Police Service of Northern Ireland

Accountability Report

Presented at Policing Board Meeting:

5 November 2026



we care
we listen
we act

Contents

Chief Constable's Foreword	03
Introduction to Outcome 3	08
Performance Dashboard For Outcome 3	09
Progress Updates Against Impact Measures:	
3.1 Representativeness of the Police Service	10
3.2 Standards of Professionalism and Conduct	18
3.3 Making best use of Resources	23
Good News and Key Updates	39

Chief Constable's Foreword



My Accountability Report this month focuses on Outcome 3 of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan: The Police Service has a representative, valued and enabled workforce. This goes to the heart of effective policing. Our officers and staff are the people who respond when someone needs help, protect victims, investigate crime and work with communities to keep people safe. They are central to everything we do, and I want them to feel proud of the work they undertake, valued for their contribution and properly supported to deliver the policing service the public deserves. Our ambition to be a representative Service across all our communities is one that will not be achieved in the short term. Throughout the past 25 years, the proportion of police officer applicants from a Catholic background has remained stubbornly at around 30 per cent. Increasing this figure, and improving the representation of women, must be a focus for everyone. We must also ensure that current and future recruitment improves representation from our diverse and ethnic minority communities, and from working class Protestant communities.

November is a particularly special time for the Police Service of Northern Ireland as we celebrate our 25th anniversary. It is an important milestone and one that gives us much to be proud of. As we reflect on that journey, we recognise the service and sacrifice of our colleagues in the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC, whose courage in exceptionally difficult and dangerous circumstances laid important foundations for policing today. Over the past 25 years, officers and staff, past and present, have worked tirelessly to protect people, support victims and build relationships across Northern Ireland, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. I want to recognise their extraordinary contribution and the support and sacrifices of their families. Our anniversary will be marked through a programme of commemorative, community and recognition events, giving us opportunities to celebrate our achievements, reflect on our journey and look ahead to the future. There is much to celebrate, but there is also much more we want to achieve. I am proud of the Police Service we have become and ambitious for the Police Service we will be in the future.

Looking to that future, I am delighted that we launched our latest student officer recruitment campaign on 12 October, alongside the opening of our Police Constable Transferee Scheme and recruitment campaign for police staff call handlers. These are exciting opportunities to join the Police Service, whether starting a new career, bringing policing experience gained elsewhere or taking up one of the many important roles performed by our

police staff. Policing is a challenging career, but it is also an incredibly rewarding one. Few jobs offer the same opportunity to make a positive difference to people's lives, support those who need help and contribute to safer communities. We want people from every background and every part of Northern Ireland to see policing as a career that is open to them. We need people with different experiences, skills and perspectives, united by a commitment to fairness, integrity and public service. People aged 17 to 57 can apply to the Student Officer campaign. I again appeal to those with influence across political, civic, community, educational and business life to advocate positively for policing and help people from all backgrounds to see the opportunities it offers. Their support can make a real difference in strengthening our workforce and helping more people from all backgrounds to see policing as a worthwhile career. Being a police officer is the finest public service a citizen can undertake. Every day officers change people's lives for the better, keeping people safe, protecting society from those who seek to harm it. Policing is a profession that not everyone can do. Those who step forward to be part of the PSNI deserve to be thanked and recognised by everyone.

These recruitment opportunities are an important part of our wider ambition to build a Police Service that better reflects the communities we serve. As this month's report recognises, there is still work to do, particularly in improving representation among women and people from Catholic, ethnic minority and Protestant working class backgrounds. These are longstanding challenges and there are no quick fixes. However, I have been encouraged by the response from colleagues across the Service to my call for more innovative and co-ordinated action. A tremendous amount of work has gone into strengthening our approach to representativeness, from recruitment and outreach to understanding the barriers people may face in joining and progressing and remaining in the organisation. Our Service-wide Action Plan on Representativeness and Race and Ethnicity Action Plan are important parts of this work. I want to acknowledge the commitment and determination shown by everyone involved. We have made significant progress in strengthening our approach, and that work gives us a much stronger foundation for the future. The next challenge is to translate that effort into sustained improvements in the make-up of our workforce and the experiences of the people who work here. We will continue to listen, learn from the evidence and adapt our approach to make a lasting difference.

There are encouraging signs in our wider efforts to rebuild the workforce. Our police officer and staff numbers are growing. Officer sickness absence and attrition have reduced, while deployability has improved. This is welcome progress and reflects the work taking place across the Service. However, our numbers remain below the levels needed to meet the demands placed on policing. Rebuilding our workforce is therefore about more than bringing in new people. It is also about retaining the experience and skills we already have, supporting colleagues who are unwell and making sure our officers and staff have what they need to do their jobs well.

Good leadership and a healthy working culture are also essential to supporting and retaining our people. We are building on the findings of our Inclusion Survey, focusing on enabling, empowering and supporting our workforce. This includes strengthening supervision, improving development opportunities and addressing barriers that prevent people from performing at their best. I want officers and staff to see and feel the difference this work makes in their working lives.

At the same time, I remain clear about the high standards expected of everyone who serves in the Police Service. The overwhelming majority of officers and staff act with dedication and integrity, often in very difficult circumstances, and they rightly expect the same standards from their colleagues.

Where standards fall short, concerns need to be dealt with fairly, thoroughly and without unnecessary delay. Accountability is essential, but so too is learning from what has gone wrong, preventing harm and making sure our values are reflected in how we lead, make decisions and treat one another every day.

Looking ahead, I am determined that we take a clear and informed approach to how policing is organised, resourced and delivered across Northern Ireland. I have appointed Ipsos, working with Crest Advisory as its independent strategic partner, to undertake a Strategic Review of the Service's resourcing and service delivery model. The review will provide an independent assessment of the demands we face and what is needed to meet them. It will examine our cost base, the changing environment in which policing operates, and the skills and workforce numbers required to deliver policing sustainably across Northern Ireland. This is an important piece of work. It will help us make informed decisions and provide the evidence needed to make the strongest possible case for the investment policing requires. At a time when our workforce has been under sustained pressure, it will help set a clear direction, giving greater certainty to our people and the communities we serve. This work will take account of the wider police reform that is taking place in England and Wales.

Turning to other significant policing matters, the events surrounding Drumcree have understandably attracted considerable public interest and scrutiny in recent weeks. The policing operation was one of the most complex and demanding challenges faced by the Service in recent years. Throughout, our operational strategy was directed towards facilitating the procession, while balancing the rights of all those affected and prioritising the preservation of life and public safety. This required extensive planning, sustained engagement and negotiation with all parties, alongside a robust evidence gathering operation and ongoing criminal justice response.

I am immensely proud of our policing response and of the officers and staff, supported by mutual aid colleagues, who worked prolonged hours in exceptionally challenging circumstances. Their professionalism, restraint and commitment helped ensure that Northern Ireland did not experience the violence and disorder that many feared. Their actions reflected the very best of policing: remaining impartial, making difficult decisions based on the full operational picture, and keeping the safety of people and communities at the centre of every decision.

I acknowledge the subsequent High Court judgment and its clear finding that my decision to seek a review of the Parades Commission's determination was lawful. It recognised that all lawful and proportionate options to facilitate the procession had been exhausted, and that a major public order intervention would have created an unacceptable risk of serious injury, disorder and wider harm across Northern Ireland. The judgment also recognised that the police operation, the efforts to secure a negotiated resolution, and the continuing criminal justice response collectively met the State's obligation to take appropriate steps to facilitate peaceful assembly. The court was clear that this obligation does not require a lawful procession to be facilitated at any cost.

I also have to take account of everyone's safety, and balance the rights of all communities. Some media reporting and other commentary suggested that the courts had ordered the procession to proceed and that police must ensure this happened, whatever the cost. That is wholly inaccurate as a matter of law. We have a duty to protect life and property, preserve public order, prevent the commission of offences and bring offenders to justice while also, in this particular matter, seeking to facilitate a Parades Commission determination and ensuring the rights of all parties are respected. This was an exceptionally

challenging balancing exercise, conducted throughout in a manner of which the organisation should be proud.

Policing operations such as this come at a real cost to service delivery more widely. The response at Drumcree required a substantial whole Service mobilisation, drawing officers and staff from across the organisation into the operation and its supporting functions. While we protected critical services, including safeguarding and key investigations, this inevitably reduced capacity for proactive and community policing, delayed some planned crime activity and specialist training, and required prolonged shifts, altered rest days and careful welfare support for those involved. It is a clear illustration of why workforce recovery, sustainable resourcing and operational resilience matter so greatly.

The financial pressures facing the organisation remain a serious concern. We are now over halfway through the financial year and the budget stalemate continues. As a result, the Police Service is continuing to operate against an 'indicative allocation', which is subject to change. While I understand the wider political context, this places the Police Service in an almost impossible position by preventing us from making informed financial decisions. We are fast approaching, if not already past, the point at which our costs are substantially committed for the year, regardless of the final budget outcome.

The indicative allocation provided is wholly inadequate and the projected funding gap for this year is now estimated at £75 million, including £5 million related to Drumcree. I remain committed to restoring the Service to adequate levels.

My firm view remains that the gap is a direct consequence of chronic underfunding since devolution and effectively means that PSNI is continuing to run with a significant operating deficit. In recent years, this deficit has been resolved by in-year allocations, but not reflected in adjustments to subsequent baseline budgets.

Our attention is now firmly fixed on securing an adequate funding settlement that will support headcount, improve the Service and put PSNI on a sustainable footing. In addition, we must make every effort to secure separate funding to specifically deal with the financial burden of legacy.

Alongside these wider challenges, this report highlights the breadth and impact of the work delivered across the Service. Every day, our officers and staff make a real difference to people and communities across Northern Ireland. They have supported victims of domestic and sexual abuse, safeguarded children and people in crisis, pursued those responsible for serious and organised crime and worked with partners to prevent harm in communities. These examples reflect the professionalism, compassion and determination our people bring to often complex and demanding circumstances. They also underline why a representative, valued and enabled workforce matters: it is through the skill, judgement and commitment of our people that we protect the vulnerable, build confidence and keep communities safe.

I was delighted to attend the Police Federation for Northern Ireland Bravery Awards in October, where I again saw the extraordinary courage, compassion and professionalism of our officers. I was immensely proud of every colleague honoured and of the actions for which they received recognition. These included responding to the bomb attack on Dunmurry PSNI station, confronting armed and violent individuals, rescuing a family from a house fire in Dungannon and responding to the terrible tragedy at Maguiresbridge.

The awards also celebrated officers who have safeguarded children and women subjected to appalling sexual abuse and rape offences. They highlighted those who safely brought armed and highly vulnerable people experiencing acute mental health crisis into custody, including individuals who had

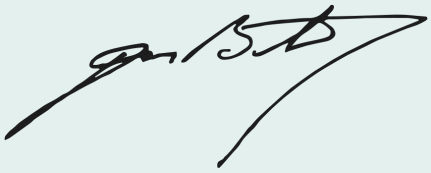
indicated an intention to provoke a lethal response from police. Officers were also commended for evacuating residents from minority communities who were under threat in their homes during a period of shameful serious public disorder.

I was pleased to see those involved in *Peelers* acknowledged for stepping forward to give the public a clearer understanding of the realities of policing. These are remarkable examples of public service, and all of Northern Ireland should recognise and be proud of the people who undertake this work on its behalf.

I am also pleased that several teams across the Service have received external recognition for their excellence and innovation. Our Digital Hub won the Best Use of Social Media in Crisis Communications award at the Orlo Big Social Awards for its work to keep the public informed and reassured during Operation Constantness. Our Finance team was named Public Sector Team of the Year at the inaugural Belfast Telegraph Accountancy Awards, recognising its effective stewardship of public funds in a challenging financial environment.

Information and Communication Services also received the Excellence in Cyber Security Award at the NPCC Innovation and Digital Awards, reflecting the work of colleagues to strengthen the resilience and protection of our systems, information and assets. These awards demonstrate the skill and commitment of the many people who support frontline policing and help keep the Service effective, secure and responsive. I congratulate everyone involved on these fantastic achievements

As we celebrate 25 years of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, I am proud of the people who have served and those who continue to serve with courage, compassion and professionalism. There are undoubtedly challenges ahead, but there is also much to be positive about. I am determined that we continue to build a Police Service that reflects our communities, values its people and gives them the support and resources they need to do their very best for the public.



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 reflects the communities we serve, provides a positive and inclusive working environment, and equips officers and staff to deliver policing safely, professionally and effectively.

Policing depends on people. The confidence, judgement, skill and commitment of officers and staff shape how victims experience our service, how communities view policing and how effectively we respond to risk and demand. A workforce that is representative, valued and enabled is therefore fundamental to public confidence, legitimacy and operational effectiveness.

