

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD
12th February 2026 at 9:30am**

PRESENT:

Mr Gerry Kelly, Chair
Mr Les Allamby, Vice Chair
Mr Frank McManus*
Ms Cheryl Brownlee
Ms Nuala McAllister*
Ms Deirdre Hargey
Mr Peter Osborne

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER
IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr Brendan Mullin

**POLICE SERVICE OF
NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:**

(1) Det Chief Superintendent Zoe McKee
(1) Chief Superintendent Kellie McMillan
(1) Police Statistician - Lindsey Jeapes
(1) 2 police staff

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of Performance
Mr Aonghus Kelly, Human Rights Advisor,
4 Officials

*Attended via video conferencing

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Thomas O'Reilly, Colin McGrath, Patrick Nelson and Trevor Clarke. Apologies were also received from ACC Davy Beck.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the Board's new Human Rights Advisor, Aonghus Kelly, to his first Performance Committee meeting and wished him all the best.

The Chair asked Members to advise of any items they wished to raise at Item 9 under "Any Other Business".

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Performance Committee meeting held on 4th December 2025.

It was **AGREED**

That Minutes of the Performance Committee meeting on the 4th December 2025 were agreed.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Director of Performance provided an update on the open actions listed on the Action Log.

The Director provided an update on AP3 from the meeting held on 11 September 2025 - Human Rights Advisor to respond to the letter from IPCO. Letter issued from HRA on 15th September. The Board is currently awaiting a response.

The Director stated that the Chair is due to meet with Sir Brian Leveson when he is next in Northern Ireland. Members discussed the current governance framework and the Director updated Members that the Board Chair is currently writing to the Secretary of State and the Minister of Justice on this issue following a recent discussion at the Board. Members agreed that they would wait for response to this letter and then:

- Consider the current guidelines that are in use for CHIS;
- Examine PSNI's internal processes for assuring these guidelines are being followed; and
- Request an annual assurance statement from the Chief Constable to the Board on this matter.

Following discussion it was: -

AGREED

The Human Rights Advisor would consider any oversight and accountability gaps and how the Board can obtain assurance on PSNI's use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources.

Officials to write to the PSNI to seek Officials to request a copy of their internal guidelines in respect of use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS). **(AP 1)**

The Director provided an update on AP1 from the meeting held on 13 November 2025 - Chair to respond to ACC Beck letter of 7th November on

CHIS / VAWG and for the Human Rights Advisor to follow up directly with ACC Beck. In correspondence ACC Beck confirmed that the HR advisor would get access from Friday 12th December 2025. The Human Rights Advisor's report is at Item 6.5 on today's agenda.

The Director provided an update on AP1 from the meeting held on 4 December 2025 - Officials to write to Chief Constable to inform him of agreed Terms of Reference in relation to Community background Monitoring. The Chief Constable's response is at Item 4.1 of today's agenda.

The Director provided an update on AP2 from the meeting held on 4 December 2025 - Officials to seek Human Resources advice on status of the HR candidate in the competition. The new Human Rights Advisor's DV clearance was completed with HR advisor taking up role in February 2026.

The Director provided an update on AP3 from the meeting held on 4 December 2025 - Officials to seek clarification on time frame of the introduction of legislative proposals 4 to 19 relating to Police Officer Misconduct Matters. A response was received from the Justice Minister and is provided at Item 4.1 of today's agenda.

4.1 Accompanying Correspondence

Members discussed correspondence returned from the PSNI in relation to:

- AP 1 December 2025 – in relation to correspondence to the Chief Constable to inform him of agreed Terms of Reference in relation to Community background Monitoring.
- AP 3 December 2025 – in relation to the time frame of the introduction of legislative proposals 4 to 19 relating to Police Officer Misconduct Matters.

It was also: -

NOTED

Members were content with the responses received to AP 1 and AP3 of December 2025.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair confirmed that there were no other items of business.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Indicator 1.3 - The Effectiveness in Tackling Child Criminal Exploitation

Board Officials presented a paper providing Members with an analysis of PSNI's Performance to date in relation to Indicator 1.3 The Effectiveness in Tackling Child Criminal Exploitation and reviewing the progress made in delivering the measures and impacts identified within the Policing Plan 2025 to 2030.

