



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland

# Accountability Report

Presented at Policing Board Meeting:  
5 February 2026



**we care  
we listen  
we act**

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# Chief Constable's Foreword



In this, my first Accountability Report of 2026, I present my formal update on **Outcome 3 of the Policing Plan 2025–2030: PSNI has a Representative, Valued and Enabled Workforce**, as set out in the Annual Performance Plan 2025/26.

This Outcome speaks to the foundations on which effective policing depends - the availability, capability and resilience of our workforce, the standards we uphold, and the resources that enable officers and staff to serve victims and communities with professionalism and care. At a time of sustained demand and financial constraint, this outcome is central to maintaining public confidence and ensuring policing in Northern Ireland remains effective, ethical and trusted. It is a strategic priority that we should all be invested in across society in Northern Ireland.

This is also the first Accountability Report of the PSNI's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. That milestone provides an opportunity to recognise how far policing has come in a society shaped by conflict, and the strength of the accountability, human rights and victim, community and workforce focused model established since the Patten reforms. Equally, it is a reminder that progress cannot be taken for granted. The confidence and legitimacy built over the past 25 years depend on continued investment in people, capability and infrastructure, and on honest leadership about the pressures the Service faces today.

The financial context remains challenging. The additional funding allocated following the December Monitoring provided a much needed budgetary lifeline and should enable the Service to reach a break even position this year. This was a significant and welcome demonstration of support for policing. The publication of the proposed Draft Budget in early January offered some encouragement, including hope of a multi-year budget, support for our Workforce Recovery Plan and provision to settle Data Breach claims. These positive announcements should be recognised and are incredibly welcome. I am grateful for the various Ministers and stakeholders who have supported my position in lobbying for these issues to be progressed. However, with only weeks remaining before the start of the new financial year, uncertainty persists.

My overall assessment remains that the PSNI continues to face a significant and recurring funding deficit in the years ahead, with serious implications for workforce sustainability and service delivery. This cycle of short-term fixes and renewed instability must end, and I urge the Executive to take stock during the current consultation period.

Against this backdrop, rebuilding and sustaining our workforce remains a priority. I was delighted that in January we launched a new recruitment campaign for Student

Officers and Custody Detention Officers, reflecting our continued determination to invest in future capacity and capability. Policing depends on people, people drawn from all communities and from all backgrounds. We want to shape an organisation that is reflective of all the wonderful communities we serve, that is equipped to meet the complex and unique challenges policing faces in Northern Ireland. We want people who are committed to making a positive difference in society and are dedicated to fairness and human rights based policing. Recruitment is not simply about numbers; it is about representativeness, resilience and maintaining the ability to respond visibly and effectively to the needs of a changing society.

Confidence and legitimacy are also shaped by how policing continues to address the past alongside present day responsibilities. In January, I provided evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on Operation Kenova. That work demonstrated the value of rigorous investigation, independent oversight and victim-centred engagement, while also highlighting serious historic failings and the continuing impact of legacy issues on policing today. The lessons from Kenova are clear: openness, accountability and adequate resourcing are essential if confidence is to be sustained across all communities, and legacy demands must not be allowed to undermine the Service's capacity to meet contemporary threats and protect the public.

Also in January, I was pleased to welcome members of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to PSNI as part of their Inquiry into policing and security in Northern Ireland. In the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the PSNI, it is right that policing's progress, pressures and future sustainability are examined and debated. Structural under funding, legacy costs and an enduring security threat are interlinked challenges that must be addressed if the gains of the past quarter century are to be preserved and built upon.

I remain closely engaged with recent announcements from Westminster on policing reform in England and Wales. I have advocated for modernisation in policing for many years, and I will continue to monitor these developments

carefully, identifying learning and opportunities that may be relevant to policing in Northern Ireland.

My report this month highlights the excellent work that continues to be delivered across the Service during a period of sustained operational demand, including the Christmas and New Year period. My officers and staff investigated serious and complex offending, carried out decisive safeguarding interventions to protect those at risk, and arrested individuals causing harm. Neighbourhood teams maintained visible policing in communities, disrupted organised criminality and drug supply, and worked closely with partners to address emerging risks and vulnerability. Specialist capabilities, including officers from Armed Response, Roads Policing and Tactical Support Groups, supported this activity through targeted enforcement and high-risk interventions, including officers placing themselves in danger to prevent loss of life, such as rescuing individuals from the sea.

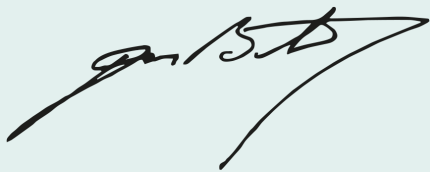
Together, these examples reflect the day-to-day reality of policing and underline the importance of sustaining the people, capability and resources on which this work depends.

Outcome 3 is about supporting the conditions that make this level of policing possible. It speaks to how we support our fantastic workforce, how we manage resources under unprecedented low numbers, and how we can best maintain the capability, resilience and legitimacy required to serve victims and communities effectively.

Our people remain our greatest strength, and ensuring they are supported, resourced and trusted is essential to maintaining public confidence and delivering policing now and into the future.

I want to conclude my foreword with an appeal to people from across all of our vibrant and wonderful communities to consider policing as a career. It is a uniquely rewarding

public service and is fundamental to the provision of a safe, secure and healthy society for future generations. Come and be a part of something special.

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

**Jon Boutcher QPM**

Chief Constable

Police Service of Northern Ireland

# Introduction

## Outcome 3: PSNI Has a Representative, Valued and Enabled Workforce

We are committed to being a Police Service that is more representative of the community, supported through a positive working environment and appropriately resourced to serve the public with high standards of professionalism and care.

Policing is a human endeavour and our officers and staff matter because they are at the heart of the experiences, relationships and outcomes we deliver for communities and victims of crime.

Our workforce is remarkable. In choosing to serve others, they have committed themselves and their families to a life of public service and the highest of professional standards.

Trust and confidence in our service is not only generated by us being representative of the communities we serve through a diverse workforce demographic but also by the range of specialist skills, talents and perspectives that they apply to their work. This is what makes us better at problem solving, excellent at working in partnership with other agencies and communities and equipped to compassionately support victims with a dedication to justice.

Our workforce cannot do their jobs without other essential resources – adequate finances to deliver a safe and progressive service, data and information for improved detection, prevention and response to crime, equipment, technology and specialist tactical resources needed to keep people safe and a sustainable estate to maintain our regional and local presence.

Outcome 3 assesses our performance against three indicators and focuses on workforce representativeness from recruitment and through career progression, standards of professionalism and conduct in role, and the effective use of resources to support workforce wellbeing and organisational capability and sustainability.

PSNI's Workforce, Fleet, Estates, Transformation and Digital Strategies ensure that the management and investment of all our resources aligns to this outcome of having a representative, valued and enabled workforce.

# Performance Dashboard

## Outcome 3: PSNI Has a Representative, Valued and Enabled Workforce

3.1 Representativeness of the Police Service	Adequate Progress
3.2 Standards of Professionalism and Conduct	Adequate Progress
3.3 Making Best Use of Resources	Good Progress

# Progress Updates Against Impact Measure

## 3.1 Representativeness of the Police Service

Adequate Progress

*We have strong visibility of workforce representativeness across the full employee lifecycle and assurance that recruitment systems are operating fairly and proportionately. Targeted action is in place informed by increasingly granular data and engagement insight. Progress remains incremental and constrained by high workforce stability and wider societal factors.*

A representative workforce is fundamental to policing legitimacy, public confidence and organisational effectiveness. Indicator 3.1 assesses the extent to which we reflect the communities we serve across the workforce lifecycle, from attraction and recruitment through to progression, retention and stability.

This update provides our self-assessment of performance under this indicator, setting out where progress has been made, where challenges persist, and how we are addressing barriers to under-representation. It also identifies where further insight and sustained effort will be required to deliver long-term improvement.

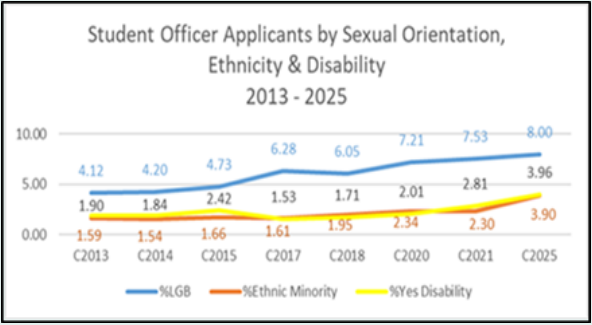
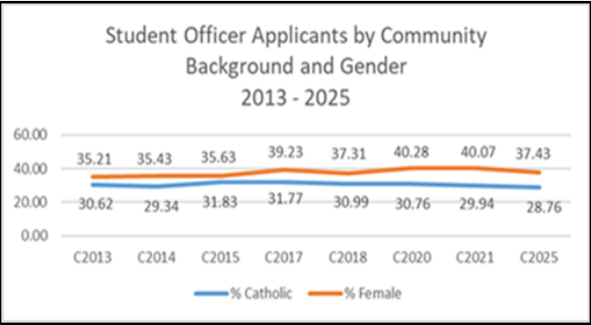
We have clear visibility of workforce representation across protected characteristics, socio-economic background and geography. Progress remains incremental, with stability in some areas and modest improvement in others. As a unique employer within Northern Ireland, we recognise that representativeness is a long-term structural challenge rather than a short-term performance lever, and this understanding shapes how we set expectations and provide assurance.