This Outcome brings together the connected conditions needed to sustain that workforce. Representativeness is not achieved through recruitment alone. It depends on whether people from all communities see policing as a realistic career, are able to access and progress through fair processes, feel they belong and can build a career within the Service. Professionalism and conduct are equally central. The standards we set, the way concerns are identified and addressed, and the action taken to prevent misconduct all shape the confidence that the public and our workforce can have in PSNI.

The ability of officers and staff to meet these expectations also depends on the resources and support available to them. Workforce strength, availability, wellbeing, capability and the effective use of technology and infrastructure all influence our ability to meet demand, protect people and sustain services under pressure.

There is evidence of progress. Workforce recovery is under way, with increased officer and staff numbers, reduced sickness absence and attrition, and improved officer deployability. A coordinated Action Plan on Representativeness has strengthened activity across the employment journey, while work continues to uphold professional standards through investigation, oversight, prevention and organisational learning. Investment in wellbeing, development, modernisation and supporting infrastructure is also helping to protect capacity and make better use of the people and resources available.

However, challenges remain. Workforce representativeness has remained static across groups. Workforce resilience continues to be affected by workforce availability, sickness absence, injury, trauma exposure and the continuing pressures placed on officers and staff. Maintaining high standards also requires sustained attention to prevention, timely investigation and organisational learning. This report therefore focuses not only on activity, but on the difference it is making, the challenges that remain and the action needed to deliver lasting improvement.

Performance Dashboard



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

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

Progress Updates Against Impact Measure



3.1 Representativeness of the Police Service

Limited Progress

We have strengthened our approach to representativeness through a coordinated Action Plan spanning the full employment journey. Workforce composition remains broadly stable, and improving representation will require sustained action over time.

1. Overall Assessment

Since our February progress update and assessment to the Policing Board, we have taken significant steps to strengthen and coordinate our approach to improving workforce representativeness. A coordinated PSNI Action Plan on Representativeness is now in place, supported by stronger attraction activity, equality monitoring, outreach, candidate support and work to understand barriers to joining, developing and remaining within the Service.

Workforce composition has remained broadly stable. Current appointment rates and the projected leaver profile create a longer-term risk of decline, which we are continuing to assess. Geographic and socio-economic analysis shows that applications are unevenly distributed across Northern Ireland and that fewer applicants come from more deprived areas.

The impact of this new and strengthened activity will be demonstrated through workforce outcomes. Future evidence on who considers policing, applies, progresses, joins, develops and remains within the Service will show whether the approach is making a difference.

A representative police service is fundamental to public confidence, legitimacy and effective policing. We want people from every part of Northern Ireland to see policing as a career open to them and to see themselves reflected in the Service that serves them.

The 25th anniversary of the PSNI provides an opportunity to renew this commitment. An additional external recruitment campaign commenced on 12 October 2026, seeking applicants for Student Officer, Administrative Support Officer and Custody Detention Officer roles. Its planning and timing enable PSNI to test additional measures designed to promote PSNI careers across all communities and geographies, launch the Police Constable Transferee Scheme and ensure that the candidate pipeline continues to support the Workforce Recovery Plan.

The campaign is centred on PSNI as a potential career choice for all. It aims to open up roles and professional pathways to job seekers through events and outreach that showcase the diversity and value of the work our people perform. While the overarching outcome is to improve representativeness, activity over the last six months also reflects what attracts job seekers in today's labour market and their preferences.

This is an opportunity to recognise the progress made since the Service was established, be clear about the challenges that remain, and work with communities, partners and our workforce to shape

the future of representative policing. The anniversary programme and current recruitment campaign provide opportunities to strengthen that engagement, particularly with a new generation considering their future careers.

2. Workforce Representation

The current workforce profile provides a clear baseline for this assessment. It shows that, while PSNI has made important progress over the past 25 years, the Service does not yet reflect Northern Ireland's communities in a number of important respects.

As at 31 July 2026, 31% of police officers and 19% of police staff were from a Catholic background, compared with 45.7% of the Northern Ireland population recorded in the 2021 Census. Catholic representation among police officers has remained broadly stable in recent years, but there is a longer-term risk of decline. Catholic officers accounted for 34.7% of police officer leavers in 2025/26, while recent appointment rates have not yet matched the projected leaver profile.

Representation from ethnic minority backgrounds also remains below the wider population profile. At 31 July 2026, around 0.9% of police officers and police staff identified as being from an ethnic minority background, compared with 3.4% of the Northern Ireland population. The position for women differs between officers and police staff: women made up 33% of police officers and 56% of police staff.

Workforce composition, 31 July 2026, compared with NI Census 2021

	Police Officer	Police Staff	NI Census 2021
Catholic	**31%**	**19%**	**45.7%**
Female	**33%**	**56%**	**51%**
Ethnic Minority	**0.9%**	**0.9%**	**3.4%**
LGBT+	**3.95%**	**3.21%**	**2.1%**
Disability	**4.75%**	**8.02%**	

These figures reflect more than recruitment. They are shaped by who joins, progresses and remains within the Service. In a large and relatively stable workforce, change takes time. This is why our approach extends beyond recruitment to include development, inclusion, fair progression and retention.

Geographic and socio-economic analysis of the 2025 and 2026 recruitment campaigns shows that applications are unevenly distributed across Northern Ireland. In the January 2026 Student Officer campaign, 21.7% of applicants came from the 30% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland, while 35.4% came from the 30% least deprived areas. This does not explain why people choose not to apply, but it helps identify where more sustained engagement and clearer routes into policing may be needed.

Recruitment data also points to a changing picture in how potential applicants describe their community background. In the January 2026 Student Officer campaign, 23% of applicants did not directly identify as either Catholic or Protestant. This reinforces the need to understand how people describe their identity and how policing is viewed as a career by the communities we seek to attract. It does not lessen the importance of Catholic representation or established fair-employment monitoring.

3. Representativeness Action Plan

To maximise opportunities to improve representativeness, and in response to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee review of Policing and Security in Northern Ireland, we have developed a PSNI Action Plan on Representativeness. Through the Attraction, Recruitment and Co-ordination Group (ARC), we are coordinating activity across the Service to improve access to policing careers and support a more representative workforce.

The Action Plan addresses the full journey into and through PSNI, from understanding barriers and attracting candidates to supporting selection, appointment, belonging and retention. It is aligned to our Workforce Strategy, Workforce Recovery Plan and the Northern Ireland Policing Plan.

The Plan is organised around eight areas of work:

1.	Understand & Remove Barriers
2.	Support & Advocacy
3.	Attraction
4.	Outreach & Engagement
5.	Access
6.	Selection
7.	Appointment and on-boarding
8.	Belonging

A coordinated programme of work is under way across each area. This includes engagement with communities, partners and education providers; targeted recruitment and outreach; broader access routes; candidate support and reasonable adjustments; analysis of progression through recruitment; strengthened on-boarding; and action on development, employee voice, inclusion and belonging.

The Audit of Inequalities, launched in January 2026, is bringing together qualitative and quantitative evidence on the experience of people across the equality groups protected by Northern Ireland equality law. It will examine where barriers or inequalities may arise in considering, joining, developing and remaining within PSNI, and will produce prioritised recommendations and an implementation plan.

The effectiveness of the Plan will be assessed through future evidence on who considers policing, applies, progresses, joins, develops and remains within PSNI.

4. Attraction and engagement

A representative police service begins with people seeing policing as a career that is open to them. Through ARC, we are coordinating attraction, outreach and access activity across the Service, using recruitment, geographic, socio-economic and community insight to focus effort where applications and officer residence are comparatively low.

The January 2026 Student Officer campaign attracted 4,104 applicants. The proportion of applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds and the proportion declaring a disability increased compared with the 2025 campaign. However, the proportion of applicants from Catholic backgrounds, women and LGBT+ communities was lower. This reinforces the need for sustained engagement rather than reliance on individual recruitment campaigns.

Student Officer applicant profile: 2025 and January 2026 campaigns

	2025 Student Officer Campaign	January 2026 Student Officer Campaign	NI Census 2021
Catholic	**28.8%**	**26.8%**	**45.7%**
Female	**37.5%**	**36.5%**	**51%**
Ethnic Minority	**3.9%**	**4.2%**	**3.4%**
LGBT+	**8.0%**	**7.3%**	**2.1%**
Disability	**4.0%**	**5.7%**	
Total applicants	**4,822**	**4,104**	

The applicant profile needs to be interpreted carefully, particularly in relation to community background and the increase in applicants who did not directly identify as Catholic or Protestant. For fair-employment monitoring, an applicant's direct response does not always determine the final community background category recorded. In some cases, the residuary method is used to determine the category in which a person is recorded. This supports statutory monitoring, but it is not necessarily a direct statement of how an individual identifies themselves.

Recent public engagement has provided an important starting point for further discussions with stakeholders and the public about how individual identity is collected and categorised. This includes the University of Ulster recruitment event in June 2026, the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Foundations and Future conversations, and a REaL event in Derry City and Strabane. Our aim is to ensure we meet statutory monitoring requirements while respecting individual choice in how people identify. We are working with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to ensure that these arrangements remain robust, clearly explained and capable of providing meaningful insight.

Learning from the January campaign has informed the current recruitment campaign. Alongside targeted advertising, it has been supported by schools and college engagement, careers events, community outreach and direct contact with potential applicants. The intention is to make the range of careers within PSNI more visible, provide clearer information about the roles and professional pathways available, and help people understand the support available during recruitment.

We will use campaign reach, applicant data, candidate feedback and progression through the recruitment process to assess whether this more coordinated approach is reaching a broader range of potential applicants.

Alongside recruitment campaigns, we are strengthening longer-term engagement with schools, colleges and communities. More than 175 officers and staff have joined the schools, colleges and universities alumni network, enabling them to engage with their former education settings and provide young people with direct contact with colleagues from a range of backgrounds, roles and career paths within PSNI.

This wider engagement is also reflected in PSNI Experience Days.

Case study: PSNI Experience Days

PSNI Experience Days give young people and community members a positive, accessible opportunity to engage with officers and staff outside an incident or enforcement context. The events improve understanding of the breadth of policing, create space for questions and discussion, and encourage participants, including those from communities with limited routine contact with policing, to see PSNI as approachable, relevant and a potential future career option.

Three Experience Days have been delivered to date at Newforge, Ulster University in Coleraine and the SHARE Discovery Centre in Lisnaskea. They attracted 261 visitors, comprising 221 pupils and 40 teachers and accompanying adults. Further events are planned for Derry/Londonderry and Newforge.

Each Experience Day combines presentations, practical demonstrations, small group sessions, a marketplace of specialist roles and informal conversations with officers and staff. Contributors have included neighbourhood policing, police dogs, armed response and the Police Safety Programme. Participants can explore police decision making, public safety, equipment and the varied careers available within PSNI. The sessions promote policing careers, provide practical safety advice and support longer-term relationships with schools and communities.

Initial feedback has been positive. In one measure, participant interest in a career with PSNI increased from 55% to 80% following participation. Attendance, participation, school involvement, contributor records and feedback from pupils and teachers will be used to assess longer-term impact and inform a repeatable model tailored to different locations and audiences.

5. Recruitment and selection

Attraction is only the first step. We aim to ensure that people from all backgrounds can understand the recruitment process, access appropriate support and demonstrate their potential fairly.

We use equality monitoring at each stage to understand who applies, progresses and reaches the merit pool. This helps us identify where representation changes and consider whether candidate information, confidence, preparation, support, assessment methods or any aspect of the process may be creating barriers.

Student Officer recruitment: progression through the 2025 and 2026 campaigns

	% of Applicants		% passed IST		% within merit pool	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Female	37.5%	36.5%	36.2%	36.1%	36.9%	37.3%
Catholic	28.8%	26.8%	25.8%	25.4%	24.8%	22.7%
Ethnic Minority	3.9%	4.2%	2.5%	3.1%	1.8%	2.5%
LGBT+	8.0%	7.3%	8.6%	6.9%	8.5%	7.1%
Disability	4.0%	5.7%	3.9%	3.3%	4.1%	5.9%
Total	4,822	4,104	2,630	2,509	1,195	1,199

The data shows that representation can change as candidates move through the process. It does not, by itself, explain why. We are using further analysis, candidate insight and the Audit of Inequalities to understand these patterns, identify potential barriers and take action where required.

Reasonable adjustments are available where appropriate, so that candidates can demonstrate their potential without being disadvantaged by the way an assessment is delivered. The January 2026 merit pool included a higher proportion of candidates who declared a disability than the 2025 merit pool. We will use appointment and attestation data to assess whether this progress is sustained and to identify any further action required.