In terms of impacts, a Board Official referred to the PSNI report card data that shows offences against children are trending slightly downwards. While this is welcomed, the upward trend in the number of sexual offences where the victim is under 18 is a concern. Children account for 10.6% of all victim-based crime and 55% of all recorded sexual offences.

The Child Internet Protection Team (CIPT) continues to face rising referral volumes which are projected to reach 1,000 in 2025/26. The Board Official

informed Members that at Performance Committee in March, there will be a paper on Policing Plan indicator 2.7 'Working in Partnership to Effectively Tackle Cyber Crime'. However, Child Criminal Exploitation crosses into the world of cybercrime.

While the rate of attrition has lowered in recent years, the 5-year data shows a slight upwards trend. However, it is important to note, the most recent figures are likely to increase further as a high number of cases are to conclude their journey through the judicial process and are 'assigned an outcome'. The attrition rate for the current 365 days period is 34.1%.

A Repeat Victim rate is the percentage of all victims have been a victim of two or more offences in the last 365 days. The repeat victim rate is 10.5%. There were 133 repeat offenders in the reporting period, the rate is 17.6% with four of these offenders linked to 20 or more offences.

The PSNI report card does not provide any update on the number of child referrals for human trafficking from the national referral mechanism (NRM). The introduction of local multi-agency NRM Panels for Northern Ireland in January 2026 will enable PSNI to consistently evaluate the outcomes for children experiencing exploitation and report more effectively.

The Board Official recalled to Members that the previous Policing and Annual Performance Plan 2020 to 2025 included an indicator which partially covered Child Criminal Exploitation. The new Plan published in April 2025 contains an improved 4-tier RAGG model (Red/Amber/Green/Green) and will be used to evaluate all future performance. During the 5-year period 2020 to 2025, the Policing Plan included an indicator which partially covered Child Criminal Exploitation; this was within Measure 1.1.1. and was 'Partially Achieved'. The latest PSNI Self-assessment for Indicator 1.3 is 'Adequate Progress'.

A Board Official advised Members will welcome the update provided in the PSNI report card which covers a wide range of initiatives (including training) which have been developed to try and tackle CCE. Members were asked to note and consider the information provided by PSNI and detailed analysis of the paper to assist with oversight and scrutiny of police performance.

The Chairperson welcomed Detective Chief Superintendent Zoe McKee and colleagues to the meeting. He invited them to brief Members on the work relating to Indicator 1.3.

The PSNI presented information through an OBA Report Card and provided a statistical commentary of their performance against Indicator 1.3 and discussed with Members the work carried out in key areas including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation – Risk, intervention, and offender management;
- Repeat child victims and offenders;
- Strategic and governance frameworks;
- Early identification and risk assessment;
- Operational response & investigation;
- Child Internet Protection Team;
- Prevention & intervention programmes; and
- Safeguarding & information sharing.

The PSNI provided the following overview: -

- PSNI explained that they are at the inception stage with Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as it's the first time they have reported on it. PSNI referred to the CCE Action Plan 2024 and that its important to be clear on the differences between CCE and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);
- In reference to the new Policing Plan, PSNI welcomed its focus on CCE. They discussed the reasons for the 'Adequate Progress' self-assessment, their ongoing strategic CCE action plan involving multi-agency initiatives

and targeted interventions, and the hope that this will contribute to reduced risk and better early identification of vulnerable children;

- The PSNI highlighted that crime against children is down 4.9%. There has been 744 repeat victims in the reporting period, who have been victim of 2,037 offences. They also referred to the 42 children are currently assessed as at risk of CSE;
- The PSNI referred to the low charge/summons rate and high attrition rates informing Members that evidential difficulties, limited corroborative evidence, delayed disclosures and the impact of child trauma can restrict opportunities for prosecution;
- There is a significant increase in adults reporting historic offences that present prosecutorial challenges for PSNI as the victim may not be able to provide detailed accounts or where digital and forensic evidence is limited; and
- The PSNI referred to the recent Criminal Justice Inspectorate of Northern Ireland (CJINI) inspection in relation to CCE which is due to be published soon. PSNI have already begun the process across departments to implement changes and are aware that this Report will recommend further improvements to their approach to CCE. The PSNI highlighted that this is one of five recent inspection and reviews including the Rachael Langdale KC Independent Review of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Members engaged in discussion with PSNI on the following:

- A Member sought further information on resources allocated to CCE and asked if additional staff will be allocated;
- A Member queried if there was any further statistical information available on children used as 'drug mules' to transport illegal drugs and queried why this is increasing geographically;
- A Member referred to resourcing pressure points, for example in Child Internet Protection Team (CIPT), and asked what the ramifications are with increased referrals;

- A Member asked about the new definition of CCE and what does this mean for providing comparative data with England & Wales;
- In regards the Rachel Langdale KC Report, a Member sought an update if this would be published soon;
- A Member asked for an assurance on concerns that those used as covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) who might be a serious risk of offending against children or women and girls;
- A Member referred to attrition rates and children who withdraw from court process and what victim centred support is available to support families;
- In relation to the Twin Sight North project, (PSNI's collaboration with Queen's University Belfast to map social and criminal networks to identify children vulnerable to coercion or exploitation), a Member asked for an update on progress and whether this will feed into longer term work and if any immediate outcomes have been identified;
- Regarding repeat Child Offenders rates, specifically the statistic of a 15-year-old reoffending 65 times, a Member asked what is being put in place to reduce rates and what lessons have been learned;
- In relation to progress regarding cybercrime and 'big tech' companies and information or evidential issues, a Member referred to Office of Communications (OFCOM) assessment that there is better collaboration between these companies;
- A Member stated that the public may not understand what is meant by CCE and asked how a child, parent or teacher can also be expected to understand what this is;
- In relation to drug dealing and the use of children, a Member asked if there are automatic referrals to social services in these circumstances. The Member further asked for clarification on whether data at a local district level is helping to identify different types of criminality; and
- A Member referred to the National Reporting Mechanism (NRM) and if there is a timeframe for reporting outcomes.

The PSNI provided the following responses to Members: -

- In relation to resources within CCE, PSNI explained there had been a reduction from 12 to 3 staff but this is now back to around 6. The difficulty is that this was for CSE alone but now they have CCE included and this is a cross-cutting issue that affects the whole organisation;
- PSNI acknowledged that the statistical information on children being used as 'drug mules' to transport illegal drugs needs improvement and the forthcoming CJINI inspection report will likely recommend this. They refer to the work of local neighbourhood policing and the work of officers to identify and arrest those involved in illegal drug trade particularly when children may be involved. PSNI referred to the research by Dr Colm Walsh¹, Queens University Belfast (QUB), who examined CCE, the prevalence and geographical development of it across Northern Ireland mainly driven by paramilitary groups;
- The PSNI acknowledge that resourcing pressure points exist in CIPT, with new emerging crime types this adds to increased service demand and impacts on the existing staff resource. There has been a 122% increase on referrals year on year. However, PSNI informed Members that additional Detective Constable recruitment for CIPT is currently ongoing. PSNI outlined that the Cyber Transformation Project may help deliver future efficiencies though service demand will remain with investigators. Despite resourcing pressures, PSNI remain victim focused and have sought to get CCE and CSE models right in line with previous recommendations made. PSNI are currently developing a CCE training package in collaboration with Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI);
- In respect of the definition of CCE, PSNI advised that the definition adopted by the PSNI is that developed by the Departments of Health,

¹ 'CCE – From Contextual to Criminal Harm: Young People's Perceptions and Experiences of Child Criminal Exploitation in Northern Ireland' Dr Colm Walsh, QUB Belfast, December 2022

Justice and Education through the 2-year action plan in collaboration with multi-agency stakeholders to address Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) in Northern Ireland². This will help data comparison by keeping it more consistent;

- It is envisaged that the Rachel Langsdale KC Report has been made available to the PSNI Service Performance Board ahead of its presentation to Board Members in March 2026;
- With regards to covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) and concerns about risk, PSNI advised the Safeguarding lead ACC Beck would be best placed to provide an answer;
- In relation to attrition rates, PSNI referred to Child Sexual Offence Legal Advisors (CSOLAs) who provide independent legal advice to children experiencing sexual exploitation, as recommended in Sir John Gillan's Review. PSNI also highlighted the Under 13 Protocol pilot that fast-tracks offences involving victims and witnesses under 13. This is designed to keep the child engaged in the process, improving safeguarding and monitoring of children at risk. However, they acknowledge that attrition rates are too high and children may be less resilient than adults. The PSNI outlined future initiatives including the Offences Strategy to reduce attrition which is in the final stages of drafting with PPS, and an update to NICHE system in June to how cases are flagged;
- The Twin Sight North collaboration with QUB is a long-term project for PSNI and they provide anonymised data and a single point of contact for researchers who seek further clarification;
- PSNI referred to the vast range of crime types in relation to repeat offenders and the complexity of same. The problem-solving work with social workers and deterrent opportunities was discussed;