While the scale of the challenge is evident in the data, it has not diminished our commitment. We continue to apply sustained outreach, engagement and affirmative action to broaden access to policing careers and to strengthen confidence among communities historically under-represented within the Service.

Our recruitment and selection processes are designed to operate fairly and proportionately while identifying the values, behaviours and capability required for modern policing. Evidence from recent campaigns provides assurance that these processes are not acting as a barrier to under-represented groups, allowing organisational focus to extend beyond process and towards longer-term factors influencing attraction, progression and retention.

# 1. Attraction

Analysis of applicant data from recent Student Officer Recruitment Campaigns shows that representation for some under-represented groups has improved, while others have plateaued despite sustained outreach and engagement activity.



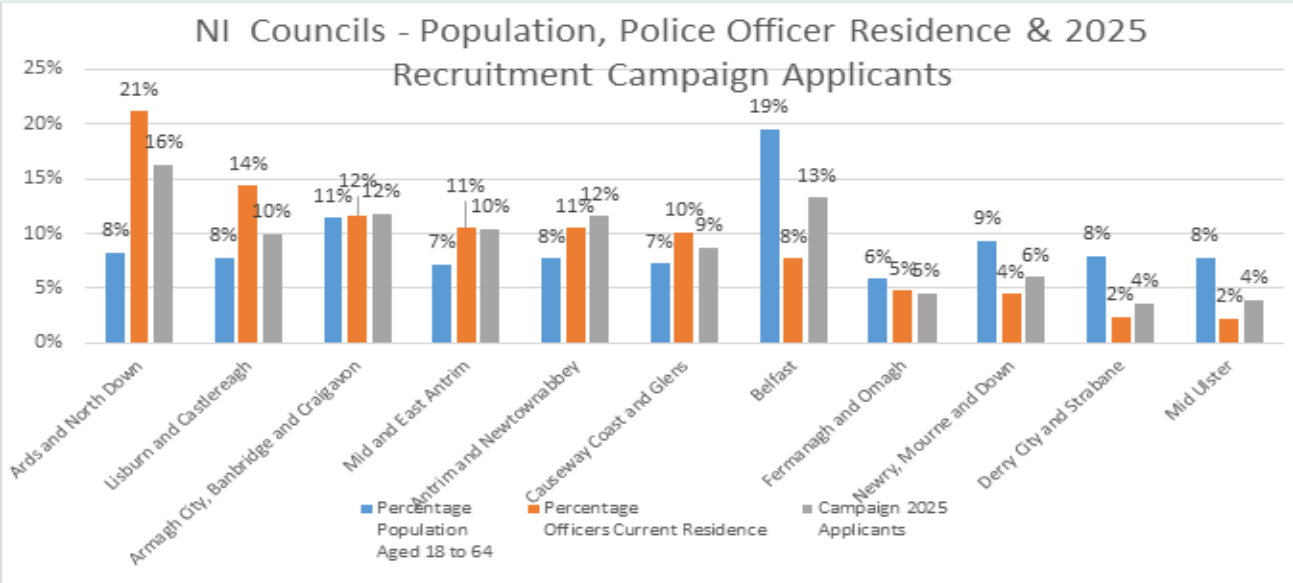
12-year trend in Student Officer Applicants

	2025 Student Officer Recruitment Campaign Applicants	NI Census 2021
Catholic	28.8%	45.7%
Female	37.4%	51%
Ethnic Minority	3.9%	3.4%
LGBT+	7.9%	2.1%
Disability	4.0%	

Applicant profile, 2025 Student Officer Recruitment Campaign: comparison with NI Census 2021

Socio-economic analysis continues to show lower representation from areas of higher deprivation. Geographic analysis identifies variation across council areas, with lower than statistically expected application rates from Mid Ulster, Derry City & Strabane and Newry, Mourne and Down.

Ards and North Down recorded the highest overall application volumes and statistically higher than anticipated applications from the Catholic community.



1. Officer and applicant residence data is mapped against valid recorded Northern Ireland postcodes.  
2. Population data is based on those residing in each council area aged 18 – 64 (not specifically those economically active). Source data: 2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland and Estimates of the Population Aged 85 and Over for Northern Ireland, 2023 (and 2001 to 2022 revised) | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

This analysis shows a correlation between council areas with higher or lower numbers of officers residing and application levels from those areas. The data reflects current residence rather than place of origin or lifetime geography. While we continue to prioritise engagement with under-represented areas, it is encouraging that gaps have narrowed in several council areas when compared with statistically expected levels and officer residence patterns.

Together, these patterns indicate that attraction is influenced not only by recruitment activity but also by broader societal, cultural and labour market factors. We are using our data in a focused way to target under-represented groups, particularly applicants from higher deprivation areas, recognising that sustained and tailored engagement is required to influence perceptions of policing as a viable and welcoming career.

We continue to embed outreach and engagement activity along with education focused initiatives designed to improve understanding of policing careers. During planning for the 2025 Student Officer Recruitment Campaign, we delivered a series of Reference, Engagement and Listening Events (REaL) with Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist; Catholic, Nationalist and Republican; LGBTQIA+; and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, aimed at improving understanding, addressing concerns and building longer-term confidence.

Our approach prioritises persistence, local tailoring and trust building. We are also adapting messaging to reflect the expectations of the Gen Z labour market, informed by the voice and experience of recent recruits.

## 2. Recruitment

Detailed analysis of the 2025 Student Officer Recruitment Campaign provides assurance that recruitment processes operate openly, equitably and proportionately. Attrition occurs gradually across all selection stages and across all applicant categories.

Performance across assessment stages demonstrates that several under-represented groups perform as well as, or better than, others. Socio-economic analysis of the merit pool shows modest improvement compared with previous campaigns, although disparities between applicants from more and less deprived areas remain.

	% of Applicants	% passed IST	% within merit pool
Female	37.4%	35.8%	36.9%
Catholic	28.8%	25.8%	24.8%
Ethnic Minority	3.9%	2.5%	1.8%
LGBT+	7.9%	8.5%	8.5%
Disability	4.0%	3.9%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,822</b>	<b>2,630</b>	<b>1,195</b>

*Student Officer Recruitment Assessment stage outcomes, 2025 campaign (by characteristic)*

This evidence confirms that selection processes are operating as intended and are not acting as a barrier to under-represented groups. This allows organisational focus to move beyond process explanation and towards longer-term factors influencing employer attractiveness, applicant confidence, early career choices, workplace experience and progression.

During 2025, we launched 33 external recruitment campaigns across a number of administrative operational and professional roles, including Administrative Support Officers (ASO), Call Handlers, Occupational Health and ICT posts. Our ASO campaign attracted 1,797 candidates: 26.2% Catholic, 69.1% Female, 3.7% Ethnic Minority, 8.3 LGBT+ and 8.9% Disability.

Ongoing Custody Detention Officer recruitment has been aligned with our Student Officer campaign to maximise outreach impact and engagement with our recruitment platforms.

As police staff numbers grow through the recovery programme, we anticipate that broader external recruitment will contribute positively to overall workforce representativeness.

### 3. Progression

We recognise the importance of representativeness across all grades and ranks in the Service. We have transparent, open and accessible promotion and development opportunities supported by robust governance and quality assurance arrangements. Equality monitoring data is routinely reviewed to ensure fairness.

Over the past 12 months, 373 officers and 159 police staff have been successful in promotion processes.

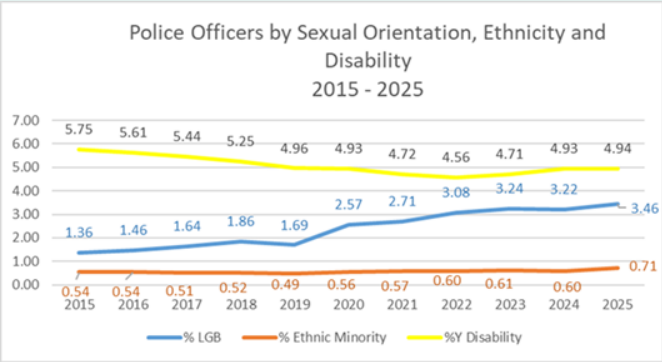
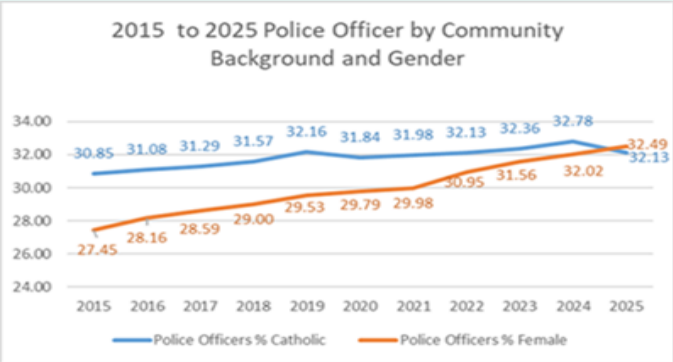
Promotions Officers & Staff 2025							
Subarea	Promoted to Rank/Grade	Headcount	% Catholic	% Female	% Ethnic minority	% LGBT	% Disability
Police Officer	Supt & Above	19	15.79%	57.89%	0.00%	10.53%	0.00%
	Ch Insp	43	48.84%	44.19%	0.00%	4.65%	2.33%
	Insp	77	41.56%	31.17%	1.30%	9.09%	5.19%
	Sergt	234	31.62%	40.17%	0.43%	6.41%	2.99%
Total Officer		373	34.85%	39.68%	0.54%	6.97%	3.22%
Police Staff Internal & External	SO & Above	31	19.35%	64.52%	0.00%	3.23%	3.23%
	EO1	35	20.00%	62.86%	0.00%	2.86%	8.57%
	EO2 & ASO	93	16.13%	67.74%	2.15%	4.30%	5.38%
Total		159	17.61%	66.04%	1.26%	3.77%	5.66%
Prepared by Workforce Planning & Equality Monitoring, HR, People & Organisational Development, PSNI							