Appointment

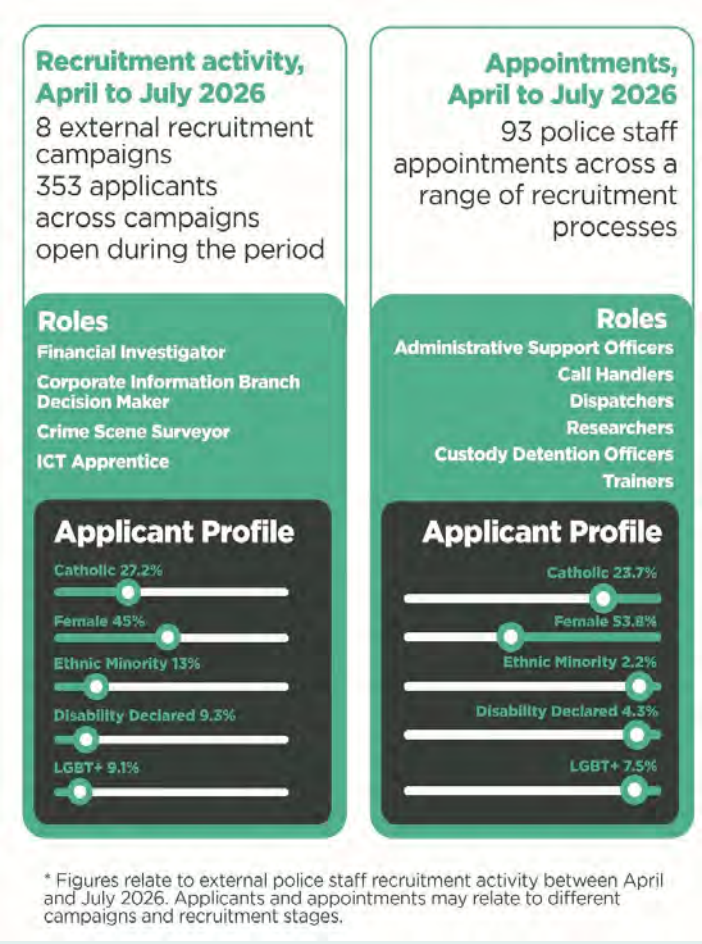
Candidates who reach the merit pool are not appointed immediately or all at once. Those from the January 2026 campaign are continuing through pre-employment checks, appointment and attestation. The pace at which candidates progress through checks, withdrawals, position on the merit list and notice periods from other employment can all affect the appointment rate and composition of each intake.

We analyse appointment data at the end of each campaign to understand progression from the merit pool through to appointment and attestation, including attrition and whether outcomes vary across different groups. We will continue to use this evidence to identify any barriers, refine recruitment and on-boarding arrangements, and take action where required.

Police staff careers and recruitment

Police staff are integral to Team PSNI. They bring professional, technical, operational and administrative expertise to roles including public contact, investigations, custody, intelligence, digital services, training and corporate support. Their contribution helps PSNI deliver for victims and communities, while enabling officers to focus their warranted powers and specialist skills where they are most needed.

Maintaining a strong and diverse police staff recruitment pipeline is therefore important to modern policing. It helps PSNI recruit the skills needed to meet current and future demand, strengthen workforce capacity and broaden the range of people who can see a meaningful career within the Service.



6. Progression

Recruitment alone will not create a more representative Service. Officers and staff need to be able to see a future in PSNI, develop their skills, compete fairly for opportunities and remain within the organisation throughout their careers.

Between April and July 2026, we launched six police officer and 11 police staff internal selection competitions. These created opportunities to progress into operational, supervisory and specialist roles. The Strategic Promotions and Examinations Board oversees these processes, with equality analysis informing eligibility criteria. This helps us identify potential barriers and consider opportunities consistently across the Service.

Reasonable adjustments are available to support officers and staff with individual needs during internal selection. These include adapted examination times and materials, readers, additional interview preparation and adjustments for neurodiverse conditions, maternity related needs and other circumstances. Candidates may also receive interview questions in writing and preparation time before interview, where appropriate. These arrangements help colleagues demonstrate their capability without being disadvantaged by the assessment process.

PdrCHAT, the professional development review process, was introduced in January 2026. It replaces the previous annual review with regular conversations between officers and staff and line managers about performance, wellbeing, development, career ambition and tenure. By the end of September 2026, 68% of pdrCHATs due for completion had been completed. The College of Policing has recognised the redesigned process for its streamlined approach and its link to enabling the National Talent Development Strategy. We are using data and feedback to understand barriers in areas where take up remains uneven and to strengthen the quality and consistency of development conversations.

Coaching, mentoring and accessible career information can also help colleagues build confidence, develop professional networks and prepare for opportunities. The Career Development Matrix, available through our intranet system, has been viewed more than 4,400 times. We currently have 28 trained coaches, 47 trained mentors and 56 mentees. An evaluation framework is being developed to assess the reach, experience and longer-term value of this support, and to inform its future development.

Targeted development support

Targeted mentoring has provided additional support for officers and staff who may have had less access to professional networks, role models or informal career advice. From October 2024 to October 2025, a year long scheme brought together 23 senior leader mentors and 31 mentees from the Ethnic Minority Police Association, Women in Policing Association, Catholic Police Guild, Disability Support Network and LGBT+ network. Ninety per cent of participants said they would recommend the scheme to colleagues.

Support has also been provided to colleagues from minority backgrounds to prepare for leadership roles through the College of Policing's ASPIRE Leadership Development Programme. Twelve officers and staff at Inspector rank, Staff Officer grade and above, attended the five day programme, designed to build leadership confidence, broaden professional networks and support career development. Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive.

External partnerships also provide access to additional learning and development opportunities. Through organisations including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Women in Business and the Chief Executives Forum, we develop bespoke advice and insight that helps PSNI remain responsive to changing professional needs.

Race and Ethnicity Action Plan

The Race and Ethnicity Action Plan 2025 to 2030 supports the wider work to make PSNI a more representative and inclusive Service. Its first year has established workstream ownership, a Performance and Outcomes Framework, objectives and measures, and baseline work on ethnicity data, lived experience and community assurance.

The next phase will focus on using this evidence to identify and address barriers affecting attraction, appointment, progression, retention and workplace experience for people from ethnic minority communities. In October 2026, PSNI held a REAP One-Year Progress Event, bringing together ethnic minority communities, partners, officers, staff and senior leaders to share progress, hear directly about experience and priorities, and inform the next phase of delivery.

7. Assurance, risks and next steps

The coordinated PSNI Action Plan on Representativeness has strengthened our response to the representativeness challenge. It provides a clearer, Service-wide approach, connecting our understanding of under-representation with targeted attraction, recruitment, selection, development, belonging and retention activity.

This has increased outreach, developed broader access routes into policing and strengthened the support available to candidates and colleagues. A further external recruitment campaign has been launched, alongside expanded engagement with schools, colleges, communities and partners, and practical initiatives to make policing careers more visible and accessible. Work also continues to strengthen understanding of candidate progression, appointment and workforce experience.

The evidence continues to demonstrate the challenge of attracting people from communities that remain under-represented. Applications vary by community background, socio-economic background and geography. This reinforces the need for sustained action to make policing a more visible, accessible and realistic career choice for people from all communities.

The Audit of Inequalities will provide further insight into barriers that people may face in considering, joining and building a career in PSNI. Its findings, alongside recruitment, progression and workforce evidence, will inform refinement of the Action Plan, further targeting of activity and assessment of progress.

The next stage is to build on the activity already under way and demonstrate its impact. Campaign, progression and appointment data will show whether the approach is reaching a broader range of people and supporting them through to appointment and attestation. Retention and leaver analysis will also help identify how workforce experience and turnover affect representativeness.

Ultimately, the test of this work will be whether it leads to sustained improvement in workforce representativeness.

Progress Updates Against Impact Measure



3.2 Standards of Professionalism and Conduct

Adequate Progress

We have robust arrangements to uphold professional standards, investigate concerns and promote early intervention and preventative activity. Complaint and investigation volumes remain broadly stable, with proportionate action taken where required. Investigation timeliness remains the principal challenge.

1. Overall assessment

PSNI has a robust and proportionate framework to uphold professional standards, investigate concerns and apply appropriate outcomes. This is supported by established governance arrangements, preventative activity and independent oversight by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

Complaint and investigation volumes have remained broadly stable compared with the equivalent period in 2025/26. Concerns continue to be addressed through a graduated approach, reflecting their seriousness, circumstances and risk. Alongside investigation and formal proceedings where required, PSNI is strengthening prevention through learning, vetting, conflict-of-interest management, integrity checks and targeted professional standards engagement.

2. Investigation

Between 1 April 2026 and 31 August 2026 there were 70 new PSD investigations. This is broadly consistent with the comparative period in 2025/26, during which 65 investigations were recorded.
513 breaches of the Code of Ethics have been recorded in the first five months of 2026/27. These breaches cover a range of conduct issues and are subject to proportionate responses, including management action and formal misconduct proceedings where appropriate.

The duration of misconduct investigations varies considerably and is influenced by several 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 purposes. For Discipline Branch cases concluded since 1 April 2025, the average time from the commencement of an investigation to final determination is 326 days. Excluding the 20 percent outlier cases reduces the average to 229 days. A small number of cases have remained ongoing for more than three years, reflecting the range of factors outlined above.

3. Outcomes[1]

Since 1 April 2026, 18 officers have attended misconduct hearings and six officers have attended misconduct meetings. These proceedings reflect cases where alleged breaches have met the threshold for formal disciplinary action. During the same period in 2025/26, nine officers attended misconduct hearings and 19 officers attended a misconduct meeting.

Between 1 April 2026 and 31 August 2026, seven Special Case Hearings were held. All resulted in dismissal without notice.

There have been five new suspensions since 1 April 2026. 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. During the same period in 2025/26, eight officers were suspended from duty. As at 31 October 2026, there are 31 officers suspended from duty.

Over the same period, 35 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. During the same period in 2025/26, 20 officers were repositioned. As at 31 October 2026, 97 officers were subject to repositioning.

One officer has received a criminal conviction in the first five months of 2026/27.

The range of hearings, misconduct meetings, Special Case Hearings, suspensions, repositioning and convictions demonstrates that misconduct is addressed seriously and proportionately. A graduated approach to sanctions and risk management is applied, reflecting the severity, circumstances and outcomes of each case.

4. Complaints and Oversight

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland provides an independent, impartial system for investigating complaints about police conduct, ensuring accountability and public confidence in policing.

Between 1 April 2026 and 31 July 2026, 981 complaints were made to PONI. This volume remains relatively consistent with the previous period when 977 complaints were received, indicating no material change in overall complaint levels.

During the same period the number of allegations investigated by PONI has decreased by 21% from 1903 to 1,501 in the current reporting period.

The broadly consistent number of complaints over the past five years indicates sustained public use of accountability processes provided by the Police Ombudsman.

[1]Reporting period for outcomes is 1 April 2026—18 September 2026

5. Prevention

While the number of misconduct investigations and complaints provides important assurance that concerns are addressed appropriately once identified, the work of PSNI's Professional Standards Department extends well beyond investigation.

Its dedicated Policy and Prevention Department leads internal and external engagement, communicates key professional risks and responsibilities, and develops and implements tools and policies that set clear expectations, support ethical decision-making and reduce opportunities for misconduct. It also promotes a culture in which officers and staff understand available reporting mechanisms and are supported and encouraged to report inappropriate behaviour, misconduct and corruption.
The Service Vetting Unit supports the protection of the PSNI's integrity, reputation, people, assets and information through robust and proportionate vetting processes. Its role is to provide appropriate assurance regarding the trustworthiness, integrity and reliability of police officers, police staff and non-police personnel working for, or on behalf of, the Service, helping to safeguard its security, values and public confidence.

Current preventative activity includes:

Prevention and communication:

Publication of case studies and lessons learned is an effective way to communicate corruption risks and the actions that can help prevent them. The Policy and Prevention Unit uses the STUDIOSB anti-corruption model, aligned with national practice, to systematically identify, understand and target key corruption threats before they escalate. It publishes articles on POINT to provide officers and staff with practical information and guidance on priority thematic areas.

In May 2026, the Service approved a revised position on the publication of police misconduct outcomes. The approach replaces a general presumption of non-publication with a structured, case by case assessment after proceedings and any appeal rights have concluded. Appropriately limited publication can support accountability, public confidence and professional standards, while requiring careful consideration of data protection, the rights of the member and any ongoing criminal matters. Where publication is authorised, information will normally be confined to a factual summary of the misconduct, the finding and the sanction imposed. Naming an officer will remain exceptional and, where their identity is not already lawfully public, will require PSNI Legal Services advice and a clear recorded justification. This approach will enable the Service to use real life case studies to support its ethos as a learning organisation.