² <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/definition-child-criminal-exploitation>

- Regarding Big tech and cybercrime and the different crime types will be provided by PSNI to Members of Performance Committee in March 2026 as part of the cybercrime report;
- Awareness of CCE has been undertaken by the Department of Education and Department of Health who developed an action plan that was published in September 2024 of which PSNI had an input and they continue to offer support;
- In respect of drug dealing, PSNI assured Members that local or gang affiliated drug dealers are continually subject to local neighbourhood intelligence-based policing. If a child is involved social services are contacted as existing common practice. Vulnerable or those deemed at risk will never be ignored by PSNI, intelligence led risk assessments and intervention at the earliest opportunity will follow; and
- In relation to National Reporting Mechanism (NRM), PSNI informed Members that the local NRM started in January 2026 and it is too soon to provide an update.

The Chairperson thanked the PSNI for their attendance and briefing and they left the meeting.

Following discussion it was: -

AGREED

Officials to share with Members Dr Colm Walsh's 2022 research paper 'CCE – From Contextual to Criminal Harm: Young People's Perceptions and Experiences of Child Criminal Exploitation in Northern Ireland'. **(AP 2)**

6.2 Human Rights Review of Children and Young People and Policing – PSNI 12 Month Update

The Director of Performance provided Members with an update on the Human Rights Review of Children and Young People and Policing publication³. In October 2025 Members were provided with the 'Six Month Update' from PSNI that outlined progress to date on the recommendations.

The Director of Performance informed Members that the 'Twelve Month Update' from PSNI showed that of the 16 recommendations made, this update notes that 13 have either been fully or partially accepted, two are not accepted (1 & 14) and a third (8) falls outside of the scope of the PSNI to progress. The previous Human Rights Advisor, Mr John Wadham, considered the responses in this Twelve-Month Report prior to his departure and his assessment is included at Annex B.

Members engaged in discussion:

- A Member referred to the response provided to the first Recommendation that the PSNI should amend its policy to ensure that, as far as possible, spit and bite guards are never used on any child younger than 14 years of age and sought further clarity; and
- A Member considered that the response to Recommendation 14 in respect of the use of children as a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) was reassuring, however, the answer was unambiguous in respect of the 4 children used as CHIS whether all of these, or if any, occurred in Northern Ireland; and
- A Member queried whether a child being used as a CHIS required the consent of their parent or guardian.

Following discussion it was: -

³ <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/publication/human-rights-review-children-and-young-people-and-policing>

NOTED and AGREED

That the Human Rights Review of Children and Young People and Policing Twelve-Month Report be published in co-operation with the PSNI and that Officials would request that PSNI provide a formatted copy.

It was also: -

AGREED

Officials to write to DCC Singleton in respect of Members questions in respect of Recommendation 1, to clarify why PSNI cannot accept this and;

Recommendation 14, authorisations to use children as CHIS, this was used on four occasions times throughout the UK. Officials to request the jurisdictional breakdown for the four authorisations and to clarify whether a child used as a CHIS requires parental or guardian permission. **(AP 3)**

6.3 Code of Ethics Review 2026 – Final Draft

The Director of Performance reminded Members that at December's Performance Committee Members agreed to reconvene the Working Group that compiled the draft Code of Ethics earlier in the year to consider the responses that have been received in the consultation process and whether any further changes should be made to the current draft.

The Working Group, along with representatives of the Chief Constable, met on Thursday 15th January 2026 and considered all the points made in the 18 responses to the consultation and produced an amended draft Code for

Members consideration. The Director of Performance outlined that Members are now asked to consider and agree the final proposed amendments and changes.

Members engaged in discussion on:

- The next steps in the process; and
- The Board Chairpersons Foreword.

Following discussion Members: -

AGREED

To approve the final draft Code of Ethics and recommended this final draft be referred to the Board for approval at its next meeting in March 2026.

