fatalities, 551 people seriously injured and a further 3,759 people slightly injured. Total fatalities were down by 10 when compared to the same period of 2024.
- The number of drivers killed or seriously injured (KSI) decreased between January to July 2024 and January to July 2025, by 16 KSI (Casualties. Pedestrian, passenger and motorcyclist KSI casualties increased by 26, 12 and 3 respectively.
- Derry City and Strabane district recorded zero road deaths between January and July 2025. Belfast City district had the most people seriously injured with 93 recorded during this period.
- Five out of the eleven districts showed an increase in their KSI casualties between January and July 2024 and this year to July. The largest increase in KSI casualties was in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon district which recorded 19 additional KSIs compared to the same period in the previous year. In contrast, Fermanagh and Omagh district showed a decrease of 16 recorded KSI casualties over the same period.

- Single vehicle collisions resulted in 9 fatalities or 33.3% of all fatalities during January to July 2025. In the equivalent period of 2024 there were 16 single vehicle collision fatalities or 43.2% of all fatalities.
- The most common principal causation factors for KSI casualties during the reporting period were 'inattention or attention diverted' (64 KSI casualties), 'wrong course/position' (59) and 'excessive speed having regard to conditions' (48).

Outcome 1

Victim Focused



Everything we do begins with victims. During this reporting period, we have maintained a clear focus on bringing high-harm offenders to justice, improving how we communicate with victims and strengthening safeguarding for those most at risk. Across the Service, officers and staff have worked to ensure victims are treated with care, respect and fairness, while learning from their experiences to improve confidence and outcomes. This continued effort demonstrates our determination to prevent further harm and deliver justice that victims can trust.

Crime Department

Organised Crime Branch

Investigations

- On 10 September 2025, detectives, supported by colleagues from Police Scotland and the Cross Border Arrest and Transit Team, arrested a man in connection with the fraudulent importation and supply of multi-kilo consignments of herbal cannabis. The suspect was returned to Northern Ireland to appear before Ballymena Magistrates' Court.
- Detectives conducted a search in the Glenalina Park area of Belfast on 11 September 2025, seizing approximately 4kg of cocaine with an estimated street value of £400,000, along with associated drug paraphernalia. A suspect was arrested and charged with possession of Class A drugs, possession with intent to supply, and possession of criminal property.
- On 24 September 2025, in an operation with the Joint Agency Task Force, detectives seized 23kg of cannabis with an estimated street value of £300,000 concealed in a suitcase following a search at Belfast City Airport. One suspect was arrested and charged with importing and possessing Class B drugs with intent to supply. This is a further example of the effectiveness of cross border cooperation in tackling serious organised crime.
- On 29 September 2025, searches of seven properties in Armagh City resulted in the seizure of cannabis plants and herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of £60,000, alongside cash and drug paraphernalia. Three men were arrested in relation to cannabis cultivation and supply offences. Two have been charged with these offences along with the offenses of possession of criminal property and possession of a prohibited weapon.

Court Outcomes

- A human trafficking offender had his sentence increased by the Court of Appeal from seven to nine years following a successful appeal that the original sentence was unduly lenient. Since the initial conviction, three further potential victims have come forward, demonstrating increased confidence in reporting.

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

- A defendant received a 32 month sentence, suspended for three years, for possession of a sawn-off shotgun and ammunition in suspicious circumstances. The court accepted coercion by East Belfast UVF.

Economic Crime Unit

Court Outcomes

- Antrim Crown Court granted a confiscation order with criminal benefit of £235,255 following the conviction of a suspect for drug trafficking and money laundering offences in December 2024. £12,112.98 was realised immediately from seized cash. An outstanding £223,142.02 remains liable to the Crown pending asset identification.
- On 29 September 2025, a man was sentenced at Craigavon Crown Court to a 12 month custodial sentence, suspended for two years, for fraud offences, including abuse of position in the financial mismanagement of an 80 year old vulnerable victim.

SERIOUS CRIME BRANCH

Investigations

- **Criminal Investigation Department**

Detectives have charged two men with arson and conspiracy to commit arson following a linked series of attacks across Belfast, Moira and Lisburn.

- Detectives have charged a man in relation to a spate of arson attacks on 5G masts in Belfast.

- **Major Investigation Team**

- Detectives have charged a man and woman with the murder Barry Furfey in Lisburn on September 2025.

- **Terrorism Investigation Unit**

- Detectives have charged two men with preparation of terrorist acts following the discovery of a suspected improvised explosive device in Co. Louth.