Conflicts of Interest eServices:

Professional Standards Department has launched a new Conflicts of Interest eService application. The associated Service Instruction is designed to promote awareness and reinforce individual responsibility, enabling members to declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest through eServices. Since its introduction, 75 conflicts of interest have been registered through the eService, including 28 relating to membership of an organisation. Line managers undertake an initial assessment and discuss any identified risks with the member. Senior management oversight provides assurance that conflicts are assessed and managed consistently, proportionately and without undue delay.

Training and organisational engagement:

PSD continues to contribute to the Student Officer Programme, engaging with student officers at weeks 2 and 21. This engagement is delivered across the organisation and addresses key risks, individual responsibilities, relevant Service Instructions and reporting mechanisms. During the past 12 months, PSD has delivered inputs to district sergeants, contact management sergeants, call handlers, custody detention officers, close protection officers and virtual officer attendance teams.

Langdale Review:

The Chief Constable commissioned Rachel Langdale KC to review and strengthen the PSNI response to domestic violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and misogyny. The Langdale Review has now been published, with a delivery programme comprising 26 recommendations established in response. PSD has been designated as lead for 20 recommendations and is implementing an associated delivery strategy in partnership with Human Resources and the Police College. This work is intended to ensure the recommendations are progressed in a coordinated, accountable and timely manner.

Partnership Working, Governance and Information Sharing:

Professional Standards Department (PSD) maintains a close and constructive working relationship with the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. While PSD investigates allegations relating to off-duty conduct, PONI is responsible for investigating allegations concerning on-duty conduct. Recent engagement has focused on strengthening information-sharing arrangements, supporting a more complete and informed understanding of officers who are subject to investigation.

The Service has also worked with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland to strengthen arrangements for reviewing, accepting and providing updates on Ombudsman recommendations. This included a joint review and consolidation of records for recommendations more than two years old. An agreed position has now been established for all 23 recommendations within scope, either confirming closure or setting out an updated position. The revised process introduces earlier engagement between PSD and the Ombudsman, enabling an initial assessment of whether a recommendation is meaningful, proportionate and capable of implementation before formal consideration. This will support clearer accountability, improve the timeliness and quality of responses, and strengthen oversight of recommendation implementation.

PSD also maintains established strategic and tactical governance processes, which inform contributions to the National Crime Agency's National Corruption Threat Assessment. PSD also participates in regional and national Police Counter Corruption Advisory Groups, providing opportunities to identify emerging risks, share learning and promote effective practice. In addition, members of the Anti-Corruption Unit recently undertook a two-day learning visit with Police Scotland, facilitating the exchange of approaches and best practice in preventing and responding to corruption.

Annual Integrity and Vetting Health Check:

An Annual Integrity and Vetting Health Check has been introduced as a mandatory component of pdrCHAT for all PSNI officers and staff. It supports the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and ethical conduct. As at 31 October 2026, 7,382 checks had been completed, representing approximately 85% of the workforce. This is higher than the 67% pdrCHAT completion rate, demonstrating that officers and staff can complete the health check independently. However, pdrCHAT cannot be finalised until the Annual Integrity and Vetting Health Check has been completed.

The check requires officers and staff to acknowledge their obligations and review the relevant policies on vetting; conflicts and business interests; declarable associations; professional boundaries and workplace relationships; substance misuse; information security; finances; social media; reporting corruption and wrongdoing; gifts and gratuities; and changes in circumstances.

The check was launched on 14 April 2026, after the initial launch of pdrCHAT. Human Resources is contacting the small cohort who did not receive the prompt through their first pdrCHAT cycle, so they do not need to wait until the following year. By 16 April 2027, all officers and staff will have received a prompt to complete the check. A small number may remain outstanding because of absence or other circumstances.

6. Assurance, risks and next steps

PSNI's arrangements provide multiple routes through which concerns about conduct can be identified, investigated and addressed. Independent oversight by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, together with internal governance, vetting, anti-corruption activity and professional standards processes, provides assurance that concerns are subject to appropriate scrutiny.

Formal misconduct hearings and meetings, Special Case Hearings, suspensions, repositioning and criminal convictions demonstrate that PSNI applies a proportionate response based on the seriousness, circumstances and risk presented by each case. The increased use of repositioning also provides an important safeguard, allowing operational, public and reputational risks to be managed while investigations remain ongoing.

Prevention remains central to this work. The Conflicts of Interest eService, Annual Integrity and Vetting Health Check, targeted training, organisational engagement, publication of misconduct outcomes and learning from cases all help colleagues understand their responsibilities and identify concerns at an early stage. PSD's leadership of 20 recommendations arising from the Langdale Review, alongside strengthened arrangements with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, provides a further opportunity to improve accountability, learning and the Service's response to domestic abuse, violence against women and girls and misogyny.

The principal continuing challenge is investigation timeliness. This can be affected by complex evidential and procedural requirements, as well as dependencies on external agencies. These risks remain subject to governance, scrutiny and learning. PSNI has prioritised additional resources for PSD, which is intended to improve the timeliness of misconduct matters.

We will continue to use investigation outcomes, complaints, vetting and integrity information to identify emerging risks, target preventative activity and assess whether our arrangements are maintaining the high standards expected by the public and our workforce.

Progress Updates Against Impact Measure



3.3 Making Best Use of Resources

Adequate Progress

Workforce recovery is under way, with increased numbers, lower sickness absence and attrition, and improved officer deployability. Modernisation and transformation activity is helping to strengthen capacity. However, workforce resilience remains constrained, and sustained improvement will depend on converting current progress into lasting operational capacity.

1. Overall Assessment: Adequate

Workforce recovery is under way. Officer and staff numbers have increased, sickness absence and attrition have reduced, and officer deployability has improved. This progress is being supported by stronger attendance, wellbeing and workforce management arrangements, although further work is needed to build the resilience required for the future.

Our Workforce Strategy provides the framework for this work: rebuilding numbers, supporting colleagues to contribute and develop, and making better use of the skills, capability, technology and assets available to us. In August 2026, police officer Average Working Days Lost due to sickness was 10% lower than in August 2025. Workforce modernisation and digital activity are also beginning to release time for frontline and specialist work.

Headcount alone does not determine operational availability. Sickness absence, injury, role and duty adjustments, fatigue, trauma exposure, annual leave and the time needed to train new recruits all affect the people available to provide policing services. Our response therefore combines workforce recovery with attendance management, Occupational Health and Wellbeing, rehabilitation, role and duty adjustments, and fair ill-health retirement arrangements. These measures help colleagues remain safe, recover and continue contributing where appropriate.

Workforce feedback and external inspection have also informed the response. This includes pdrCHAT, which supports more consistent conversations about performance, wellbeing, development and career ambition, and psychological health surveillance for colleagues in higher-risk roles.

We recognise the critical role played by first-line supervisors and managers and have expanded learning and training for those newly appointed, either substantively or temporarily promoted. Their role, capability and confidence are key to creating a workplace culture where officers and staff feel equipped and empowered to do their jobs, and where all colleagues feel a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Alongside this focus on our people, we are prioritising resources according to risk and investing in the skills, systems and infrastructure needed to protect delivery for victims and communities. The following sections set out the progress achieved, the work under way to sustain it and the further action needed to maintain a healthy, capable and resilient workforce.

2. Workforce strength and capacity

A capable, healthy and available workforce is essential to our ability to respond to victims, support communities and ensure that officers and staff can perform their roles safely and sustainably. Workforce strength and availability are improving through sustained work to increase numbers, strengthen attendance management, support recovery and make best use of the people available.

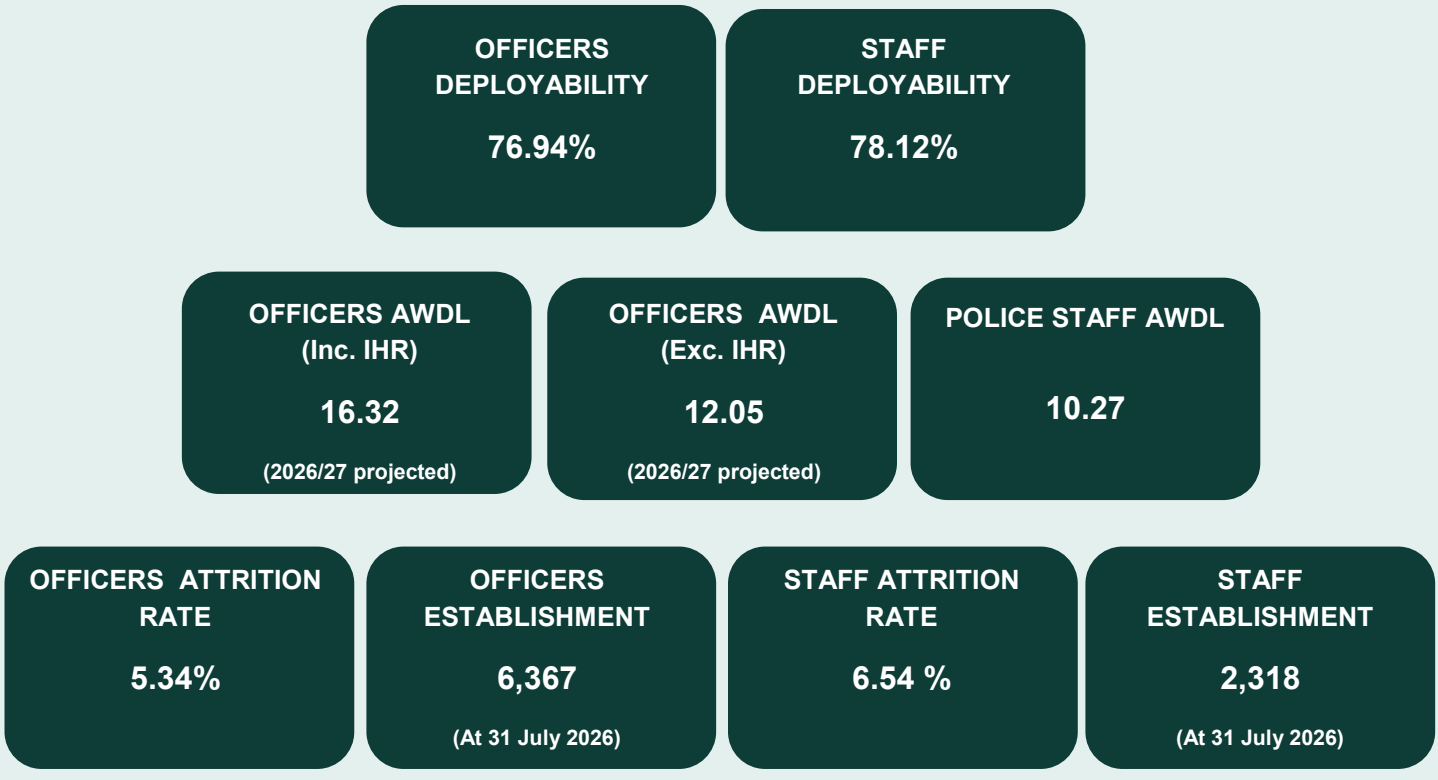
At the end of July 2026, police officer and police staff full-time equivalent numbers had increased by 100 and 52 respectively, compared with December 2025. This is early evidence that the Workforce Recovery Plan is starting to take effect

	December 2025	July 2026	Change
Police officer (FTE)	**6,267**	**6,367**	**+100**
Police staff (FTE)	**2,266**	**2,318**	**+52**

At 31 July 2026, officer deployability was 76.94%, up from 75.6% in February. Staff deployability was 78.12%, broadly unchanged from 78.3%. Both measures remain below the 80% level used to assess sustainable operational resilience.

Sickness absence and attrition have also reduced. Officer Average Working Days Lost, including officers on an ill-health retirement pathway, reduced from 19.8 days in December 2025 to 16.32 days in July 2026. Staff Average Working Days Lost reduced from 10.8 to 10.27 days. Officer attrition reduced from 5.93% to 5.34%, while staff attrition reduced from 7.99% to 6.54%.

Workforce capacity snapshot: 31 July 2026



Our intention is to recover workforce strength in a way that improves operational resilience, not simply to increase overall numbers. This means maintaining a sustained recruitment pipeline, retaining the experience already within the Service and directing additional people towards the areas of greatest assessed risk and demand.

Student Officer recruitment remains the main route through which we are rebuilding officer numbers. By March 2027, we expect to have recruited 634 Student Officers, compared with an estimated 355 officer leavers. This would increase officer headcount to 6,668.