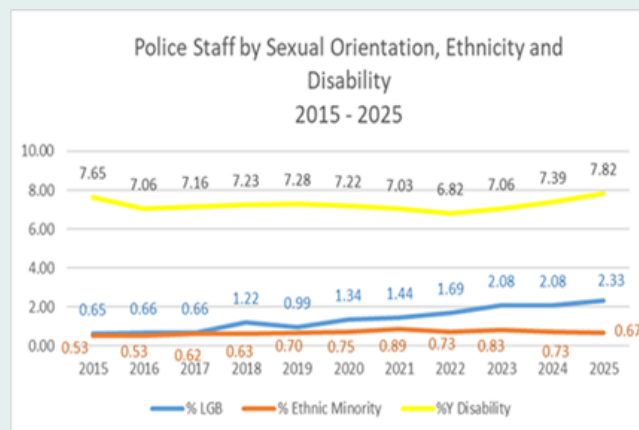
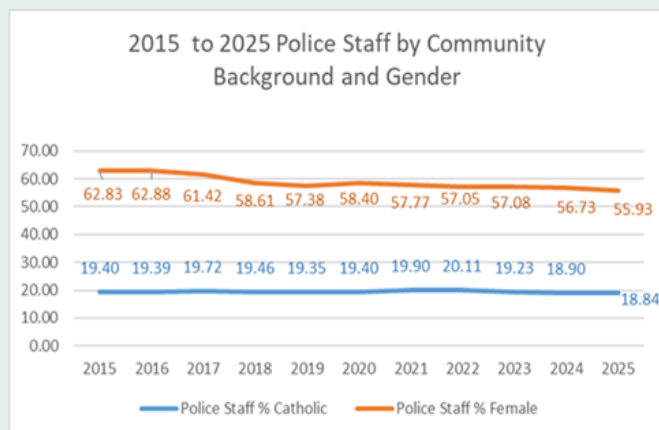
Leadership and management development has been strengthened to support those newly promoted, recognising the pivotal role first-line leaders play in shaping culture, inclusion and workforce experience. Coaching and mentoring capability has also been expanded, with 26 officers and staff qualifying as Institute of Leadership and Management coaches during the year.

During 2025, we launched our Race and Ethnicity Action Plan and refreshed the Disability Action Plan. These are two aspects of our broader equality obligations and our commitment to being a diverse and inclusive workplace. They support our understanding of how representation is sustained, or narrows, across grades and roles.

### 4. Workforce retention and stability

Over the ten-year period from 2015 to 2025, workforce representation has remained broadly stable across several characteristics, with gradual improvement in others.





	Police Officer 31/12/2025	Police Staff 31/12/2025	NI Census 2021
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>32.8%</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Ethnic Minority</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
<b>LGBT+</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	

Workforce composition, 31 December 2025, compared with NI Census 2021

Workforce stability remains high, with stability index rates of 93.46% for police officers and 92.12% for police staff. While this supports continuity, it means changes in workforce composition occur gradually. Recruitment gains take time to be realised, while relatively small numbers of leavers from under-represented groups can have disproportionate impact.

Exit data shows that police officers are frequently retained until retirement, with ill-health retirement rates higher than comparative forces. We are examining contributory factors to strengthen prevention, wellbeing support and recovery pathways, and to reduce avoidable loss of experience and capability.

Police officer leaver comparison - 2024/2025		
Leaving Reason	PSNI	England & Wales
<b>Retirement</b>	33%	36%
<b>Voluntary Resignation</b>	15%	53%
<b>Medical</b>	47%	5%
<b>Discipline</b>	4%	5%
<b>Death</b>	1%	1%

For police staff, wider labour-market choice presents retention challenges. We are responding by strengthening insight into what matters most to different professional groups and targeting changes where they will have greatest impact, including pay arrangements for clinical staff and flexible working models.

## 5. Overall assessment

As a Service, we take a targeted and evidence informed approach to improving workforce representativeness. Visibility across the workforce lifecycle is strong, and progress to date is incremental. Representation within applicant pools and across the workforce has remained broadly stable, reflecting the long-term and complex nature of the challenge.

Attraction and recruitment remain essential, and we continue sustained outreach and engagement activity. However, our evidence shows that such activity alone is insufficient to deliver step-change improvement. Progress is also influenced by wider societal, demographic and labour market factors that sit beyond our direct control.

We are confident that recruitment, development and promotion processes operate fairly and proportionately, finding no evidence of systemic disadvantage. In some areas, outcomes for under-represented groups are stronger once individuals apply. For example, we have seen LGBT+ representation exceed population benchmarks and we are actively learning from successes such as this to inform future activity.

At this early stage of the Policing Plan, our assessment reflects a clear understanding of the current data, the pace at which change can reasonably be expected, and the areas where further insight and effort are required. Continued improvement will depend on sustained recruitment, sharper insight into progression and retention dynamics, and disciplined evaluation of what genuinely supports workforce representativeness.

# Progress Updates Against Impact Measure

## 3.2 Standards of Professionalism and Conduct

Adequate Progress

*There is evidence of steady progress, including stronger internal reporting, ongoing promotion of ethical standards and development of key policies and tools. However, the need to fully embed the revised Code of Ethics and associated processes mean that key areas of work remain to be completed.*

This indicator assesses how effectively the Police Service upholds the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct, both on and off duty. Our progress update provides evidence of how officers are held to account through internal Professional Standards Department (PSD) processes and external oversight, and how the organisation works to prevent misconduct and maintain public confidence through fair, transparent and proportionate handling of concerns.

Misconduct investigations, breaches of the Code of Ethics, complaints and their outcomes are important not only as measures of organisational performance, but also as drivers of legitimacy and trust in policing. Transparent reporting of these measures demonstrates that concerns are taken seriously, that officers and staff are accountable for their actions, and that the Service is committed to learning and improvement.

Indicator 3.2 therefore provides assurance that ethical standards and professional behaviour are actively governed, that concerns are investigated appropriately when they arise, and that we are increasingly emphasising preventing misconduct through early intervention and learning.

## 1. Ethical standards

Consistent handling of alleged misconduct and complaints is central to public confidence and organisational legitimacy. It demonstrates that officers and staff are expected to act lawfully, ethically and in line with our values, and that breaches are addressed transparently.

Monitoring investigation levels, outcomes and confidential reporting provides insight into organisational culture and the extent to which inappropriate behaviour is challenged. These measures also inform organisational learning, enabling improvements in supervision, training, policy and leadership.

Standards for behaviour are set out through:

- PSNI Code of Ethics for Police Officers
- PSNI Competency and Values Framework
- Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics for Police Staff

These frameworks inform recruitment, training, professional development and performance conversations, ensuring ethical standards are embedded and support reflection for our people on what and how they perform their jobs, and what they can learn to continuously improve themselves and our Service.

## 2. Investigation

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 October 2025 there have been 88 new PSD investigations. This is broadly consistent with the previous year, during which 144 investigations were recorded across the full 2024/25 reporting period.

652 breaches of the Code of Ethics have been recorded in the first seven months of 2025/26. These breaches cover a range of conduct issues and are subject to proportionate responses, including management action and formal misconduct proceedings where appropriate.

The average duration of a misconduct investigation is highly variable and influenced by a range of factors, including demand on the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI), the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), and other PSNI departments whose input may be required for evidential or procedural reasons.

## 3. Outcomes

Since 1 April 2025, 16 officers have attended misconduct hearings and 24 officers have attended misconduct meetings. These proceedings reflect cases where alleged breaches have met the threshold for formal disciplinary action.

There have been 15 new suspensions since 1 April 2025. Suspension is used proportionately, typically where the seriousness of the alleged conduct, the potential risk to the public, or the integrity of an investigation warrants temporary removal from duty.

Over the same period, 34 officer repositionings have been implemented. Repositioning is a key risk management tool, allowing the Service to mitigate operational and reputational risk while investigations are ongoing, or following outcomes where continued service is appropriate but a change in role is required.

Nine officers have received criminal convictions in the first seven months of 2025/26.

The pattern of hearings, meetings, suspensions, repositionings and convictions demonstrates that misconduct is taken seriously, with a graduated range of sanctions and risk management options applied in line with the severity and circumstances of each case.

## 4. Complaints and oversight

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 October 2025, 1,820 complaints were made to the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI). This volume remains relatively consistent with previous periods, indicating no material change in overall complaint levels.

