

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

COMMITTEE REVIEW ON TACKLING PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY, CRIMINALITY AND ORGANISED CRIME

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GLOSSARY

A and E	Accident and Emergency
Board	Northern Ireland Policing Board
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland
CTL	Communities, Transition and Learning Delivery Group
DfC	Department for Communities
DoJ	Department of Justice
EANI	Education Authority Northern Ireland
EAP	Executive Action Plan
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
IRC	Independent Reporting Commission
JATF	Joint Agency Task Force
MASH	Multi-Agency Support Hub
NCA	National Crime Agency
NHSCT	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
NIAS	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NILT	Northern Ireland Life and Times
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
PBNI	Probation Board Northern Ireland
PCSPs	Policing and Community Safety Partnerships
PCTF	Paramilitary Crime Task Force
PfG	NI Executive's draft Programme for Government
PSAs	Paramilitary style attacks
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PwC	Policing with the Community
OCGs	Organised Crime Groups
OCTF	Organised Crime Task Force
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
TCPL	Tackling Criminality and Promoting Lawfulness Delivery Group
TEO	The Executive Office
TPPT	Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team
WHSCCT	Western Health and Social Care Trust
YJA	Youth Justice Agency

1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is responsible for the independent oversight of the work of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

In addition to regular Board accountability meetings with the Chief Constable, the Board has four committees to take forward detailed scrutiny of the work of the PSNI and fulfil its range of legislative duties.

The Board's Partnership Committee is responsible for delivering statutory responsibilities in respect of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), oversight of the PSNI Policing with the Community (PwC) Strategy, strategic engagement and community consultation.

The Committee is also responsible for overseeing PSNI progress in Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime and agreed to review the work of the PSNI in this area along with assessing the Board's contributions.

You can find out more about the Committee's work by reviewing the minutes of the meetings in the Publications section of the Board's website at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Paramilitary activity including organised crime, community control, violence and coercion remain a very real aspect of community life in Northern Ireland. Paramilitaries exploit their own communities and others through racketeering and criminality, and they seek to exert control through violence, brutally assaulting and shooting people. They also exploit vulnerability, including younger citizens who can easily be drawn into their activities.

The Executive Action Plan (EAP) published in 2016, sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends to take forward and implement the recommendations from the Fresh Start Panel, whilst recognising the extensive work already being undertaken within communities on the issue of disbanding paramilitary groups, and building on existing expertise. The EAP and programme of delivery are, by design, seeking to develop a collaborative approach to tackling ongoing issues of paramilitary activity, criminality, and organised crime. Achieving the outcomes that have been set requires government departments, law enforcement agencies, local councils and community and voluntary sector partners to work closely together, and to ensure that people's lived experience is part of planned responses and delivery.

The Board is responsible for oversight of the PSNI in tackling paramilitarism and recommendations allocated in the EAP. The Board's Partnership Committee has carried out this Review to scrutinise the work of the PSNI in this area in the 2019-20 period: and to assess the Board/PCSP progress where recommendations are allocated for action. As a result of the review undertaken by the Committee five (5) Recommendations have been made along with eleven (11) operational areas for improvement which specifically relate to the performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) with the aim of developing the work undertaken so far:

Recommendation 1: A8

The Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team should consider revising the wording of A8 as a principle rather than a protocol as it suggests a set of rules.

Recommendation 2: Support for Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)

That officers working in the PCTF continue to be given full organisational support and assistance where there are threatening behaviours towards the team by known paramilitaries and/or criminals.

Recommendation 3: Funding

With the current phase of funding ending in 2021, it is essential that long term funding is arranged with the Department of Justice to ensure longevity and stability of this programme.

Recommendation 4: Civil Recovery Agency

That the Board supports the IRC recommendation to establish an agency that focuses solely on civil recovery of the proceeds of crime in Northern Ireland. This should be progressed by the Department of Justice without delay.

Recommendation 5: Legislative powers for policing

The power to make Unexplained Wealth Orders extended to Northern Ireland without further delay, and for full use to be made by law enforcement of existing powers including Serious Crime Prevention Orders. Steps also need to be taken to protect law enforcement activity in tackling organised crime post EU Exit.