We have also launched a Police Constable Transferee Scheme, providing an additional route for experienced officers from other police services in Great Britain to join PSNI. The scheme complements the Student Officer Programme by bringing in officers who already have operational experience. Those transferring will be supported through a condensed training programme, specifically tailored to account for their existing operational capability while ensuring that training for the Northern Ireland context and jurisdiction is provided.

Together, these routes will support continued workforce recovery and strengthen operational capacity.

Leavers and attrition

Officers and staff leave PSNI for a range of reasons, including retirement, resignation, ill-health retirement, disciplinary outcomes and bereavement. Attrition is the proportion of the workforce that leaves over a defined period. Both measures matter because they affect workforce strength, operational resilience, retention of experience and the recruitment needed to sustain policing services.

We monitor recorded leaver information, including reason for leaving, age, length of service and workforce characteristics, alongside feedback from exit interviews to help us understand colleagues' experience and identify themes that may inform retention activity.

There are different recorded pressures for officers and staff. Medical exits feature highly for officers, while resignation is the largest category for police staff. Retirements represent the loss of significant experience, while the resignation of younger officers and staff reinforces the importance of effective on-boarding, development, wellbeing and career opportunity.

Alongside workforce data, 44 voluntary exit interviews were completed between April and July 2026, comprising 29 police officers and 15 police staff. Among officers, retirement and work-life balance were the most frequently raised themes. Police staff more often identified career development, promotion, lack of opportunity and pay or benefits.

We are using this insight, alongside workforce data, to identify where retention activity can have the greatest effect. It is informing work across on-boarding, development, wellbeing, leadership and career opportunity, which is addressed accross this report. Where a line manager exit interview has not taken place, an HR Partner will contact the leaver directly. This gives more colleagues the opportunity to share their experience and strengthens the evidence available to target retention action.

3. Protecting our workforce

Policing places significant physical, psychological and personal demands on officers and staff. Injury, illness, trauma exposure, fatigue and violence can affect colleagues, their families and the teams in which they work. Protecting our workforce is therefore central to our duty of care and to sustaining the experienced, capable people needed to serve victims and communities.

Our approach is to prevent avoidable harm, identify support needs early, help colleagues recover and remain in work where safe, and treat people with dignity where a return to their previous role is not possible.

Over the last six months, we have worked closely with the National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo, to ensure that PSNI's wellbeing strategy and investment in clinical treatment services align with national best practice, and to take forward critical work on workforce fatigue.

Attendance, recovery and sustainable contribution

Role and duty adjustments, alternative duties and rehabilitation can help colleagues remain connected to work and continue contributing while recovering from injury or illness. At July 2026, 1,129 officers had a role adjustment, a 3% reduction on the previous year. More than 100 officers and 20 police staff had moved into alternative roles that matched their capability and organisational need.

Suitable roles, practical support and regular review help colleagues remain safe, supported and able to make a meaningful contribution. Adjustments must also be necessary, reasonable and regularly reviewed, so they continue to meet individual needs while supporting teams and operational delivery.

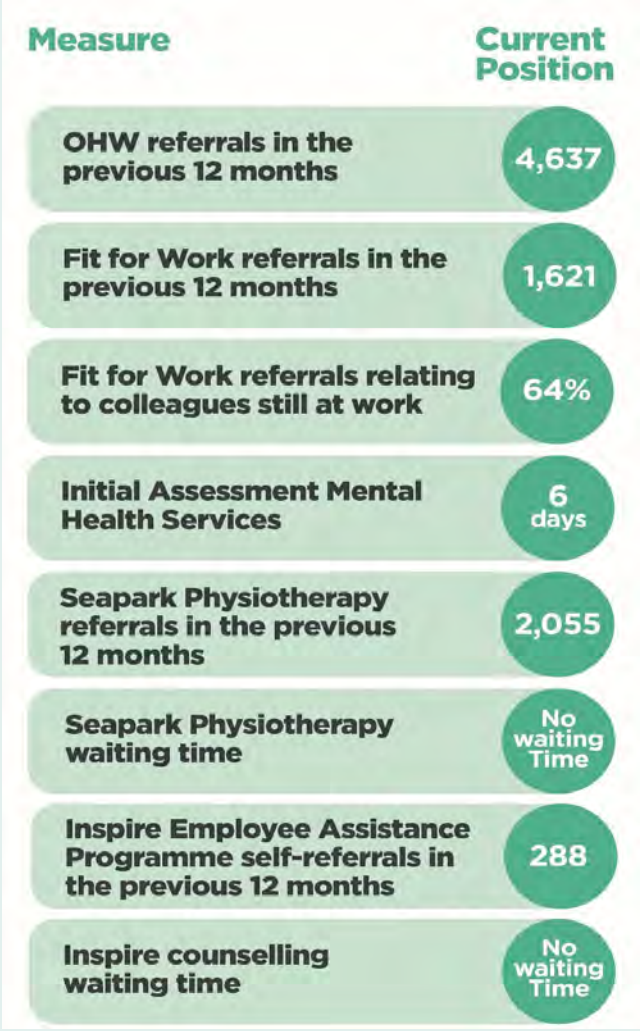
We have strengthened oversight through local, departmental and Service-wide absence and duty adjustment panels, improved management information and central review of more complex cases. Refreshed attendance management arrangements support earlier identification of colleagues who may need enhanced support, timely review of adjustments, and clearer management responsibility for recovery and return to work.

Ill-health retirement pathway

Some officers and staff experience serious or complex health conditions that can lead to extended absence or ill-health retirement. Our aim is to support recovery, dignity and continued contribution wherever safe and appropriate. Where ill-health retirement becomes necessary, colleagues are supported through a fair, compassionate and timely process.

A small number of complex long-term cases can have a disproportionate effect on headline officer sickness figures. We therefore report officer Average Working Days Lost both including and excluding officers on an ill-health retirement pathway. This provides a clearer understanding of wider absence patterns while maintaining focus on the support required by colleagues with complex health needs.

In September 2026, PSNI approved changes to sick-pay arrangements for officers being considered for ill-health retirement. From January 2027, the usual sick-pay arrangements will apply consistently to officers on an ill-health retirement pathway and other officers absent through sickness. Transitional arrangements and individual communication are in place for colleagues already at the relevant stage of the process.





Occupational Health and Wellbeing

Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHW), the Health and Safety Department and local managers work together to create safe working environments, prevent harm, provide support and help colleagues recover. In the 12 months to July 2026, OHW received 4,637 referrals, including 1,621 Fit for Work referrals.

A Fit for Work referral is a consent based referral by a line manager when a health issue affects, or may affect, an officer's or staff member's ability to carry out their role safely and effectively. It is not dependent on sickness absence and may relate to physical injury, psychological health, disability, fitness concerns, duty adjustments, rehabilitation or return to work.

Its purpose is to provide independent, work focused advice on functional capability, workplace risks and potential adjustments, rather than diagnosis or treatment. The individual is involved in the discussion and referral, with consent obtained before submission.

Importantly, 64% of Fit for Work referrals between September 2025 and July 2026 involved colleagues who remained at work, demonstrating the value of early intervention, advice and support.

Access has improved across a number of pathways, particularly counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy. Seapark Physiotherapy and the Inspire Employee Assistance Programme continue to provide support without a waiting list. Specialist psychological treatment capacity, particularly clinical and counselling psychology, remains an area of focus.

Peer and family support

Peer support provides practical help following traumatic incidents or during difficult periods in colleagues' work or personal lives. The Peer Support Network now includes more than 150 active supporters across four teams, supported by a 24-hour advice and referral route. A recent user survey found that 89% of users would recommend peer support to colleagues.

This work has received external recognition. At the National Police Wellbeing Awards in October 2026, the PSNI Peer Support Team won the Peer Support Award. OHW was Highly Commended in the Healthy Living category for the Healthy Working Lives Programme.

Support also extends to families and close networks. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified Supporting Those That Serve and Friends and Family Evenings as innovative practice. These arrangements help families understand the demands of policing, recognise when someone may need support and know where to find help.

Prevention, trauma and psychological health

HMICFRS also recognised the range of established wellbeing support that PSNI offers, including the innovative family support arrangements described above. It recommended that PSNI introduce structured psychological screening for colleagues in roles involving higher levels of trauma and emotional demand.

Our response builds on the Trauma and Resilience Programme, which brings together prevention, psychological education, self-assessment, peer support, treatment pathways and follow up support. We are please that the programme has received external recognition through the CIPD NI Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative award.

We have strengthened the specialist leadership and information needed to manage psychological risk. This includes recruitment of a consultant level clinical psychologist to lead Mental Health Services, development of a Suicide Prevention and Postvention Framework and a Mental Health Framework, and reinforced arrangements to identify, monitor and respond to trauma related risks.

The particular trauma, safeguarding and security demands faced by PSNI officers and staff have informed our work with the National Police Wellbeing Service and other UK policing partners. Through this engagement, PSNI is contributing to the development of wider trauma support and psychological health surveillance practice across UK policing, while continuing to learn from national evidence and expertise.

Case study: Psychological Health Surveillance Programme

Some policing roles involve sustained exposure to distressing material, traumatic events and complex safeguarding work. Over time, this can affect psychological wellbeing, attendance, retention and the ability to remain in demanding roles.

As part of Crime Department's Wellbeing Project, a Psychological Health Surveillance Pilot commenced in June 2026, involving 226 officers and staff from Public Protection Branch and the Digital Forensics Unit.

The pilot is designed to identify psychological health risks earlier and provide follow up support where needed. ***Lena*** *by Inspire has been commissioned to administer an online questionnaire designed to identify risks at an early stage. Where responses indicate a potential concern, follow up assessment and support can be offered through Occupational Health and Wellbeing.*

Before launch, four awareness sessions were delivered for participants and line managers, supported by a process map and frequently asked questions. By the end of the preparatory phase, 167 responses had been received to the pre-pilot evaluation questionnaire.

The pilot adds a structured, preventative approach to existing support for people working in higher-risk roles. Its evaluation will consider participant experience, use of wellbeing support, work ability, Average Working Days Lost, referral patterns and implementation of local wellbeing strategies. This will determine whether the approach is effective, proportionate and suitable for wider use.

CARE Framework

Since February, the Career Assistance for Resilience and Empowerment (CARE) Framework has been applied more directly through local wellbeing planning and the Crime Department Wellbeing Project. CARE helps teams consider the demands, risks and working environment of their roles, bringing together line managers, Occupational Health and Wellbeing, peer support and other services to identify pressures early and strengthen local support.

The Framework covers role design, psychological and physical risks, induction, wellbeing conversations, training, local wellbeing plans and transition from demanding roles. It provides a flexible approach that teams can apply according to their operational context and risk profile.

Healthy Working Lives Roadshows

The Healthy Working Lives Roadshows bring practical wellbeing support directly into colleagues' working environment. Three roadshows were held in Belfast, Londonderry and Portadown between November 2025 and June 2026, covering sleep, stress, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, peer support and available Occupational Health and Wellbeing services.

A total of 130 officers and staff attended. All survey respondents were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the events, and 92% said the content was relevant or very relevant to them. This provides encouraging feedback on an approach that makes wellbeing advice and support visible, accessible and relevant to the demands of policing.