During the same period the number of allegations investigated by PONI has increased by 7% to 3,278.

External oversight continues to be a critical component of the accountability framework, providing an independent route for public complaint and assurance that serious or sensitive matters are subject to impartial investigation. The relatively stable complaint volumes, alongside a moderate increase in allegations investigated, suggest steady public engagement with accountability mechanisms.

## 5. Prevention

While the number of misconduct investigations and complaints provides important assurance on how concerns are handled once identified, PSD's role extends significantly beyond conducting investigations.

Current preventative activity includes:

- Actively promoting confidential reporting, which has resulted in a marked increase in referral volumes (currently 44% above the five-year average), suggesting enhanced confidence among officers and staff to raise concerns. Each referral is triaged and, where appropriate, escalated to investigation or other management action.
- Development and implementation of new tools and policies designed to set clear expectations, support ethical decision making and reduce opportunities for misconduct.
- Use of the STUDIOSB Anti Corruption model, aligned with national practice, to systematically understand and target key corruption threats before they escalate. This structured approach enables PSD to prioritise resources on higher risk and threat areas, align activity with national learning and benchmark against best practice. It also enables material to be provided to officers and staff against key thematic areas.
- We are progressing implementation of the updated Code of Ethics for Police Officers, having actively consulted and worked with the Policing Board to support its introduction. Associated policies linked to on-duty and off-duty standards are being reviewed in parallel to ensure concise, clear and contemporary expectations of behaviour.
- A new Conflicts of Interest eService application is being developed to support the updated Code of Ethics. This tool will streamline the declaration, review and management of conflicts, reducing the risk of unmanaged or undisclosed interests undermining operational integrity or public confidence.
- Integrity and vetting health checks are being introduced for all officers and staff. These annual checks will form part of the individual performance review process and will commence with a learning package outlining PSNI standards and expectations. This will inform a mandatory

integrity-focused conversation with line managers, supporting early identification of potential issues and timely intervention.

This preventative orientation positions PSD as a contributor to organisational learning and integrity by design, rather than solely an investigative or punitive function.

## **6. Overall assessment**

Our assessment against this indicator is broadly positive. We have a robust and proportionate framework in place to uphold professional standards, investigate concerns and apply appropriate outcomes, supported by effective governance and independent oversight.

Stable complaint and investigation levels, alongside consistent application of disciplinary and risk management measures, provide assurance that misconduct is addressed fairly and transparently. Preventative capability continues to strengthen through enhanced confidential reporting, integrity tools and early intervention. Introduction of the updated Code of Ethics will further reinforce contemporary standards of professional behaviour.

While risks remain, including investigation timeliness and reputational impact, these are understood, actively managed and subject to ongoing Board scrutiny and organisational learning.

# Progress Updates Against Impact Measure

## 3.3 Making Best Use of Resources

Good Progress

*We have a clear understanding and active control of capacity and deployability pressures, with early evidence of stabilisation. Overall performance remains constrained by low workforce numbers, sustained abstraction and dependency on the pace and funding of recovery and transformation activity*

Indicator 3.3 provides assurance on how effectively we are making best use of our people, assets and enabling functions to sustain operational capability, deployability and resilience. It recognises that effective resource management is achieved not through isolated activity, but through coordinated control of workforce capacity, asset utilisation and the welfare, wellbeing and engagement of our officers and staff.

As one of the most scrutinised police services in the world, operating in an environment of sustained threat, injury and trauma exposure, we must demonstrate not only that we are delivering under exceptional pressure, but that we are doing so with rigour and a clear duty of care to our workforce.

The 2025/26 financial year represents a period of significant structural strain. We are operating with historically low workforce numbers, alongside sustained and complex demand and elevated abstraction driven by fatigue, trauma exposure and injury arising from the operational pressures of policing. In this context, the financial position and draft budget reinforce the imperative for transformation and for adopting more sustainable ways of delivering policing.

Making best use of resources therefore means optimising all of our available assets, our people, estate, technology and fleet, in service of victims and communities, enabling effective delivery of Policing Plan Outcomes 1 and 2.

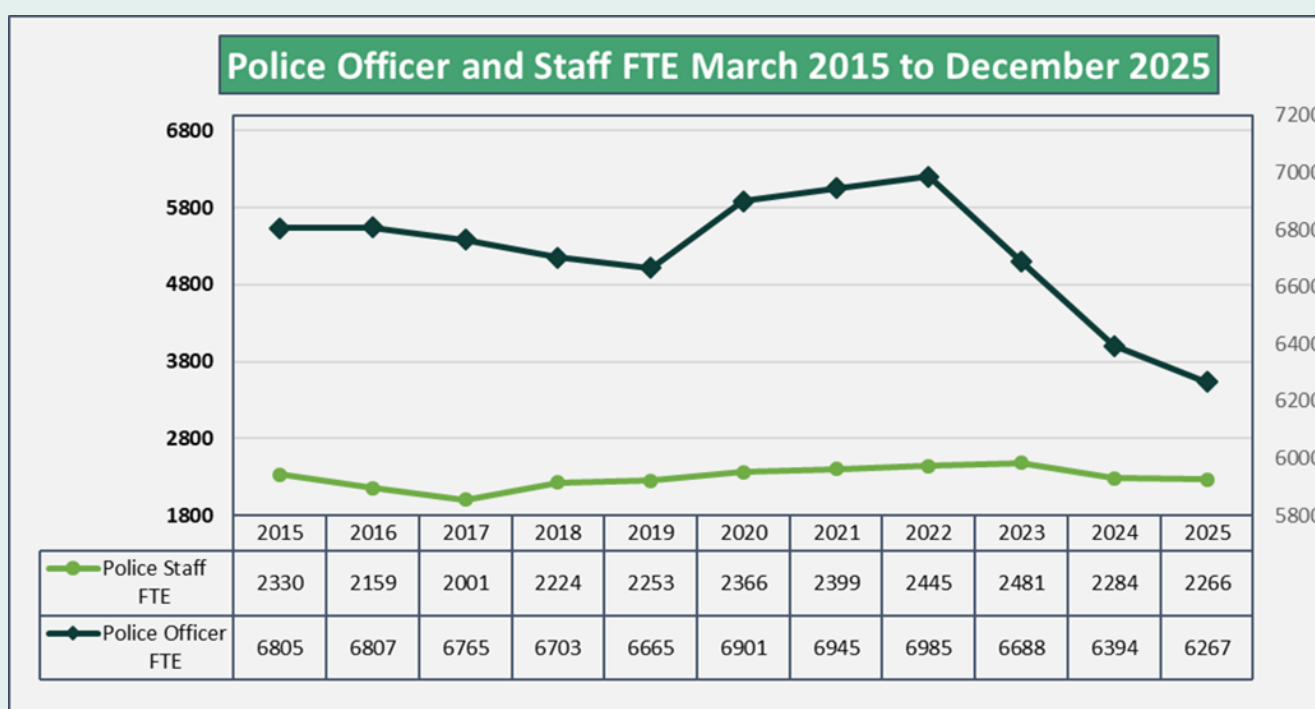
This performance update focuses on the controls in place to sustain operational resilience and deployability, supported by planned changes to our Service Operating Model and delivery of key transformation strategies. Coming early in the lifespan of the Policing Plan, the assessment sets out what we can confidently evidence at this stage, highlights priority areas for improvement, and identifies where insight gaps or resource constraints continue to limit the pace or scale of change.

# 1. Equipping our Service and our workforce

## Workforce strength and capacity

As at 31 December 2025, the Service had 6,267 police officers and 2,266 members of police staff. This level of resourcing continues to constrain resilience and increases the importance of reducing avoidable abstractions, supporting recovery, and protecting deployable capacity.

PSNI Overview HR Dashboard 31/12/2025			
SubArea	Act (FTE)	% Catholic	% Female
Police Officers	6267	31%	33%
Part-Time Reserve	149	10%	44%
Police Staff	2266	19%	56%



*10-year trend in Police Officer and Staff Establishment and Full Time Equivalent figures*