Operational areas for improvement in relation to PSNI Performance

All relate to the points in **Section 6 – PSNI Performance**:

- i. It is not clear from the review conducted by the Committee how funding and resources are allocated to the work of the JATF and further information on this point will be sought from PSNI. (Point 3)
- ii. The Partnership Committee would welcome PSNI providing evidence of the work carried out in collaboration with partner agencies (outside of the NCA and HMRC), local communities and PCSPs in relation to Measure 3.3.2. of the 2019-20 Policing Plan. (Point 4)

- iii.** Further information will be sought on how the learning from the 'Together Project' is being implemented and measured specifically in relation to tackling paramilitarism. (Point 5)
- iv.** Evidence provided by PSNI to the Board with regards to evidence of co-design of programmes and interventions with local communities needs to be relevant to the indicators. (Point 6)
- v.** Much of the public information currently provided by PSNI in relation to the work of the PCTF relates solely to operations in respect of drugs. In order to build confidence in the community further examples of the work that the PCTF are undertaking in all areas, for example, extortion and money laundering, should be publicised. (Point 7)
- vi.** The Partnership Committee would welcome clarification of how the work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs sub group. (Point 7)
- vii.** The Partnership Committee would ask PSNI to provide quantitative data regarding convictions, such as a breakdown of the offences to which these convictions relate, given the numerous types of criminality for which these groups are involved. (Point 9)
- viii.** The Partnership Committee will request qualitative information in relation to paramilitary assaults and shootings outside of the statistics to better understand what the role of statistics is in relation to informing and measuring the work of the PCTF. (Point 10)
- ix.** The Partnership Committee understand that the continuation of paramilitary violence remains an issue of concern and will explore further with PSNI to ascertain if there is any intelligence or explanation for the rise in the statistics for PSAs and shootings. (Point 11)

- x. Despite the creation of the PCTF in 2017, outcome rates for PSAs remain low. The Partnership Committee will explore with PSNI the reasons for this and identify what work has been undertaken to address some of the barriers to achieving convictions.
(Point 12)

- xi. The Partnership Committee will request further information from PSNI with regards to the process undertaken towards full implementation of recommendations C1 and C4.
(Point 13)

The PSNI has responded to each of the operational areas for improvement which can be found at **Annex B**.

3. BACKGROUND

Twenty years after the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, paramilitary groups are still active in Northern Ireland and involved in a range of activities that inflict harm on individuals and communities. These activities include organised crime; drug dealing; fuel laundering; counterfeiting; loan sharking; extortion of local businesses; coercive control over communities; intimidation; and so called PSAs and the impact of this activity is felt daily by communities.

PSAs and intimidation have a significant physical and psychological impact on victims and their families, including children. Victims of attacks often experience chronic pain and long-term disability, and can suffer from social isolation.

i. The Fresh Start Agreement

The Fresh Start Agreement was finalised on 17th November 2015 between the Northern Ireland Executive, the UK Government and the Irish Government. The introduction to the Agreement set out its overall vision as follows:

“Building on the political Agreements reached in the past, the progress made to date – and to ensure it continues – we reiterate the primacy and centrality of peace and the political process to the continued transformation of our society, through democracy, inclusion, reconciliation, equality of opportunity for all and the absence of violence.”

The Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government jointly provided £50 million in ‘ring-fenced’ funding to support the delivery of the programme until March 2021. The Executive have since agreed to extend funding for a further 3 years.

A key goal in terms of the delivery of that vision was set out as *“We have entered into the most far-reaching commitments ever taken here to uphold the rule of law and bring about the end of paramilitarism.”* The Fresh Start Agreement set out various ways and measures by which this goal was to be achieved which included the establishment of a three (3) person Panel (The Panel) to develop a strategy and make recommendations to disband paramilitarism in Northern Ireland. The Panel recommended a strategy that included a security and criminal justice response to paramilitarism alongside the need to address wider societal issues in their report in June 2016.

ii. Northern Ireland Executive Action Plan Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime

The Northern Ireland Executive responded to this report with an Action Plan in July 2016, a link to which can be found at **Annex A**. The EAP sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends to take forward and implement the recommendations from the Fresh Start Panel, recognising the extensive work already being undertaken within communities on the issue of disbanding paramilitary groups, and building on existing expertise.