Fatigue, recovery and operational readiness

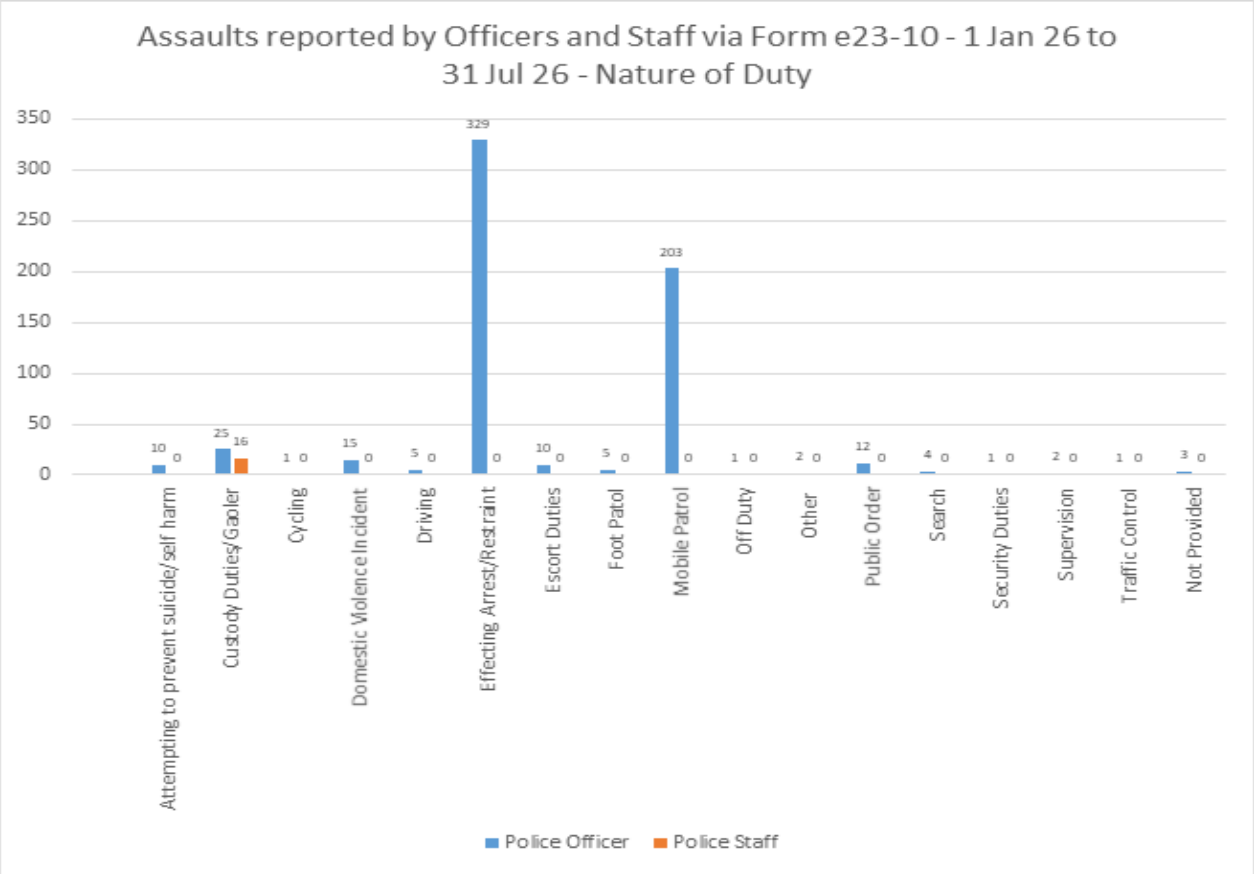
Fatigue is both a health and safety concern and an operational performance issue. It can develop through shift work, extended duties, overtime, cancelled rest days, sustained demand and exposure to distressing incidents. Within PSNI, fatigue is identified as a contributing factor in 6% of Health and Safety Incident Reports and 10% of Fit for Work referrals. It directly accounts for 1.62% of Average Working Days Lost and may also contribute to a wider proportion of sickness absence.

A Fatigue Management Paper has been completed, providing a clearer evidence base for how PSNI identifies, manages and reduces fatigue related risk. This has informed the establishment of an Overtime Steering Group and the development of an Overtime Management Policy, strengthening oversight of the working patterns and demands that can affect rest and recovery. Further measures include health surveillance for night workers, practical advice on sleep and recovery, and consideration of how shift patterns can be designed and managed to reduce fatigue.

Responding to harm

Violence and hate directed against officers and staff are not part of the job. They can cause physical injury and psychological harm, affect confidence and wellbeing, and reduce the numbers available to serve communities.

Data from the first seven months of 2026 shows that arrest and restraint was the activity most commonly recorded when officers and staff were injured or harmed during their duties. This reflects the particular risks faced by officers and staff in frontline and public facing roles.



A review of historic records has resulted in approximately 17,500 violent warning markers being added to relevant records on our records management system. This provides officers and staff with improved information to assess risk during future contact and supports safer decision making.

An enhanced Ten Point Plan is being developed to respond to violence and hate directed against the workforce. It recognises that harm includes hate incidents and hate motivated abuse, as well as physical assault. The plan will strengthen identification and recording, welfare and supervisory support, colleagues' rights as victims of crime, and consistent investigation of incidents.

Protecting the workforce from violence, injury, trauma and avoidable ill health is central to operational resilience. Support, recovery and prevention arrangements continue to develop, alongside work to address specialist treatment capacity and roles facing sustained demand.

4. Workforce experience and development

Supporting the physical and psychological health of officers and staff is essential, but a sustainable workforce also depends on how people experience the organisation. They need opportunities to be heard, visible leadership, meaningful recognition and confidence that their experience can influence change.

Culture, voice and belonging



More than half of the workforce took part in the 2025 Inclusion Survey, with 4,387 responses and a response rate of 50.4%. This compares very favourably with response rates of 12% to 25% reported in similar surveys across England and Wales. The high level of participation provides a strong baseline for understanding workforce experience and reflects a willingness to contribute to improving PSNI.

The survey identified positive relationships within teams and with line managers, while also highlighting that fewer colleagues felt valued by PSNI as an organisation. It identified four Service-wide priorities: leadership; psychological safety and Team PSNI culture; fairness and inclusion; and recognition, wellbeing support and communication.

Since February, the Culture Development and Implementation Group (CDIG) has brought together senior leaders, staff associations, Minority and Diversity Support Associations, equality specialists and colleagues with responsibility for culture and wellbeing. It oversees how workforce insight is translated into practical action, with departments responsible for delivering improvements in their own areas.

How people experience their work affects whether they feel able to perform well, pursue development opportunities and build a long-term career in PSNI. It therefore matters to wellbeing, retention and the ability to sustain policing services.

More than 70 tailored presentations, data reviews and workshops have helped departments understand their results and identify practical actions. Common themes include leadership visibility, greater transparency around strategic decision making, more consistent recognition, equal recognition of the role of police staff in policing, and addressing small but noticeable issues that affect day-to-day workplace experience. These commitments are being incorporated into

departmental business plans and monitored through CDIG, which will review progress and escalate significant barriers or recurring issues through established governance arrangements.

The Employee Voice Policy, introduced in January 2026, sets out how workforce feedback is gathered, considered and acted upon. The Your Voice Forum provides a regular route through which staff associations, Minority and Diversity Support Associations and workforce representatives can raise issues directly with the Chief Constable and Service Executive Team. The MSA Chairs Group, established in 2026, provides an additional route for Minority Staff Associations to work collectively with PSNI on inclusion, workforce experience and organisational development.

Team PSNI has also created opportunities for direct contact between the workforce and the Service Executive Team. Between September 2024 and June 2026, 16 events were held across Northern Ireland, attended by 7,852 officers and staff. Team PSNI 2 is planned as part of the 25th anniversary programme and will build on this direct engagement, leadership visibility and connection.

Recognition, inclusion and family support

Recognition emerged as an important theme in the Inclusion Survey. In response, a Recognition Strategy is being developed to provide a clearer, more consistent approach to recognising contribution across the Service, supported by practical guidance for managers.

PSNI's approach to inclusion and equality extends further than meeting our legal obligations. It underpins our aim to be victim, community and workforce focused and informs how we engage with communities and work to address Violence Against Women and Girls. It also reflects our commitment to creating a workplace where every officer and member of staff can thrive, and where all communities feel respected and supported.

Case study: 25 for 25, recognising service and strengthening connection

The Service's 25th anniversary is an opportunity to recognise the contribution of officers and staff who have served communities across Northern Ireland. The 25 for 25 programme brings together 25 workforce focused activities and events intended to strengthen recognition, pride, belonging and connection across Team PSNI.

The programme builds on work already under way. This includes the mentoring scheme, the schools, colleges and universities alumni network, attraction and outreach activity through ARC, and support for events led by Minority and Diversity Support Associations. It also includes long service and attestation events, police staff recognition, family activity, a 'baton of honour' reunion, the PSNI mile championship, local anniversary tea breaks, a Service letter from the Chief Constable and opportunities for colleagues to share their experience of serving in PSNI.

Recognition does not remove the wider pressures faced by the workforce. It does, however, provide a practical and meaningful way to acknowledge the contribution of our officers and staff, involve families, encourage inter-generational learning and reinforce the value of their service to communities across Northern Ireland.

Our new Family Friendly Workplace initiative supports the same objective. The Family Friendly Hub brings together policies, thoughtful guidance and compassionate support in one place, helping colleagues understand the options available when balancing policing with family and caring responsibilities.

Development, leadership and capability

Professional development, effective supervision and training help officers and staff perform safely and effectively, build confidence and prepare for future roles. They are important to workforce resilience because colleagues are more likely to remain, progress and make a sustained contribution where they receive clear expectations, meaningful feedback and appropriate support.

HMICFRS recognised the development of pdrCHAT and identified the need for PSNI to ensure that the process is used consistently and effectively across the Service. Introduced in January 2026, pdrCHAT supports regular conversations between colleagues and line managers about performance, wellbeing, development, career ambition and tenure.

By the end of September 2026, 68% of pdrCHATs due for completion had been completed. The College of Policing has recognised the redesigned process for its streamlined approach and its link to enabling the National Talent Development Strategy. Completion data and feedback are being used to understand barriers and strengthen the quality and consistency of development, wellbeing and career conversations.

Coaching, mentoring and accessible career information also help colleagues build confidence, develop professional networks and prepare for future opportunities. The Career Development Matrix, available through POINT, has been viewed more than 4,400 times. We have 28 trained coaches, 47 trained mentors and 56 mentees. Targeted mentoring has supported colleagues from minority backgrounds and colleagues working in Crime. An evaluation framework is being developed to identify good practice and inform the future development of coaching and mentoring.

Fundamentals of Management programme

First-line managers shape colleagues' day-to-day experience of PSNI. They set standards, manage performance, support wellbeing and help create teams where people feel included, clear about expectations and able to perform at their best.

The Fundamentals of Management programme is mandatory for all newly substantively promoted first line managers and, since July 2026, for officers temporarily promoted to Sergeant. Aligned to the National College of Policing Leadership Standards, it equips supervisors to lead ethically and inclusively, make and communicate sound decisions, manage people and performance, support wellbeing and uphold professional standards.

The programme has been attended by 343 supervisors since February 2026. As at 22 July 2026, 62 of 142 temporarily promoted Sergeants had completed the programme, with further sessions planned to ensure all have completed by the end of 2026.

A Leadership Pledge was introduced in June 2026, setting clear expectations for managers to lead with courage, compassion and empathy; create inclusive teams; challenge behaviour that falls short of standards; and recognise their teams' contribution. The Chief Constable has attended each in-person session since the pledge was introduced.

From January 2027, the programme will move to a three-day in-person input, followed by e-learning, virtual lessons and a workbook. This will provide a strengthened and more accessible development route for both newly promoted and temporarily promoted first-line managers.

Police staff induction

A more structured police staff induction has been introduced in response to feedback on the on-boarding experience. New staff now begin on the same day each month and attend an induction programme at the Police College. This gives colleagues from different departments the opportunity to meet, hear from key figures, understand essential requirements and begin their careers with a shared Team PSNI ethos.

Two induction sessions have been delivered to date, with 24 staff attending in September and 20 in October 2026. From November 2026, all new police staff will attend. The programme covers the Police Staff Handbook, conduct and professional boundaries, wellbeing and development, personal and information security, organisational structure and governance. Early feedback has been positive, and a formal evaluation will follow as the programme becomes established.

Training and professional readiness

Training is central to operational readiness and the confidence of officers and staff in carrying out their roles. Maintaining high standards of mandatory and specialist learning ensures colleagues have the knowledge, skills and professional judgement needed to respond safely and effectively to the demands of modern policing. Current compliance is generally high in key mandatory areas.

Mandatory training, August 2026

Course	Qualified
Firearms	**96.5%**
Personal Safety Programme	**89.5%**
First Aid	**90.6%**

The Driver and Training Unit has increased the availability of trained response drivers from below 60% to 74%, while maintaining national licensing and College of Policing requirements. The Basic Driver category has also strengthened resilience by enabling appropriately qualified officers to undertake non-response duties, releasing response drivers for emergency calls.

PSNI's command and public order training, including Multi-Unit Tactical Training, is recognised by national and international partners as a rights-based, realistic and strategically valuable capability. The programme develops judgement, leadership, proportionality and resilience under pressure, alongside tactical skill. Recent operational demand, including disorder in June 2026, reinforced the importance of maintaining this readiness.

Learning on domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, and child protection is being strengthened across the Police College. The Foundation Training syllabus is being reviewed with support from Public Protection Branch, embedding domestic abuse and related aggravating factors throughout Student Officer learning on assault, safeguarding, investigation and vulnerability.

A dedicated Public Protection and Safety module covers domestic abuse, sexual violence, child protection, hate crime, stalking, harassment, missing persons and related risks. Women's Aid contributes to every Student Officer course, providing specialist insight on emotional and psychological abuse, power and control, and barriers to reporting.