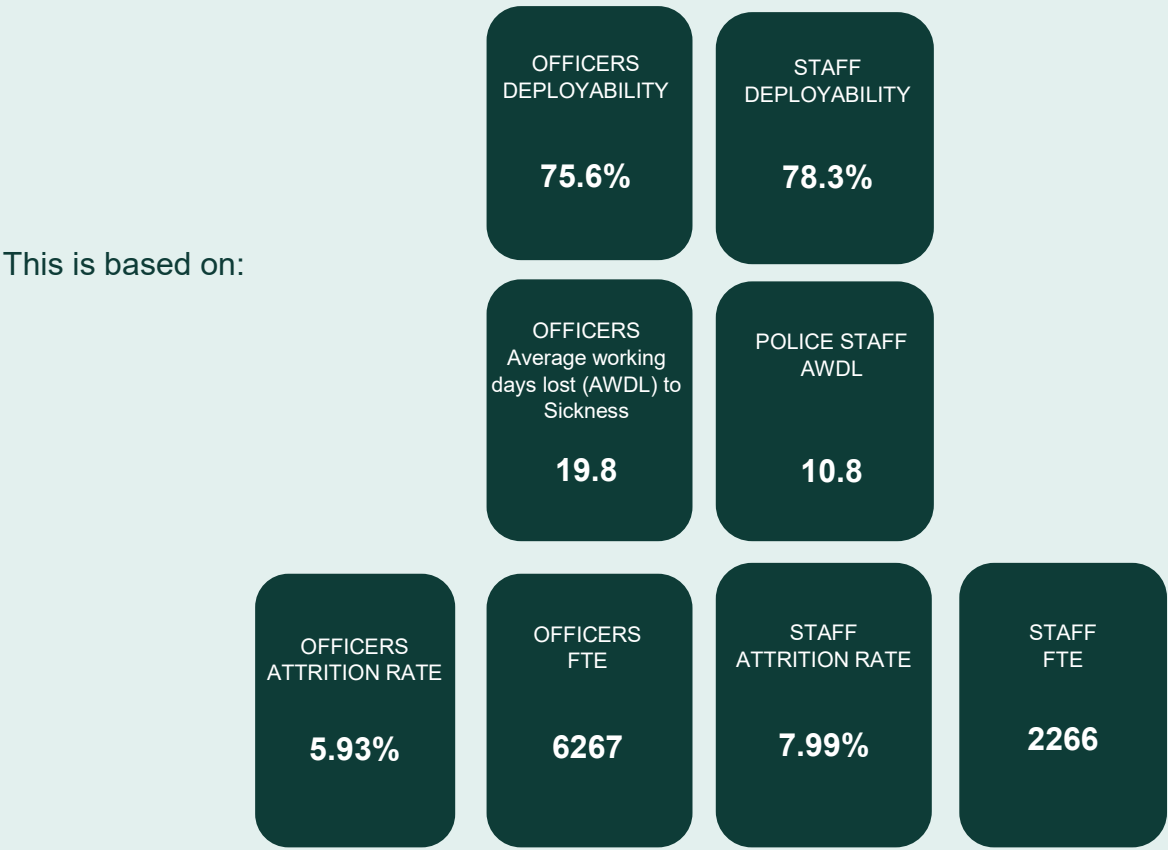
Our ambition is to recruit and recover workforce levels to 7,000 police officers and 2,572 police staff by March 2028 on a stable basis, and within the current capacity of our Police College. Based on our rank ratio, this will mean recruiting 1,700 police officers and 730 police staff across this period, of which 642 will be additional officers and 228 additional staff.

Overview of Recovery Plan		
Recovery Plan	Police Officer posts	Police Staff posts
Year 1 - 2025/26	150	76
Year 2 - 2026/27	246	76
Year 3 - 2027/28	246	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>228</b>

Deployable workforce

We measure and track workforce availability and deployability through absence and attrition metrics. To strengthen operational decision making, we are developing a mobilisation dashboard to improve real time visibility of resources and support assessment of agility and surge capacity.

Using current absence and attrition data, deployability as at December 2025 is assessed as follows:



A deployable workforce provides a practical measure of the proportion of the workforce available for duty. Across UK police forces and emergency services, an informal benchmark of 80 - 85% effective availability is generally recognised. Our data indicates deployability remains below this range, increasing pressure across teams and specialist units and placing surge capacity at risk.

Our analysis of absence data indicates a clear relationship between sustained operational pressure and rising sickness absence. We are experiencing the combined impact of increasingly complex and demanding workloads alongside reduced workforce numbers, contributing to elevated fatigue and stress related conditions. In practice, this requires us to continue meeting demand for victims and communities while managing reduced availability across frontline deployments, specialist units and response capacity.

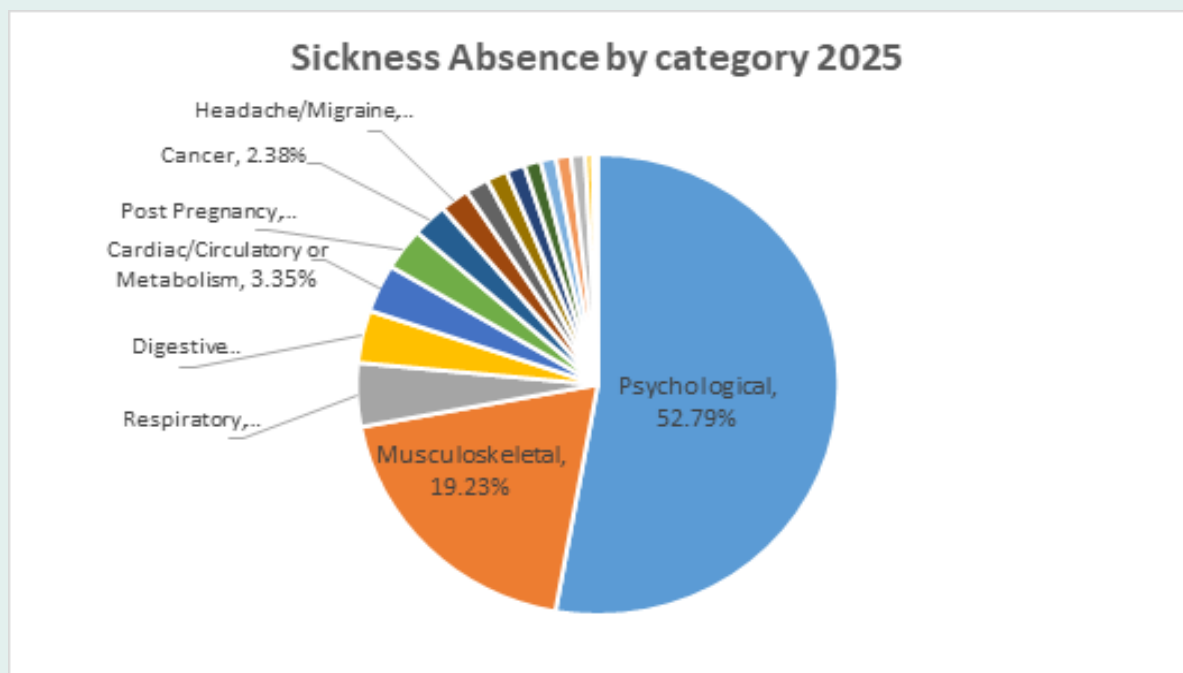
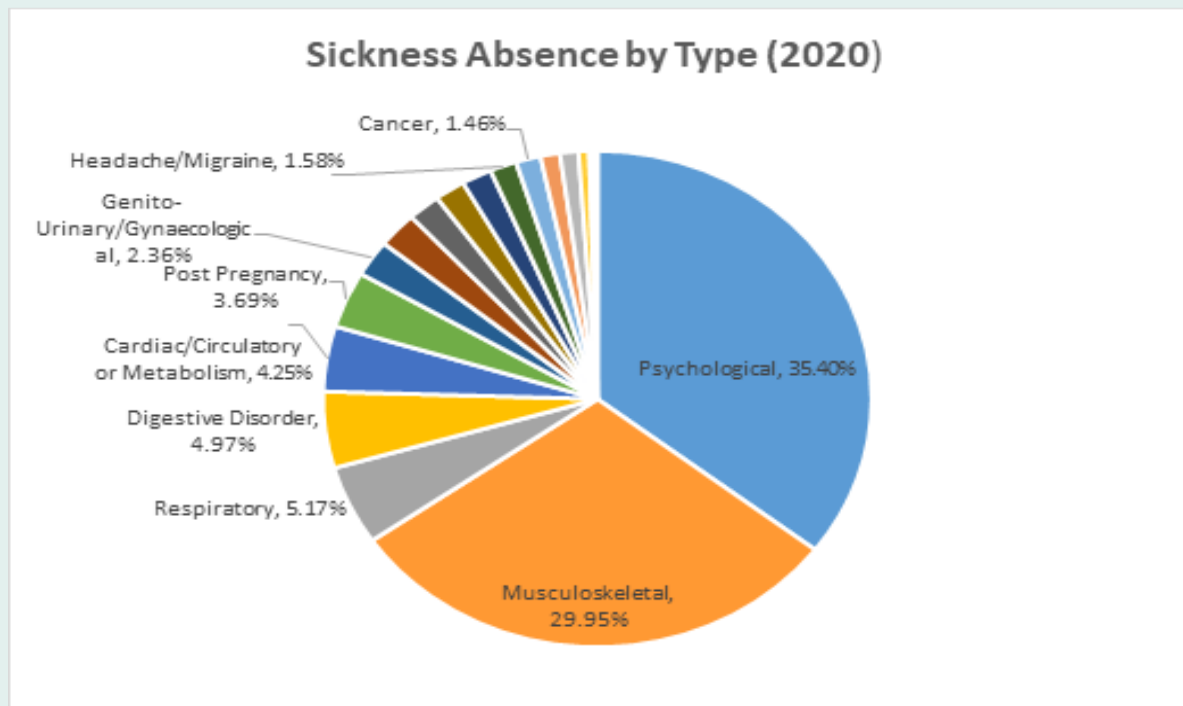
Sickness absence, role adjustments and occupational wellbeing

Psychological conditions are the single largest cause of absence, accounting for 53% of police officer and staff absence, with musculoskeletal conditions also significant at 19%. Together, these factors reduce effective availability and place sustained pressure on operational delivery.