Court Outcomes

- Two men were sentenced to 26 and 24 years' imprisonment respectively for the murder of Malcolm McKeown in Waringstown in August 2019, along with concurrent indeterminate sentences of 10 years for firearms offences.
- Three individuals were sentenced in relation to drug criminality linked to the New IRA, receiving custodial and suspended sentences ranging from 24 to 37 months following seizures of controlled drugs valued at £8,000 and financial evidence of

transactions relating to the supply of drugs totalling £200,000.

- A suspect was sentenced to 30 months for firearms offences, including conversion of imitation firearms. He had his sentence increased from 2½ to 5 years following an appeal by the prosecution.
- A defendant has been sentenced to a 20 month custodial sentence (suspended for three years) and will be required to pay £15,000 order over three years in relation to a number of fraud offences, including fraud by abuse of position, against a medical practice in Limavady. The practice was defrauded out of £63,000 between February and May 2023.
- A man was sentenced to three years' imprisonment (half to be served on licence) for burglary with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, common assault, possession of an offensive weapon with intent and threats to commit damage criminal damage to the victim's house, car and a police car following an incident in Londonderry in May 2023. Another man was also sentenced to 100 hours' community service and probation for two years for common assault and possession of an offensive weapon.

PUBLIC PROTECTION BRANCH

(REaL) Reference, Engagement and Listening Event– Victim Journey

D/Superintendent Kerry Brennan attended the REaL Event on 14 October 2025, delivering a presentation on progress in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) over the last three years. Partners and stakeholders commented positively on our achievements to date and welcomed a proposed future focus on children, regarding it a progressive next step for the VAWG Action Plan. The Service's current Action Plan is being reviewed as we look to prioritise our focus and activity into year four and beyond.

Inspection and Assurance

- Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) has completed fieldwork for the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Inspection, with findings now under review. This inspection, which includes case file analysis and engagement with thematic leads, will inform further service improvements.

CJINI's inspection into Child Criminal Exploitation has reached the factual accuracy stage, with publication to follow thereafter. The inspection will assess PSNI's response to emerging threats and safeguarding responsibilities under the Child Protection framework.

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue are inspecting the Service in November 2025, an element of which comprises 'Inclusion &

Wellbeing'. There will also be a revisit of the 2024 report relating to the recommendations made in the Offender Investigation Unit and Child Internet Protection Teams.

Court Outcomes

- Operation Niccolic, a complex large scale catfishing investigation into the online abuse of 47 child victims has resulted in an offender receiving a sentence of 27 years' imprisonment. His offending involved the use of numerous aliases relating to young teenage boys to make contact with children aged between eight and 16. Detectives made 176 victim identification and safeguarding referrals to UK police services as part of the investigation.
- In a recent rape case, a 15 year old victim reported a sexual assault in Bangor. Following a robust investigation, the suspect has now entered a guilty plea at Downpatrick Court, with sentencing awaited.
- Two suspects have been convicted following the investigation into a serious sexual assault in Dungannon town centre in September 2023. Both remain on remand awaiting sentencing in November.
- On 24 September 2025, a defendant pleaded guilty to an offence of non-fatal strangulation. The conviction followed a report to police in March 2025 that he had strangled his partner to the point whereby she lost consciousness. He remains on remand awaiting sentence.

LOCAL POLICING

- On 16 October 2025, 125 police officers across Derry City & Strabane and North Area, led by Superintendent Sinead McIlldowney, carried out a coordinated operation targeting individuals evading arrest or wanted in connection with ongoing investigations. Officers made 127 attempts to locate offenders and achieved 32 arrests, including a number of individuals wanted for serious domestic abuse, GBH with intent, and offences against children. In addition, officers also maximised visibility by conducting bail compliance checks, vehicle checkpoints and engaged with community members to provide reassurance. This focused activity has significantly reduced threat, risk and harm within local communities and demonstrated our commitment to tackling Violence Against Women and Girls and repeat offending.
- In Belfast, response officers acted swiftly following the report of a violent assault in the New Lodge area involving the use of hammers. Two suspects were quickly located and detained. A concealed firearm was recovered. Both have been charged with aggravated burglary, possession of a firearm with intent, and a range of drug related offences.
- In Lisburn, the prompt and thorough investigative response by officers led to the identification and arrest of a suspect involved in hate-motivated criminal damage close to an international supermarket and

prayer centre in the town centre.
The suspect has been charged to Court. Officers coordinated efforts with the local Council to ensure this graffiti, which has caused significant community distress, was promptly removed.