Student Officers are trained to recognise domestic abuse, identify victims and perpetrators, gather evidence, use Body Worn Video, assess risk and safeguard through the Domestic Abuse, Stalking

and Harassment (DASH), and Honour Based Violence process, and signpost victims to partner support. Mandatory pre-learning for all officers covers domestic abuse, stalking and abusive behaviour, non-fatal strangulation, violence against women and girls, grooming and cyber flashing.

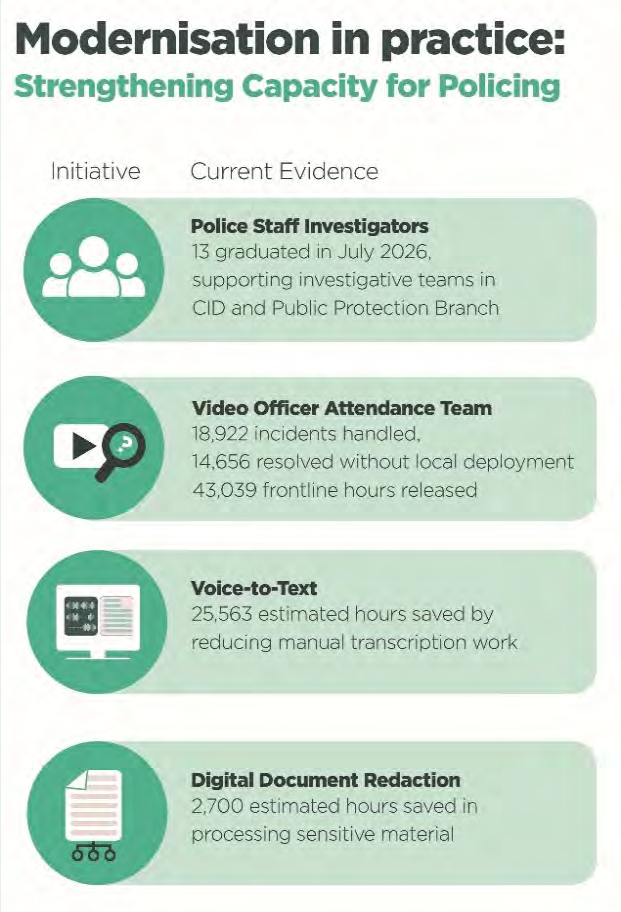
New domestic violence training is being developed for use across all districts. It will strengthen understanding of risk and barriers to reporting, reinforce high quality referrals and operational practice, and provide supervisors with focused learning on high-risk DASH factors and researching domestic history through safeguarding reports.

5. Modernisation, technology and infrastructure

Recovering workforce numbers is essential, but it is not the only way to strengthen operational capacity. Better use of skills, experience, technology and infrastructure can match people to work more effectively, reduce avoidable administrative demand and direct specialist capability towards areas of greatest value for victims and communities.

The Service Operating Model, Workforce Recovery Plan and resource allocation arrangements help identify where skills and capacity are needed most, taking account of operational demand, risk, existing staffing and specialist requirements.

Workforce modernisation creates roles and ways of working that make best use of police staff capability, enable officers with restrictions to continue contributing safely and protect specialist officer time for work requiring their full powers and experience.



Case study: Police Staff Investigators

In July 2026, PSNI's first 13 Police Staff Investigators graduated from the Police College. They are being introduced to support investigative teams in Criminal Investigation Departments and Public Protection Branch.

Working alongside detectives, Police Staff Investigators can progress many parts of an investigation, including taking statements, interviewing victims and witnesses, managing evidential material and preparing case files. Where appropriately designated, they can also exercise specified police powers in defined circumstances.

The role is intended to help investigations progress promptly and thoroughly, while allowing detectives to focus on work requiring the full powers, experience and responsibilities of a constable. The first cohort is working towards Professionalising Investigation Programme Level 2 accreditation.

Early feedback from the first cohort has been positive and a continuing professional development event is planned for November 2026. A review of the pilot will then inform whether to deliver another internal course or open the role to external recruitment.

The Video Officer Attendance Team provides a further example of using available capability differently. It enables officers whose restrictions may limit the full range of operational duties to remain in valuable public facing roles through digital contact with the public.

The model gives people another way to access our services and can provide an appropriate response in suitable circumstances, while reducing avoidable demand on local officers. It does not remove the need for local, face-to-face policing where this is required. We are also exploring whether it can give victims of domestic violence greater control over when and how they engage with police, including the option to arrange contact at a time that is safe and appropriate for them.

Making better use of people and technology also depends on reliable information, effective digital systems and the physical infrastructure that supports policing. The following sections set out how our data, digital, estates and fleet activity is strengthening these foundations for the future.

Data and Information Risk Strategy

Accurate, secure and well managed information is essential to public confidence, lawful policing and effective decision making. It enables officers and staff to access the information they need, manage risk and use their time more effectively. Our Data and Information Risk Strategy provides the framework for managing information securely, ethically and effectively, with strategic oversight from the Service Data Board, supported by the Data Delivery Group and specialist working groups. Each department has also included a data related objective in its 2026/27 business plan, supporting local accountability for information management.

The independent Protecting from Within review was commissioned jointly by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and PSNI following the disclosure of personal information relating to 9,483 PSNI officers and staff on 8 August 2023. The original review made 37 recommendations to strengthen information governance, leadership, accountability, risk management, data protection, information security, information management, skills and organisational culture.

Assessing progress between August 2023 and June 2026, the review concluded that PSNI had made substantial progress. Twenty-seven recommendations are assessed as substantially implemented or embedded within business-as-usual arrangements. A further ten have been started and now require further maturation, embedding or evidence of sustained effectiveness. It also identified seven opportunities for continued improvement. These include prioritising activity around sensitive and frequently used information; strengthening accountability of Senior Information Asset Owners and Information Asset Owners; further developing data quality, artificial intelligence, analytics and skills; and introducing mechanisms to demonstrate that staff can access, understand and apply relevant policies, service instructions and guidance.

PSNI’s Service Data Board will provide strategic oversight of delivery of the remaining outstanding actions from the original review and consider the further opportunities identified for continued improvement.

Digital services

Digital tools are helping officers and staff spend less time on repetitive administrative work and more time on investigation, safeguarding and delivering services to the public. Examples include Voice-to-Text for Achieving Best Evidence and suspect interviews, and digital document redaction for sensitive material.

SKIPR, PSNI's general use AI tool, has recorded more than 17,000 uses during pilot activity and preparation for wider rollout. It is helping officers and staff review, compare, structure and draft from complex material more quickly, while retaining appropriate human oversight.
Targeted digital tools are also improving internal services. In Human Resources, a pilot digital assistant has reduced the time needed to deal with routine queries and enabled seven vacancies to be reallocated to other business areas. This illustrates how digital support can reduce transactional demand and allow specialist colleagues to focus on more complex work.

Digital services are also improving how the public can contact PSNI. In the year to June 2026, 50,000 reports were made online, compared with 30,000 during the equivalent period in the previous year. Online reports now account for 8% of all reports. Further work on online reporting, witness appeals, live chat, text messaging and contact-management tools is intended to provide accessible routes for the public while protecting contact-centre capacity for people who need direct police assistance.

As these tools move from pilot activity into routine use, their contribution to service, administrative demand and capacity for higher-value work will be monitored.

Estates and sustainability

Our estate is large, ageing and expensive to maintain. To support modern policing, we need buildings that are safe, affordable and suited to current and future operational needs. This requires us to reduce the number of sites we no longer need, invest in the buildings we retain and develop facilities that will support policing for the future.

During 2025/26, Estate Services reduced reactive maintenance spending by £1 million through increased planned maintenance. Four sites were disposed of, generating £4.83 million in capital and revenue receipts. This was the highest annual level of capital receipts and the greatest number of site disposals achieved in more than a decade.

A key element of this work is the future Police College and Crime Campus at Redburn. Since February, security, compliance and demolition activity has progressed, and the site is being used for training where possible. Work is also continuing on the business case, funding, stakeholder requirements and longer-term design.

Around 90% of the operational estate is more than 25 years old. Maintaining it in its current form would require an estimated £303 million over the next 15 years. We must therefore continue to prioritise investment carefully and make better use of the buildings and land available to us.

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 2026, Fleet Services supported a number of high-profile policing operations, including disorder in June, the summer Fleadh and deployments around Drumcree in September. Further investment has provided 35 vans and 30 cars fitted with the latest ANPR technology. In total, 302 vehicles have been commissioned into service over the last 12 months.

Although the labour market remains highly competitive, 10 additional mechanics have been recruited and progress has been made in other role recruitment. This will improve fleet availability and visible policing.

Transport Services have made use of the Redburn site and plan to operate a workshop facility from there before the end of the financial year. Plans are progressing to replace the ageing public-order fleet, which will require significant capital investment. Moving towards the end of 2026 and into 2027, the Fleet Strategy will be reviewed and updated alongside a focused EV Strategy. Investment will be required to support transition to a modern fleet, including replacement of the public-order fleet, general-purpose fleet and aircraft.

6. Assurance, risks and next steps

The progress set out in this report provides early evidence that workforce recovery, wellbeing support and modernisation activity are strengthening PSNI's capacity and resilience. However, these improvements must be sustained and translated into lasting operational benefit.

Further progress is still needed to build the resilience required for the future. Workforce numbers remain below the level required for sustainable operational resilience, while deployability continues to be affected by sickness absence, injury, role and duty adjustments, fatigue, trauma exposure and the time required to train new recruits. Specialist treatment capacity also remains an area of focus for colleagues who need counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy or clinical psychology.

Looking ahead, our focus is on sustaining recovery and converting improved activity into lasting workforce resilience. New capacity will continue to be directed towards areas of greatest risk and demand, while leaver, absence and deployability data will inform retention and workforce support.

We will also continue to improve colleagues' experience of PSNI through attendance, wellbeing and psychological-health support, leadership and development, induction and action on Inclusion Survey feedback through departmental plans, CDIG and Employee Voice arrangements.

Modernisation will remain an important part of this work. We will assess the contribution of Police Staff Investigators, digital tools and new public-contact models, while continuing investment and planning for data, estates and fleet. This will help us demonstrate not only what has been delivered, but the difference it makes for victims, communities and the workforce.

Ultimately, the test of this work will be whether it delivers a stronger, healthier and more sustainable workforce, better able to serve the people of Northern Ireland.

Good News and Key Updates



Victim Focused

Protecting victims, responding to vulnerability and pursuing those responsible for serious harm remain central to the work of the Service. Throughout September and October officers and staff across local and specialist policing teams have demonstrated professionalism, compassion and determination in supporting victims, safeguarding those at risk and progressing complex investigations. Significant criminal justice outcomes during this period reflect sustained investigative effort and a commitment to ensuring those responsible for serious offending are brought before the courts.

Domestic abuse remains a significant area of demand and harm. Local policing and public protection teams have responded to high risk incidents recognising the risks associated with coercive control, threats to life, sexual violence and repeat offending. In Belfast, officers responded to a serious domestic abuse incident and secured the arrest of a suspect who was subsequently charged with 17 offences. Their prompt investigation and decisive action reflect the value of early evidence gathering, effective safeguarding and progressing serious offending without delay.

In South Belfast, officers responded to a domestic incident involving allegations of coercive control and threats to life involving a firearm. Local and neighbourhood policing teams worked alongside public protection colleagues to deliver a coordinated search, investigation and arrest plan. Despite operational and logistical challenges, officers recovered a number of imitation firearms and, through cooperation with An Garda Síochána, enabled the suspect to be stopped and arrested while returning from the Republic of Ireland. In a separate incident, officers in Belfast responded to reports from a pregnant woman concerning alleged domestic abuse by a former partner, including harassment and sexual assault. The suspect was arrested, charged to court the following day and subsequently remanded in custody. Both investigations highlight the need to identify risk at the earliest opportunity, preserve evidence and take decisive action to prevent further harm. They also reflect the Service's focus on providing victims with a professional, trauma aware and safeguarding led response.

Significant criminal justice outcomes have also been secured in relation to serious domestic abuse. On 8 September, a 53 year old man received a five year custodial sentence for grievous bodily harm with intent following a serious assault on his partner involving a weapon. On 30 September, a 36 year old man was sentenced at Belfast Crown Court to five years and three months imprisonment for offences including non fatal strangulation, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and domestic abuse following three separate assaults on his partner. On 9 October, a 45 year old man received an eight year custodial sentence for grievous bodily harm with intent, aggravated by domestic abuse, following a serious assault involving a hatchet. Collectively, these sentences represent important progress in holding perpetrators of high harm domestic abuse accountable and securing justice for victims.