The EAP follows the strategic outline provided by The Panel: Promoting Lawfulness; Support for Transition; Tackling Criminality; and Addressing Systemic Issues. The EAP is a programme of delivery with four (4) long-term outcomes and forty-three (43) recommendations to achieve the outcomes:

a) Approach to Delivering Long Term Prevention

Outcome - Paramilitarism has no place

Communities need to be supported to build confidence in the rule of law and in the promotion of lawfulness. This approach promotes lawfulness and preventative measures to support those on the margins of the justice system, including our most vulnerable young people. It addresses the ongoing recruitment into paramilitary groups to ensure that in the longer-term those who wish to continue this activity are not able to find the support to do so.

b) Approach to Delivery - Building Confidence in the Justice System

Outcome - Public Support and Increasing Confidence in the Justice System

It is important for all citizens to feel confident engaging with the justice system. This approach focuses on the relationship between policing and communities and speeding up the justice system, particularly in those communities which may have become disengaged with justice and law enforcement. It works on building an increased understanding of the way the justice system works and ensuring it operates at an appropriate pace; both are key to building confidence between policing and communities.

c) Approach to Delivery - Strategies and Powers to Tackle Criminal Activity

Outcome - A Society where Citizens and Communities Feel Safe and Confident

There have to be tangible and visible consequences for those unwilling to participate fully in a lawful society. A new co-located, multi-agency Taskforce dedicated to Tackling Paramilitaries was set up to focus on criminality that has links to paramilitary organisations. This is PSNI led and incorporates staff and resource from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the National Crime Agency (NCA).

d) Approach to Delivery - Building Capacity to Support Transition

Outcome - Support is available for those who wish to move away from Paramilitary Activity and Structures

This approach looks at how to build the capacity of communities transitioning away from violence and the impact of strong-arm control to help individuals move away from paramilitary groups and to help communities stand up to them. Recommendation B4¹ is essential to the delivery of this and eight (8) geographical areas² have been identified as particularly vulnerable to paramilitary activity. This approach links in with other programmes, including the early intervention programme for vulnerable people, the approach to PwC, Good Relations Strategy, and the approach to restorative practice.

iii. Independent Reporting Commission (IRC)³

The Fresh Start agreement provides for robust independent monitoring to ensure progress is made on these difficult issues. A four (4) member Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) was established and is responsible for reporting annually on progress towards ending continuing paramilitary activity. The IRC published two (2) reports - October 2018 and November 2019. Their next report is due in October 2020.

The IRC consult a wide range of stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, local councils, communities and civic society organisations, and its reports inform the Executive's draft Programme for Government (PfG) priorities through to 2021.

¹ Recommendation B4: The Executive should establish a fund to support ambitious initiatives aimed at building capacity in communities in transition, including through developing partnerships across civil society and across community divisions

² New Lodge and Ardoyne (North Belfast), Creggan (West Belfast), Brandywell (Londonderry), Antiville (Larne), Castlemara/Northland (Carrickfergus), Mount/Ballymacarret (East Belfast), Kilwilkee (Craigavon), Clondeboye, Conlig, Kilcooley (Bangor).