- In Newry, Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Policing Team working with colleagues from Organised Crime Branch, Tactical Support Group and partners in His Majesty's Revenue and Customs recovered £250,000 in cash, £40,000 cocaine, £10,000 worth of cannabis and 20,000 cigarettes following a search. Burner phones were also recovered. This collaborative response has disrupted a significant criminal operation.

Outcome 2

Community Focused



Policing is most effective when it is visible, trusted and delivered in partnership. Over recent months, officers have combined strong neighbourhood presence with targeted problem solving and community engagement, working alongside partners to prevent harm and build resilience. From local initiatives that support young people to multi-agency operations that protect the public, our work remains focused on keeping communities safe, tackling the issues that matter most to them and strengthening public confidence through visibility and collaboration.

- In response to six fatal collisions in Ards and North Down, on 3 October 2025, Newtownards neighbourhood officers, accompanied by Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Chair Pete Wray, led a multi-agency road safety operation alongside the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA), Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland Road Safety Partnership and colleagues from Roads Policing and District Support Team.

The purpose of the operation was to target and address driving offences contributing to serious and fatal road incidents. Almost 200 drivers were detected speeding and numerous Fixed Penalty Notices were issued. Several arrests were made for offences of driving under the influence of alcohol and taking a vehicle without the owners consent. A range of other motoring offences, including driving without insurance and using a mobile phone while driving were detected and a number of vehicles were intercepted and directed for inspection by the DVA enforcement team operating from Newtownards MOT.

In addition, a Speed Awareness Day was held at Glastry College, where officers engaged with young people, delivering educational sessions on the risks of excessive speed and demonstrated use of the laser speed detection devices

On 13 October 2025, a subsequent Police and Community Safety Partnership led road safety meeting brought together senior police, elected representatives and partner

agencies to agree a collective plan to prevent further road deaths.

- In Newtownards, neighbourhood officers launched the Sport Changes Life initiative, a multi-week partnership led programme, using sport and education to engage young people aged 11 to 14, strengthen relationships with neighbourhood police, and reduce anti-social behaviour. It combines sports and physical activity in the form of team building, multi-sport challenges and confidence building exercises, with educational workshops on good relations, personal development and active citizenship. Participants also co-plan a small intergenerational social impact event to foster dialogue and community ties. Delivered with schools, youth organisations and partners, and funded through the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC), the programme aims to provide positive role models, encourage inclusion, respect and resilience, and create alternatives to offending.
- Across Antrim and Newtownabbey District, officers delivered pop-up surgeries and awareness events during Hate Crime Awareness Week, including in local schools and public spaces. These events provided crime prevention advice, challenged intolerance and built stronger relationships with minority communities.
- A cross community driving initiative took place at Nutts Corner. It involved 15 young people undertaking practical driving and

road safety education, and was supported by partners JMR Driving Academy and the Road Safe NI Charity.

- Antrim Neighbourhood Policing Team held an information day at Greenmount Agricultural College providing crime prevention and personal safety advice to a number of new students as they start college life.
- Working in collaboration with the Local Police and Community Safety Partnership who have secured Ending Violence Against Women and Children funding, officers across Lisburn and Castlereagh District have engaged in a programme of events commencing in November that include Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops, Walk and Talks, Walks with Women, educational programmes for post-primary settings in Lisburn and Castlereagh. All Officers in Lisburn and Castlereagh have already received trauma-informed approach training from Women's Aid, and in addition, the District has been invited to pilot the Hollie Guard app.
- On 25 September 2025, detectives from the Economic Crime Unit delivered specialist training under the 'Collaborate to Disrupt' programme to around 50 representatives from the insurance sector and legal profession. The session focused on treating insurance fraud as a criminal dishonesty offence rather than a motoring issue, emphasising the wider financial harm to the public through increased premiums. This reflects our focus on prevention and

partnership-led disruption of economic crime.

- Following the disorder over the summer in Ballymena, officers have supported the formation of a community led group to channel local concerns into constructive activity. The initiative aims to reduce protest related disorder, promote victim and community led solutions, support women led leadership and safe spaces, and build long term community resilience. Objectives include assisting the group to formalise, secure funding and resources, facilitating partnerships with police, council and community organisations, and developing services such as a safe drop-in space. The programme seeks to shift energy from confrontation to positive local action, improve engagement between police and the community, and reduce the frequency of disruptive protests.