An important strategic development in the response to serious sexual offending was the September launch of the Joint Strategy for Investigating and Prosecuting Serious Sexual Offences by the Police

Service of Northern Ireland and the Public Prosecution Service. The strategy establishes a shared approach across four priorities: supporting victims through consistent and trauma responsive engagement; improving the quality and timeliness of investigations and prosecutions; strengthening leadership and accountability and developing officers and staff involved in this highly sensitive work. Closer collaboration will support improvements in victim confidence, investigative standards and criminal justice outcomes.

This strategic work is complemented by victim focused policing on the ground. In South Belfast, neighbourhood officers responded after a woman reported being sexually assaulted by an unknown man in a public place. The suspect was promptly identified and arrested with controlled drugs also recovered during the arrest. He was subsequently charged and remanded in custody. The response supported the victim, brought the matter before the criminal justice system and disrupted behaviour which posed a real risk to other women and girls.

A number of significant sentences have also been imposed for child sexual abuse offences, including both recent and non-recent offending. On 11 September, a 48 year old man received a four year custodial sentence for 13 non-recent sexual offences against children involving offending between 2002 and 2023. On 15 September, a 48 year old woman was sentenced at Craigavon Crown Court for seven counts of sexual abuse, receiving a two year sentence comprising one year in custody and one year on licence. The offender was also made subject to notification requirements, a Sexual Offences Prevention Order and an indefinite disqualification from working with children.

Further cases included a 22 month custodial sentence imposed on a 35 year old man for 18 counts of sexual abuse arising from online communications. On 25 September, a 64 year old man received a sentence of 12 years and four months for more than 30 counts of non-recent child sexual abuse involving three victims. On 14 October, an 80 year old man was sentenced to four years and six months for nine counts of non-recent child sexual abuse. Protective orders and notification requirements were also imposed providing additional safeguards beyond the custodial sentences.

On 5 October, a 59 year old man pleaded guilty to 109 child sexual offences, including attempted sexual communication with a child under 16. The offences occurred between June 2023 and April 2025, with sentencing scheduled for December 2026. These cases reflect the complexity and persistence required in investigating sexual offending against children, particularly where abuse has occurred over extended periods or involves online manipulation or abuse of positions of trust.

On 1 October, two men aged 20 were each sentenced at Dungannon Crown Court to six years imprisonment following a rape committed in September 2023. Both offenders were also made subject to lifetime Sexual Offences Prevention Orders. In a separate case, a 55 year old woman received a three month custodial sentence at Downpatrick Magistrates Court for breaching the statutory anonymity afforded to victims of sexual offences. The offence involved the publication of material on social media likely to identify protected victims. Protecting victim anonymity is an essential part of the criminal justice process helping to prevent further harm and distress to those affected by sexual offending.

Improving communication with people who report incidents and victims of crime remains a priority. On 6 October, text message notifications were introduced as part of an enhanced approach to providing initial updates. Where suitable contact details are recorded individuals receive a reference number, investigating officer contact details where applicable, relevant advice and a link to the PSNI Portal. The Portal enables users to view the status of an investigation, receive notifications when

this changes, request an update and provide further information. From commencement at 11.00am on 6 October, 2,919 initial updates were issued with 78% delivered by text and 22% by email. This provides a clearer and more accessible route for people to remain informed and engaged with their report.

Officers have also responded with compassion and courage when people are experiencing acute mental health crises. In North Area, officers located a missing woman in deep water after concerns were raised about her welfare. Despite significant personal risk an officer entered the water and brought her safely to shore. In a separate incident officers attended a hospital after a man in crisis gained access to a high level roof area. An officer engaged with him calmly for approximately 30 minutes enabling him to come down safely and receive appropriate care.

In South Area, officers responded to concerns for two vulnerable young people believed to be at immediate risk of self-harm. They were located at a hazardous waterside location, where one entered the water and became submerged. Despite fast moving water and difficult terrain officers acted quickly to bring her to safety. The professionalism, courage and empathy shown in these incidents alongside effective partnership with health and emergency service colleagues helped prevent potentially tragic outcomes.

Public Protection Branch is progressing arrangements for a Service wide Violence Against Women and Children and Domestic Abuse Conference in January 2027. The event will bring together operational learning, victim and child perspectives, external expertise and emerging practice. It will support officers and staff in applying consistent, victim centred and trauma sensitive approaches to their work.

Community Focused

Local and specialist policing teams continue to make a practical difference to community safety through visible policing, partnership working, prevention and targeted action against those whose behaviour causes harm. Activity during the reporting period has included tackling serious and organised crime, managing high risk offenders and responding to emerging threats.

Concerns about the unsafe and antisocial use of e-scooters, e-bikes, scramblers and other electrically powered vehicles remain an area of focus. In North Area, Antrim Neighbourhood Policing Team worked with Road Safe NI to develop a school based education programme addressing relevant legislation, risks of serious injury and the consequences of unsafe behaviour. The pilot commenced on 17 September across four secondary schools in the Antrim area. Following positive feedback, the initiative is planned to extend to six secondary schools in Newtownabbey with further online sessions for parents, guardians and the wider public. This approach combines prevention and education with enforcement to address issues affecting community safety.

Tackling serious organised crime, including drug supply and the criminality which underpins it, remains a priority. During September, Organised Crime Branch operations resulted in the seizure of suspected drugs with estimated values of £65,000 and £58,000 in separate incidents. Cash and drug related paraphernalia were also recovered with two men subsequently charged with drugs offences including being concerned in the supply of Class A controlled drugs.

A joint operation involving the Organised Crime Unit, Belfast Harbour Police and the National Crime Agency resulted in the discovery of a significant quantity of cash concealed within a vehicle arriving at Belfast Harbour. The driver was arrested and subsequently charged with possession of criminal

property. The operation reflects the contribution of effective partnership working in disrupting suspected criminal activity at points of entry to Northern Ireland.

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force has maintained its focus on suspected criminality linked to paramilitary organisations. A 46 year old man was charged as part of an ongoing investigation into suspected criminality linked to the West Belfast UDA following forensic evidence connecting him to drugs seized during searches in the Joanmount Gardens area.

Further criminal justice outcomes followed investigations into high value drug supply. Two men were sentenced at Dungannon Crown Court after officers discovered a sophisticated cannabis cultivation operation in Strabane involving 575 plants and approximately 105 kilograms of herbal cannabis, with an estimated street value of £1.2 million. In Craigavon, two individuals were sentenced following an Organised Crime Branch investigation which resulted in the seizure of £260,820 in cash and cocaine with an estimated street value of £100,000. One offender received a six and a half year custodial sentence and a Serious Crime Prevention Order, while the second received a suspended sentence. These investigations have disrupted substantial drug supply activity and progressed the prosecution of those involved in associated criminality.

Economic Crime Unit colleagues have also secured important results. An investigation into suspected shell companies resulted in the forfeiture of €731,704 and £146,689, with the companies referred to Companies House for consideration of further action. In Banbridge, Economic Crime Unit officers supported neighbourhood colleagues during an operation targeting rogue traders. Following arrests, further victims were identified and an account freezing order secured for £71,661.48, with the funds subject to investigation with the ultimate objective of compensating victims. Pursuing criminal assets alongside the identification of further victims remains an important element of the response to economic crime.

Community safety is also supported through the investigation and prosecution of serious violence, disorder and persistent offending. Belfast Public Order Enquiry Team officers arrested and charged two adult men in connection with disorder on Stewartstown Road including offences of riot, encouraging riot, criminal damage and affray. In Coleraine, detectives investigating a stabbing on Railway Road charged a man with attempted murder, possession of an offensive weapon and threats to kill. He was remanded in custody. In Banbridge, a man was arrested, charged and remanded following a serious assault which left a victim with a fractured skull.

Focused proactive policing has also delivered significant results. Belfast’s dedicated Wanted Persons Team made 520 arrests over a 12 month period, including 26 high risk and 72 medium risk offenders, alongside the execution of 308 bench warrants. By locating wanted individuals and ensuring those who fail to attend court are brought before the justice system the team has made a substantial contribution to public protection and community safety.

Public Protection Branch has undertaken further targeted activity to manage individuals who present significant risks to children and vulnerable people. On 26 September, the Child Internet Protection Team, supported by Intelligence Hub and Local Policing colleagues in Coleraine, located and arrested a 31 year old man wanted in connection with indecent images of children offences who had evaded police since July. He was subsequently charged and brought before the court. Coordinated intelligence led activity was central to locating the individual and progressing the investigation.
Offender Investigation Unit activity also resulted in the arrest of a 43 year old registered sex offender in connection with suspected sexual offences involving two children. The individual was charged and remanded in custody. Following an urgent multi-agency review his risk management category was

increased from Category 1 to Category 3, with responsibility transferred to the Public Protection Team. Further protective measures were pursued to strengthen ongoing safeguarding arrangements.

In a separate investigation, proactive monitoring of a registered sex offender who had relocated from England to Northern Ireland identified suspected further offending involving indecent images of children. An unannounced visit resulted in the identification of suspected offending involving a laptop computer. The individual was subsequently arrested, charged and remanded in custody. These interventions underline the value of dynamic risk assessment, compliance monitoring and coordinated offender management in identifying suspected further offending and safeguarding children.

The Service is responding to emerging threats associated with online child sexual abuse and exploitation. On 2 October, an 18 year old man was arrested following a substantial policing operation supported by detectives, after a victim reported receiving grossly offensive self-harm and indecent images of children material from an individual claiming association with a known COM group. Digital devices were seized and the suspect was subsequently charged and remanded in custody representing the first known COM group related remand in Northern Ireland.

A separate planned operation resulted in the arrest and interview of a 15 year old male in connection with similar suspected offending. Initial digital examination identified material consistent with COM group extortion and suspected indecent images of children offences. The individual was released on bail pending further examination and consideration of charging. Specialist digital examination remains ongoing, with enquiries focused on identifying potential victims, securing evidence and establishing whether further individuals are involved.

Prevention remains an essential part of the Service's approach to violence against women and girls. The Power to Change Phase 2 campaign, launched on 16 September through collaboration between The Executive Office, Department of Justice and PSNI challenges harmful attitudes and behaviours, particularly online, and highlights the potential consequences of online conduct. It recognises that lasting change requires collective action across government, policing, education and communities.

The Service's Race and Ethnicity Action Plan also remains an important vehicle for improving trust, confidence and inclusivity. On 5 October, PSNI hosted a 'one year on' engagement event for community representatives, partner organisations and stakeholders. The event considered progress across the Plan's five workstreams and future priorities, including planned community and staff surveys being developed by Ulster University to inform future delivery and accountability.

Workforce Focused

The health, wellbeing, skills and resilience of officers and staff remain essential to maintaining an effective policing service during sustained operational demand, changing crime types and significant financial uncertainty.

Occupational Health and Wellbeing has achieved important external recognition for its contribution to supporting the workforce. On 1 October, the Trauma and Resilience Programme received the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Northern Ireland Award for Health and Wellbeing. At the National Police Wellbeing Service awards on 13 October, PSNI's Peer Support Team received the Peer Support Award, while Occupational Health and Wellbeing was Highly Commended in the Healthy Living category for its Healthy Working Lives Programme.

This recognition reflects the contribution made across the Service to supporting the physical and psychological wellbeing of officers and staff. The Peer Support Team provides confidential and practical assistance from trained colleagues who understand the realities of policing. Its success is a credit to those who give their time, experience and compassion to support colleagues through difficult periods.

Further wellbeing support is being progressed through the planned introduction of a National Police Wellbeing Service Wellbeing Van. The vehicle will support outreach activities, health promotion and wellbeing engagement. It will also be available following major or traumatic incidents, alongside the Peer Support Team, and at large planned events where officers and staff are on duty.

The National Police Wellbeing Service has also provided 40 fully funded Wellbeing Retreat places for officers and staff. These opportunities are intended to support rest, reflection and recovery with arrangements being progressed to ensure fair allocation across the Service.

The increasing complexity of investigations, particularly those involving online exploitation, serious sexual offending and the management of high risk individuals, reinforces the need to maintain specialist investigative skills and effective partnership working. Recent operations reflect the professionalism and commitment of officers and staff working across Public Protection, Crime, Intelligence and Local Policing Teams. Their ability to coordinate investigations, assess risk and respond to emerging threats is central to protecting vulnerable people and maintaining public safety.

The Service continues to operate in a challenging financial context. More than halfway through the financial year, PSNI remains operating against an indicative allocation which is subject to change. This creates difficulties for financial planning when a significant proportion of annual costs are already committed. Securing an adequate funding settlement remains a priority to support workforce recovery, improve service delivery and place PSNI on a sustainable footing. Supporting and retaining a skilled workforce, while investing in the wellbeing of those already serving, remains central to the Service’s ability to protect victims, keep communities safe and maintain public confidence.

psni.police.uk