It was also: -

NOTED

That not all Members agreed. A Member registered their concern with regards to Articles 2.5, 6.2 and 6.3 of the final draft Code of Ethics.

Members also: -

AGREED

That the Board Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the draft Code of Ethics Foreword and provide final wording. **(AP 4)**

6.4 New Human Rights Advisor Update and Work Programme

The Human Rights Advisor took up his post on 4th February 2026. The Director of Performance provided Members with an update. As well as attending the Board meeting on 5th February, the Advisor has also undertaken a series of introductory meetings that has focused on:

- Introductory meetings with Political and Independent Members;
- Various meetings with Board officials and PSNI;
- Meeting with PSNI Human Rights lawyers and trainers;
- Meeting with the Human Rights Commission, Commissioner and CEO;
- Reviewing the McCullough Report; and
- Attending the Privacy Seminar on 25th February 2025

At its meeting in November 2025, Members of the Performance Committee considered and agreed priority areas of work for the new Human Rights Advisor. Members also considered and agreed a Three-Year Work Programme for Human Rights and the Human Rights Advisor will use the this to guide his work over the next three years.

Members engaged in brief discussion on:

- Consideration of future work, that the legislative detail is fulfilled by the Human Rights Advisor; and
- Privacy roundtable and proactive Board engagement.

Following discussions it was: -

NOTED

Members were content with the Human Rights Advisors proposed work programme for the Board's Human Rights Advisor.

6.5 Human Rights Advisor - Assessment of Closed Materials and Update on Power of Arrest Guidance

The Director of Performance highlighted two reports that were finalised by the previous Human Rights Advisor prior to the ending of his contract. The first concerned his assessment of the closed materials in relation to the Mc Cullough Review and also the use of CHIS and domestic violence and violence against Women and Girls. The Human Rights Advisor had produced a full report and Members noted its content and referred to their earlier discussions on this issue under Item 4.

The Director of Performance also reminded Members that the previous Human Rights Advisor was working with ACC Crime on the disproportionate numbers of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) compared with those under the Police and Criminal Evidence Order 1989 (PACE). This issue was discussed at the Performance Committee in September 2025.

The Human Rights Advisor made three recommendations to PSNI in respect of the guidance to officers when making their choice as to which power to use. PSNI have considered these recommendations and have shared with the Human Rights Advisor updated Guidance on the Power of Arrest. The updated Guidance is provided for Members to note.

Members engaged in brief discussion on:

- The positive outcome on this issue for the Performance Committee as result of the former Human Rights Advisor John Wadham's work.

Following discussion it was: -

NOTED

Members were content with the updated Guidance on the Power of Arrest.

6.6 Effectiveness Questionnaire / Annual Assessment of Committee

The Director of Performance recalled to Members that Pursuant to Section 8 of the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Performance Committee is required to assess its own effectiveness on an annual basis and report the results of its effectiveness review to the Board.

As such and as we approach the close of the 2025/26-year, Committee Members are asked to complete and return a questionnaire to Board officials who will then collate and feedback the responses received for consideration at a future meeting.

Following discussion it was: -

NOTED

Members to return complete questionnaires ahead of the March Performance Committee meeting on 12th March 2026.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

7.1 Members stated they would submit questions to the Chief Constable in relation to three areas identified.

7.2 RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

A response from the Chief Constable was received to a Members question in respect of the number of non-molestation orders (NMOs) in the period 2021 to 2025.

A response from the Chief Constable was received to a Members question in respect of Home Office immigration team raids on businesses and workplaces in Northern Ireland.

8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

No other communication issues were identified.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Director of Performance provided for Members information, a new standalone report published in December 2025 and authored by Jonathan Hall KC titled 'State Threats Legislation in 2024'.

The Director of Performance also provided for Members information, a new report 'AI in Policing: international lessons and domestic solutions' published in December 2025 by Justice.org.

The Director of Performance informed Members that he had just received a letter from DCC Singleton seeking advice and further consultation with the Board on whether Notifiable Memberships should be replaced with a Conflict of Interest in a new Service Instruction. The Director confirmed that this would be brought back to the March meeting for further discussions.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Performance Committee meeting would take place on the 12 March 2026 at 9:30am.

Meeting closed at 12:30pm.

PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

12 February 2026

Chairperson