### Average working days lost (AWDL)

	As at 31.12.25 (Officers)	As at 31.12.25 (Staff)
<b>Target AWDL</b>	<b>14.11 days</b>	<b>10.31 days</b>
<b>AWDL</b>	<b>19.80 days</b>	<b>10.80 days</b>
<b>AWDL (excluding those on an IHR pathway)</b>	<b>13.72 days</b>	

### Absence reasons comparison (2020 vs 2025)



Our Workforce Strategy sets out a clear commitment to creating safe and healthy workplaces and treating wellbeing as a core control in protecting deployable capacity. Over the past year, we have strengthened attendance management arrangements alongside continued investment in occupational health and wellbeing (OHW) provision. These measures focus on keeping people well at work, improving access to treatment, supporting timely recovery and return, and maintaining appropriate accountability to minimise service disruption.

Recognising the unique and, at times, dangerous nature of policing roles, we have strengthened governance and oversight of temporary and longer-term role adjustments required to support rehabilitation from injury or illness. These arrangements are used as a workforce utilisation control, enabling officers and staff to remain productive and engaged by matching capability to demand while safeguarding individual wellbeing and operational safety.

Role and duty adjustments therefore support sustained deployability by reducing avoidable absence and retaining experience within teams. Current data indicates that the largest proportion of adjustments relate to the use of personal protective equipment and the physical requirements of arrest and restraint, consistent with musculoskeletal conditions being a leading cause of absence.

We continue to strengthen how disability related adjustments are identified and applied, ensuring they are considered reasonably and proportionately alongside operational requirements and our duty to keep the workforce safe. This ensures adjustment processes remain person centred and operationally effective, with a clear emphasis on enabling continued contribution wherever possible.

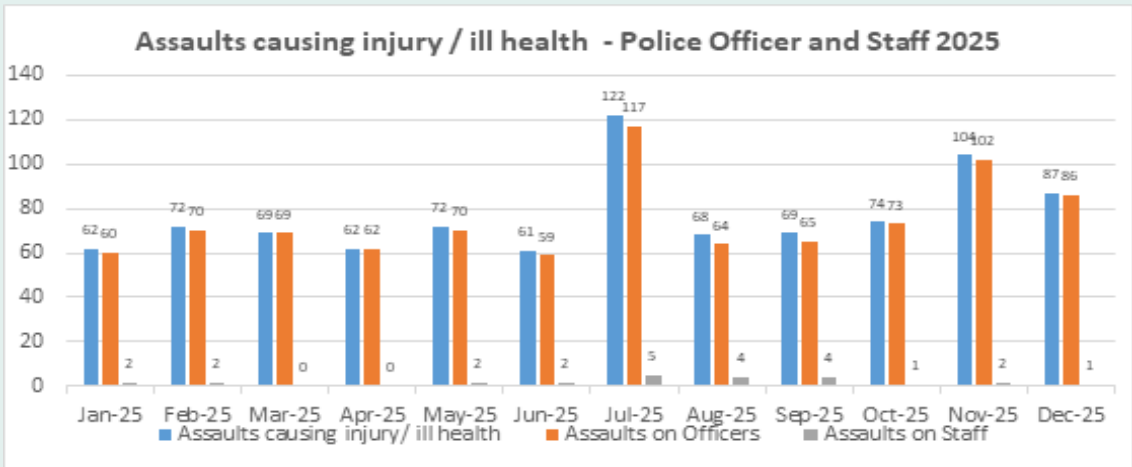
Access to OHW support has been expanded through tailored clinical pathways designed specifically for policing. Attendance support panels enable earlier more targeted local intervention, while refreshed attendance management controls and PULSE performance dashboards strengthen clarity of roles, responsibilities and organisational grip.

The introduction of the refreshed Professional Development Review ‘CHAT’ (PdrCHAT) further supports this approach by enabling structured, regular conversations between line managers and staff focused on performance, wellbeing, ambition and tenure, reinforcing engagement and early intervention as part of routine people management.

## Creating a safe place to work

### Assaults on police officers and staff

Assaults on our officers and staff represent a direct and compounding risk to workforce availability, wellbeing and operational resilience. Beyond immediate injury, assaults contribute to psychological trauma, increased sickness absence, reduced deployability and longer-term retention pressures, making them a material threat to our ability to meet operational demand.



We continue to take a firm and proactive stance, including strengthened conflict management capability, use of evidential tools such as body worn video, targeted operational responses and partnership working to ensure assaults are robustly investigated and prosecuted. Our position is clear: there is zero tolerance for violence against our officers and staff. In parallel, and in partnership with the Policing Board and the Police Federation, we continue to advocate for stronger protections and sentencing outcomes, while supporting those assaulted as victims of crime and enabling their recovery and return to the workplace.

### **Case study: Op Angle 441**

*In June 2025, 121 injuries were reported as sustained by officers on duty during a period of sustained disorder in Ballymena. Recognising the significant physical and psychological risks to our teams during this difficult operation, we stood up a dynamic welfare and wellbeing response. District welfare hubs provided real time respite and support for deployed teams, supported by defusing and debriefing through our accredited Peer Support Team, and follow up contact by line management with support from Human Resources and OHW. A significant number of those injured sustained injuries to their head or neck as a result of being hit by masonry or other objects. A protocol for suspected concussion and concussive impact was implemented, alongside access to a Trauma Impact Prevention Technique workshop to support processing of potential psychological stress.*

### **Preventative welfare and resilience**

Policing in Northern Ireland exposes officers and staff to sustained operational pressure, trauma and risk, and without effective welfare support these pressures translate directly into increased sickness absence, reduced deployability and longer-term attrition. Our approach prioritises early intervention, recovery and sustained contribution, with welfare activity aligned to capacity preservation and operational need.

This prevention-first approach includes trauma informed peer and group interventions, confidential counselling, wellbeing volunteers, physiotherapy access, fitness and physical training support, self-monitoring and signposting tools, and 24/7 access to wellbeing facilities. These measures are designed to support resilience and maintain officers and staff in productive roles wherever possible.

Increased utilisation of preventative services is interpreted carefully and may reflect improved awareness, confidence to seek support and reduced stigma, rather than deteriorating wellbeing. Where effective, prevention shortens absence duration, reduces reliance on clinical pathways and protects deployable capacity.

### **Clinical treatment and recovery pathways**

While prevention remains the priority, reactive clinical intervention is essential where formal assessment and treatment are required to restore capacity safely.

During 2024/25, demand for Occupational Health input remained sustained, reflecting the high-risk policing environment. Process improvements during 2025 have improved referral flow and reduced internal bottlenecks. However, treatment pathway capacity, particularly for psychological and trauma related care, remains a strategic risk, with delays increasing the likelihood of extended absence and pressure on deployability.

## **Case study: Psychological Surveillance Pilot**

*Statistics indicate that a police officer may be exposed to 400-600 traumatic incidents in their career compared to 3-4 for a member of the public.*

*Some duties, tasks and roles place officers and staff at higher risk of trauma exposure. This year we are piloting psychological surveillance for those in high-risk roles such as Child Abuse and Child Internet Protection, cybercrime and offender investigation units. The pilot will include psychological screening and monitoring and a clear support pathway where a health and wellbeing risk is identified. The pilot will be implemented within each team's local wellbeing plan as part of PSNI's CARE framework (Career Assistance for Resilience and Empowerment), alongside the range of existing wellbeing and psychological support initiatives available for all officers and staff.*

## **Wellbeing support and recovery**

Where utilisation and protection manage immediate risk, support and recovery determine how quickly workforce capacity can be restored.

## **Occupational Health and Wellbeing**

Total OHW referral volumes have remained broadly steady, increasing slightly to 4,602 in the 12 months to November 2025. Operational improvements implemented in August 2025 have improved referral flow and reduced internal bottlenecks, enabling faster access to appropriate assessment. Musculoskeletal pathways demonstrate stable capacity, with average waits to initial assessment of approximately 37 working days, and contracted services such as Seapark Physiotherapy and the Lena (Inspire) Employee Assistance Programme reporting no waiting lists.

However, mental health treatment access remains a significant strategic risk. While initial assessments are timely, typically within seven days, treatment waits for counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy and clinical psychology remain prolonged and measured in hundreds of calendar days. We view this gap between assessment and treatment as a priority for risk management, given its impact on recovery times and deployability.

## **Peer support and wellbeing volunteers**

Peer-led support complements clinical services and strengthens early intervention. Post-incident peer support activity has increased steadily since introduction, with 153 requests and defusing/debriefing support provided to 473 officers and staff during 2025. Wellbeing Volunteer Referrals, over 100 in 2025, also reflect continuing demand for accessible, confidential support. We continue to invest in capability and visibility through targeted professional development, strengthening the preventative layer that supports resilience and timelier reintegration to duty.

## **Case study: Friends and Family Night**

*We recognise that the demands of policing can impact not only the individual officer or staff member, but also their family and wider support network. To strengthen early support we have developed resources for families and friends to improve awareness of potential impacts, signs to look for, how to have supportive conversations and how to access confidential support routes. These resources are reinforced through a structured 'Friends and Family' evening delivered in collaboration with the Police College, OHW, peer support and staff associations. Delivered at a key transition point for student officers, the session strengthens early recognition and access to help, supporting resilience and sustained deployability.*

## 2. Engaging and empowering our workforce

### Workforce voice, experience and belonging

Feeling valued and having a sense of belonging are central to morale, wellbeing and resilience. We recognise that workforce voice must be heard clearly and consistently and translated into visible, practical improvements in day-to-day working life. We have therefore established a more systematic approach to capturing this voice, supported by governance and a focus on learning and action. Being Workforce Focused means equipping, engaging and empowering our officers and staff to deliver for victims and communities. The Workforce Strategy, *Being Workforce Focused, Being Team PSNI*, was developed in partnership with the workforce and sets out reciprocal commitments: what our people can expect from PSNI as an employer, and in return, how the workforce should commit as a member of Team PSNI.