Major Events (Close Protection Unit)

- **Operation Oakwood** successfully delivered the policing operation for the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Despite last minute itinerary changes and challenging logistics, officers ensured the safety of the Royal couple while maintaining routine protection for other key individuals. The visit generated extensive positive media coverage, enhancing public confidence in the Service's capability and professionalism.

- **Operation Semimade** saw the UK Foreign Secretary host international delegates at Hillsborough Castle in a major diplomatic summit. This large scale policing operation required mutual aid, strategic coordination with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and collaboration across PSNI departments. Delegates provided highly positive feedback.

The successful delivery of these high profile policing operations is underpinned by the dedication of officers and staff across the Close Protection Unit and showcases their resilience, adaptability and professionalism. Despite resource constraints and last minute changes, officers went above and beyond to secure the VIPs while maintaining core protection duties.

These operations demonstrate the Unit's strong planning capability, effective teamwork and unwavering commitment, reinforcing confidence in the Service's ability to operate at both national and international levels.

Firearms & Explosives Branch (FEB) - Launch of Online Application Platform

FEB is responsible for the safe and effective licensing of firearms owners, firearms dealers and clubs within Northern Ireland. On September 2025 the Police Service launched an online application platform which uses 'My PSNI Portal' to facilitate members of the public logging in securely to complete an application to acquire firearms.

This modernised system integrates enhancements requested by users since the service first moved online, offering a more streamlined and user-friendly experience. Early engagement events were held with firearms dealers and club representatives to test and refine the platform prior to launch, demonstrating a co-design approach that has resulted in improved functionality and accessibility.

In the first four weeks of operation, nearly 2,000 applications have been successfully submitted. Positive feedback has been received from users, highlighting the system's ease of use and improved processing efficiency. This marks a significant step in modernising licensing processes, enabling staff to focus on risk assessment and public safety while reducing administrative burden.

This webpage can be access at:

<https://www.psni.police.uk/request/firearms-and-explosives-branch>

Outcome 3

Workforce Focused



Our workforce is our greatest strength. We continue to invest in the wellbeing, training and professional development of our officers and staff, while modernising systems and processes to make work more efficient and effective. Despite the pressures our people face, they continue to demonstrate professionalism, adaptability and commitment every day. By supporting them with the right tools, leadership and environment, we are building a Service that is resilient, capable and proud to serve every community in Northern Ireland.

Video Officer Attendance Team – Digital Policing and Workforce Enablement

The Video Officer Attendance Team (VOAT) was launched as an innovative digital model for delivering policing services and addressing some of the most critical workforce challenges facing the organisation, including historically low officer numbers and a record volume of role adjustments.

Currently, PSNI's headcount stands at 6,247 officers, with

approximately 1,100 officers subject to one or more role adjustments that may limit their ability to undertake the full range of frontline duties. The majority of these officers are aligned to local policing, which has created significant challenges in sustaining frontline visibility and capacity.

VOAT provides a practical and inclusive solution by enabling officers with role adjustments to connect directly with victims through a secure video platform. From a supported office environment, officers can investigate incidents, gather evidence and progress investigations remotely, making full use of their policing skills and experience in a meaningful, victim focused way. This approach reduces administrative and travel burdens, strengthens workforce utilisation, and supports delivery of the *Workforce-Focused* outcome that "PSNI has a representative, valued and enabled workforce."

Importantly, VOAT remains an optional service for victims. Where a victim prefers, a physical police resource continues to attend in person. However, early feedback

highlights strong satisfaction with the convenience, discretion and efficiency of the service, and current demand now exceeds existing capacity.

Since its inception in April 2025, VOAT has delivered tangible benefits, including an estimated 11,000 constable hours saved, improved allocation of officer time to core duties and measurable uplift in workforce capability and morale. Financial efficiencies of approximately £1.2m have also been realised, primarily through reduced travel time, vehicle use and administrative processing.

Building on this success, two additional regional VOAT hubs are planned to open in January and March 2026, which will effectively triple the current resource base. Once fully implemented, the initiative is projected to offset up to 25% of local policing demand on frontline officers, allowing more visible policing in communities while maintaining a high quality service for victims.

Local Policing – Officer Support and Capability

Funding has been obtained to deliver SELECTA DNA training to Neighbourhood Policing and District Support Team officers in Lisburn and Castlereagh District. This forensic marking has been shown to reduce burglaries and thefts by up to 83% and will be rolled out to relevant businesses and Op Russett victims.