Working with the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI), Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland (SANI), Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) and Minority and Diversity Support Associations (MSA's/DSA's), priority recommendations from the *2023 Your Service, Your Voice* Cultural Audit have been translated into a structured action plan focused on recognition, learning and coaching, promotion and development, reward and inclusion. Progress has been made across all priority actions.

A key mechanism for workforce voice has been the Team PSNI engagement events, led by the Chief Constable and Service Executive Team. Since September 2024, twelve events have been delivered with over 6,100 attendees, providing direct access to senior leaders and structured opportunities to share views and improvement ideas. Feedback consistently highlights improved leadership visibility, confidence that workforce voice is heard, and stronger connection between individual roles and organisational purpose.

To ensure culture development is sustained rather than episodic, we have established a Culture Development Framework supported by the Culture Development Framework and Implementation Group (CDIG). This group provides leadership, coordination and oversight of culture related initiatives, ensuring alignment with values, wellbeing, diversity and ethical leadership. It also provides a clear governance mechanism to translate workforce insight into action.

Underpinning all of this are the healthy relationships in place with staff representative bodies, PFNI, SANI, NIPSA and MSA's/DSA's. Strong collaborative working is ensuring that lived experience continues to inform priorities and delivery.

### Pulse survey: Inclusion

The *Your Service, Your Voice* Culture Audit recommended a deeper dive into the area of inclusion. From 15 September to 6 October 2025, a pulse survey on inclusion took place, with 50.3% of the workforce taking part. This has provided us with a sound basis to take insightful action. Emerging findings indicate performance broadly in line with the 39-benchmark forces in England and Wales, while also identifying areas requiring continued attention, including organisational connection, perceptions of being valued by PSNI as an organisation, and role based differences in perceptions of leadership visibility and psychological safety. Encouragingly, compared with England and Wales benchmarks, our workforce report higher confidence that reports of inappropriate behaviour will be properly investigated, reinforcing the importance of prevention, fairness and trust in internal systems.

Headlines have been shared with the workforce and reported to the Board. Workshops are scheduled with Commanders, Heads of Branch and their teams to identify actions for inclusion in 2026/27 business plans. Root cause analysis focus groups will deepen understanding of key

themes, with full results to be shared early in 2026. We will continue structured engagement with staff associations and MSA's/DSA's to support collective ownership of actions and delivery. A new MSA/DSA Chairs and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Group will be embedded in the coming months.

### **Case study: Professional Development Review “CHAT”**

*We recognise the critical role line managers play in engaging and empowering our people. pdrCHAT is a new professional development framework designed to replace compliance led performance reviews with structured, coaching led conversations focused on performance, wellbeing and development. Rolling implementation from January 2026 will spread conversations across the year, reduce pressure on line managers, and improve the quality and consistency of engagement with staff. By strengthening line management conversations, pdrCHAT is intended to support engagement, wellbeing and development, contributing directly to workforce resilience and more effective use of resources.*

Our ongoing review of pay and allowances supports recruitment, retention and engagement, and recognises the critical work officers and staff do. In the last 12 months, work has been undertaken to assess areas where PSNI is not aligned to England and Wales, specifically in respect of the unsocial hours allowance. For police staff, the Revised Environmental Allowance is now supported by an annual review mechanism established through engagement with the Department of Justice and trade unions, with the first uplift arising from this paid in March 2026. Recognising that the Holiday Pay remedy is of significant importance to both officers and staff, we continue to push for progress on the business case which seeks authority to remedy this longstanding issue.

Long Service Awards were reinvigorated in June 2023. Since then, ceremonies have provided meaningful recognition of commitment and service, with positive feedback indicating that leadership involvement and the opportunity for families and friends to attend are valued. This provides a tangible example of how we recognise and celebrates the loyalty and contribution of our long standing workforce.

## **3. Enablement and transformation**

Our Transformation Programme provides the overarching framework through which we are delivering workforce recovery, modernisation and improved efficiency. It brings together enabling strategies and programmes to ensure change activity is prioritised, aligned to operational need, and focused on making best use of limited resources.

### **Transformation Strategy**

At the core of this work are two strands: Workforce Recovery and optimising the Service Operating Model. The Service Operating Model clarifies how policing activity is delivered, where resources are best deployed, and how demand can be managed more effectively. We are using it to support evidence based decisions on workforce deployment, capability requirements and prioritisation, reducing duplication, strengthening resilience and protecting frontline capacity.

During 2025, foundational work progressed, including submission of the Workforce Recovery Outline Business Case, development of the Service Operating Model across key thematic areas, and identification of supporting projects focused on workforce modernisation, demand management, and efficiency and effectiveness. We intend that emphasis in 2026 will shift decisively to implementation and realisation, ensuring that recovery activity delivers sustainable benefit.

## **Case study: Video Officer Attendance Team**

*The Video Officer Attendance Team (VOAT) provides a strong example of workforce modernisation in practice, enabling the Service to make best use of available officer capability. In the context of sustained workforce pressure and increasing levels of role adjustment, VOAT enables our officers to remain operationally active in public facing roles aligned to their skills, restrictions and personal circumstances.*

*Rather than defaulting officers with adjustments into back office abstraction, VOAT maximises their contribution by matching capability to demand. This retains skills and experience within operational policing. It reframes role adjustment as enablement rather than limitation and demonstrates how structured innovation can protect deployable capacity.*

*For victims, VOAT improves accessibility and responsiveness through timely digital attendance, continuity of contact and increased choice in how they engage with us, while retaining physical deployment where required. For communities, it reduces unnecessary travel and abstraction from frontline and neighbourhood policing, releasing capacity back into visible and preventative activity.*

## **Workforce Recovery Programme**

This Programme is a critical component of our response to sustained reductions in officer and staff numbers and the resulting pressure on deployability and wellbeing. During 2025, we ensured that student officer intakes could be sustained at 51 per course and began planning future recruitment campaigns to maintain a pipeline of candidates. We welcome ring-fenced funds for recovery in the draft budget but recognise the underlying gap that will continue to impact. In tandem, we have engaged with the Department of Justice to secure the necessary funding and explore additional options, including transferee recruitment from other police services. In 2026, subject to policy direction and funding approval, we will focus on delivering these mechanisms alongside continued recruitment throughput; ensuring workforce recovery supports operational resilience and long-term sustainability.

## **Workforce Strategy**

During 2025, we refreshed our Workforce Strategy through extensive engagement with officers, staff and their staff associations, the PFNI, SANI and NIPSA. The strategy reflects collective leadership commitment and, most importantly, the voice of the workforce. It recognises the unique challenges faced by those who serve in policing in Northern Ireland, including sustained risk, scrutiny, trauma and high public expectation. It sets out how we will deliver both “tiny but noticeable” improvements and longer-term initiatives to better equip, engage and empower our officers and staff. Workforce voice sits at its core, reflecting what our people have told us they need to do their jobs well, how they contribute to the Service and how they experience value and belonging. The strategy is deliberately reciprocal in nature and provides the strategic framework for supporting our workforce to deliver for victims and communities.

## **Digital Strategy**

The Digital Strategy is a critical enabler in making best use of resources by improving productivity, reducing administrative burden and strengthening data led decision making. During 2025, progress included delivery of new digital engagement platforms, expansion of digital investigation capability such as body worn video and automatic number plate recognition, rollout of mobile applications and support for the Human Resources Core system renewal. To strengthen governance and delivery momentum, we have established the Digital Change and Innovation Delivery Group. Priorities for

2026 include modernising legacy systems, digitising high volume processes such as covert authority handling and Freedom of Information management, and progressing the HR SAP upgrade to

improve efficiency and data quality, releasing officer and staff time for victim and community focused activity.

### **Data and Information Risk Strategy**

Accurate, timely and secure data and information are essential to fulfilling our statutory duties. The Data and Information Risk Strategy sets the strategic direction for ensuring data and information are managed ethically, securely and effectively, in line with national policing standards, our legal obligations and public expectations. During 2025, progress included significant Operation Thistle activity, strengthened Data Protection Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Agreement oversight, completion of the Operation Sanukite Independent Review and full resourcing of the Data Protection Team. An implementation plan for the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 was also developed. Priorities for 2026 include completion of all outstanding Operation Thistle recommendations, reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office on Freedom of Information performance and addressing residual compliance risks.

### **Estates and Sustainability Strategy**

Our Estates and Sustainability Strategy supports effective policing by ensuring our estate is safe, modern, sustainable and aligned to operational need. The estate is a key enabler of workforce wellbeing, productivity and public accessibility, and rationalisation is required to reflect modern policing and address legacy inefficiencies. During 2025, key progress included acquisition of the Kinnegar site for a future Police College and Crime Campus, signalling tangible investment in the workforce and progressing the Patten Recommendation. Our officers, staff and new recruits were actively engaged in shaping plans for the site, including the workforce led re-naming of the location as "Redburn". Further progress included additional site disposals and strengthened governance through the Strategic Accommodation Group and development of a Strategic Asset Management Plan. Priorities for 2026 include enabling works at Redburn to support early operational use, progressing estate rationalisation and modernisation plans, and reduction of the maintenance backlog to ensure estate resources are used effectively and sustainably.

### **Fleet Strategy**

The Fleet Strategy underpins operational effectiveness by ensuring vehicles and supporting infrastructure are safe, reliable and aligned to policing demand. With approximately 2,700 vehicles supporting frontline and specialist activity, fleet capability is directly linked to deployability and visibility. During 2025, Fleet Services supported a number of high profile policing operations, including disorder in Ballymena and the Open Championship, providing assurance of fleet resilience during periods of heightened demand. Delivery activity also progressed, including commissioning of new vehicles, enhanced automatic number plate recognition capability, piloting of dash-mounted cameras and an internal restructure supported by additional mechanic recruitment. Priorities for 2026 include improving fleet capacity, modernising systems and operating models, progressing

replacement of Tactical Support Vehicles and expanding lower emission options where operationally appropriate.

## Training, Leadership Development and Professional Capability

Training and leadership development are essential enablers in making best use of available resources. We focus on ensuring that training investment translates directly into operational readiness, safety and deployability, and does not create avoidable abstraction or compliance burden. We prioritise mandatory, role-critical and risk-based training that supports delivery in increasingly complex operational environments and aligns training provision with organisational need and workforce modernisation.

### ***Case study: Neurodiversity (Operational Learning)***

*Following an incident in December 2024 involving officer interaction with an autistic member of the public, we undertook an immediate review of neurodiversity training and operational guidance. Actions included strengthened engagement with Autism NI and stakeholders, targeted training for senior leaders and key staff, and an agreed improvement plan aligned to external recommendations focused on practical frontline capability, communication and de-escalation.*

## 4. Overall Assessment

The Service continues to operate under significant pressure arising from constrained workforce numbers, elevated abstraction and sustained demand complexity. These factors affect deployability and operational resilience. However, we remain steadfast in our belief that our people are our most critical asset in delivering for victims and communities, and that the evidence set out in this update provides assurance that we are exercising active and proportionate control over our available resources.

Workforce capacity is being managed through a clear understanding of availability constraints, targeted efforts to reduce avoidable abstraction and a disciplined approach to deploying available capability. Workforce utilisation arrangements are actively governed to maximise contribution, align skills to organisational need and retain experience within the organisation. Protection of the workforce is treated as a strategic priority, with assaults, trauma exposure and wellbeing recognised as direct risks to capacity, and controls in place to support early intervention, recovery and timely return to work.

Workforce engagement activity is strengthening resilience and connection during this period of sustained pressure, while enablement and transformation provide the longer-term framework through which capacity constraints will be addressed structurally and sustainably.

Key risks remain, including continued pressure on deployability while workforce numbers recover, sustained sickness absence (particularly psychological and stress-related conditions), treatment pathway constraints and dependencies linked to delivery of transformation programmes. Looking ahead, we will remain focused on recovering workforce numbers, reducing avoidable abstraction, sustaining effective governance of utilisation, and progressing transformation from design into delivery so that tangible capacity, productivity and resilience benefits are realised.

# Good News and Key Updates

Our first update of 2026 covers an extended timeframe of sustained operational demand and includes the Christmas and New Year period. Traditionally one of the most challenging times of the year for policing, this period placed additional pressure on our officers and staff across Northern Ireland.

The examples of policing that follow illustrate how victims were supported, communities protected and policing services delivered through the professionalism and commitment of our workforce during a period of heightened demand.

## Victim Focused

Protecting the vulnerable and those at greatest risk of harm has remained a central priority. In Coleraine, our local officers supported a victim subjected to sustained online stalking and harassment. They worked alongside colleagues from Public Protection Branch in a complex investigation that secured the arrest of the offender in England, returned him to Northern Ireland, and resulted in him being charged and remanded into custody. This intervention removed an ongoing risk to the victim.

Our officers intervened in a number of incidents involving individuals in acute mental health crisis. In Craigavon, officers prevented a woman from falling from a bridge, saving her from serious injury or death. In Portstewart, local officers and colleagues from the Armed Response Unit, supported by a NI Ambulance Service paramedic and the Coastguard, worked together to rescue a distressed woman who had entered the sea and was at risk of being swept away. Officers entered the water to remove the woman to land and conveyed her to hospital on the paramedic's advice. These incidents underline the safeguarding role our officers routinely perform as first responders, at significant risk to their own safety.

Between 20 December 2025 and 2 January 2026 we responded to 1,407 domestic-abuse related calls. This shocking figure is an increase on the previous year and the fourth highest total in the last decade. This reinforces that risk can rise over the holidays as a range of factors can escalate abusive behaviour and reduce opportunities to seek help. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender or background. We are here to help and encourage anyone experiencing domestic abuse, or concerned about someone else, to contact us. In an emergency, call 999. If it is not an emergency, we can be reached on 101 or via our online reporting service <https://www.psni.police.uk/report>

## Community Focused

In Bangor, targeted patrolling and engagement by our local Neighbourhood Policing Teams successfully dealt with an escalating problem of antisocial behaviour. By combining youth diversion, enforcement and partnership working, we disrupted localised criminality and reduced the impact on the wider community.

In Belfast, we coordinated a multi-agency response to drug exploitation and vulnerability in the Holylands and wider Botanic area. Neighbourhood officers convened and chaired a partnership forum involving health and housing providers, Belfast City Council, education partners and voluntary

organisations. This coordinated approach has focused on targeting drug supply, safeguarding vulnerable individuals and improving information sharing, with tangible improvements being reported by residents and businesses.

In East Belfast, neighbourhood officers continued to work in partnership with the Belfast Giants and Clanmil Housing Association through the Line Change programme, a preventative initiative focused on strengthening community connections and improving outcomes for young people. The programme recently gave 19 young people from the area, aged 11 to 18, the opportunity to have personal ice-skating and hockey lessons at the SSE Arena. By combining early engagement, positive role models and partnership support, this programme is helping to build trust, challenge negative influences and reinforce safer, more resilient neighbourhoods, demonstrating the value of sustained community based policing that moves beyond enforcement alone.

Community intelligence continues to support decisive action against organised criminality and drug supply. In West Belfast, information provided by the community enabled officers to intervene at a sensitive location, resulting in significant drug seizures, arrests and the recovery of stolen property. This intervention reduced harm and reinforced confidence in policing as the appropriate means of addressing serious criminality.

Our Operation Season's Greetings campaign provided a further example of coordinated, community focused policing. The operation identified 68 targeted patrol areas across districts, which were patrolled on 2,165 occasions, focusing on visibility, prevention and reassurance. Retail crime was prioritised, with 814 shoplifting offences investigated and an outstanding clearance rate of approximately 47%, providing reassurance to businesses, staff and the wider community during one of the busiest times of the year.

Road safety formed a central strand of the operation, with Roads Policing Units and Tactical Support Group officers playing a key role through targeted checkpoints, patrols and enforcement. Officers conducted 1,953 preliminary breath tests, submitted 97 reports to the PPS and detected 471 drink drive offences, alongside issuing 158 endorsable fixed-penalty notices. This activity was reinforced by our wider winter anti drink-and-drug driving campaign, during which officers made 288 arrests, conducted approximately 5,200 preliminary breath tests and detected around 5,700 speeding offences. Together, this sustained and visible enforcement challenged dangerous driving behaviour and likely prevented serious harm on our roads.

## Workforce Focused

### Crime Department

- Senior leadership are working to make the best use of their people by improving how officers and staff are deployed, supported and developed so they can meet demand effectively and safely. An establishment reset in 2024 led to a reduction in the number of detectives within the Department. Crime is short 200 from the reset figure. Approval has now been provided to replace these posts and appointments will take place in a phased programme from January to March 2026. Focus will be placed on priority areas such as cyber, organised crime, serious investigation, intelligence, covert policing and child protection.
- To further strengthen investigative capacity, a 12-month pilot programme has been introduced that will see 20 Police Staff Investigators (PSIs) working alongside experienced detectives in our Serious Crime and Public Protection Branches, using designated powers to support serious and complex cases. Subject to satisfactory evaluation, the aim is to recruit PSI's into a wide range of investigatory roles across the Service.

Longer-term workforce planning has also been strengthened through earlier identification of specialist roles requiring extended lead-in times for selection, improving resilience and reducing the risk of capability gaps.

- A monthly People Forum brings Branch Leaders, Human Resources and Occupational Health together to coordinate resourcing, career progression and transparent selection. Branch welfare groups and Occupational Health and Wellbeing activities, including roadshows, drop-ins and emerging psychological screening for high risk roles, support staff wellbeing and resilience.

More widely, supporting workforce wellbeing remains central to sustaining organisational performance. Targeted occupational health engagement, wellbeing initiatives and enhanced support for colleagues in high risk roles across the Service continue to reinforce the importance of protecting those who protect others. These efforts are complemented by continued engagement between the Chief Constable, the Service Executive Team and the wider workforce through Team PSNI events. Twelve events have now been held, and these will continue throughout the coming year. This will ensure sustained leadership visibility, open dialogue and meaningful engagement across the organisation.



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