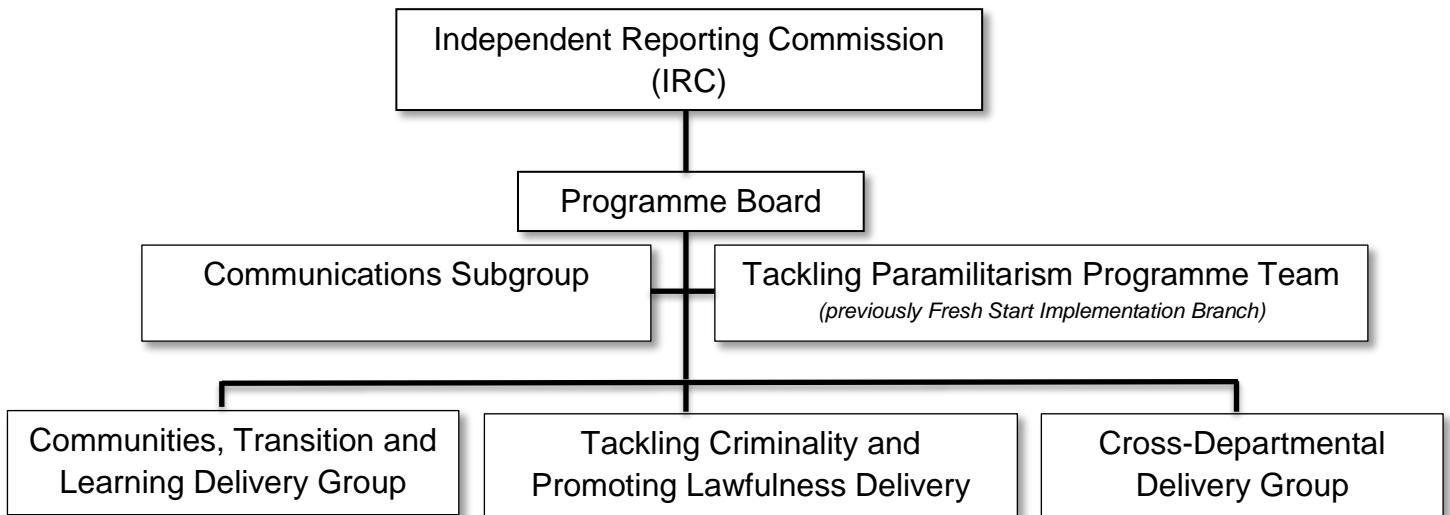
³ <https://www.ircommission.org/>

iv. Governance and Monitoring

The Programme Board is monitored by the IRC who report annually on the progress against the Action Plan. Thematic updates require all delivery leads to provide updates to the IRC and committees on progress against the programme outcomes at agreed intervals. The programme is designed to ensure there is co-ordination and shared learning across each approach, with an outcome based accountability (OBA) in line with the Prince 2 Programme Management methodologies. There is also measurement and evaluation of individual projects led by the delivery partners.

4. STRUCTURE

The Department of Justice (DoJ) lead on implementing the Executive’s commitment to Tackling Paramilitarism and in 2017 set up the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Board, which is monitored by the IRC.



Programme Board

The Programme Board sets strategic direction, makes decisions on implementation, delivery and funding, and monitors and reports on the progress to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and the Northern Ireland Executive

Communications Subgroup

Oversees communications activity, ensures common narratives/language and that the message is cohesive and relates to the core programme message.

Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team (TPPT)

Co-ordinates the work and fosters the partnerships needed across government, with the statutory, business, voluntary and community sectors, and with communities, to deliver the programme outcomes.

Communities, Transition and Learning Delivery Group (CTL)

Co-ordinates and progresses the response to the actions in the Action Plan that have a direct impact on communities to ensure a cohesive approach to delivery of recommendations and to working with communities.

Tackling Criminality and Promoting Lawfulness Delivery Group (TCPL)

Ensures a consistent approach to promoting lawfulness that is broader than law enforcement alone in order to promote a culture of lawfulness that goes alongside law enforcement activity. Through the EAP the intention is that work to build trust and confidence will continue so that no citizen feels the need to engage with, or supports turning to, paramilitary groups as an alternative.

Cross Departmental Delivery Group

A DoJ staffed dedicated communications team and public affairs resource whose purpose is to engage with communities to make an impact and work with an extensive list of stakeholders who can contribute to delivery.

Joint Agency Task Force (JATF)

Under the 'Fresh Start Agreement' it was agreed that a JATF would be established to enhance efforts to tackle cross-jurisdictional organised crime, including that linked to paramilitarism, and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of those involved in it. The JATF is led by senior officers from the PSNI, An Garda Síochána (AGS), the Revenue Commissioners and HMRC.

The JATF is led and governed by two (2) groups - a Strategic Oversight Group and an Operations Co-ordination Group. There is no specific co-located JATF team or budget, with the JATF Operations Co-ordination Group providing a collective focus to all agencies involved to increase co-operation and resource the tackling of cross border crime.

Intelligence is shared through the appropriate systems on a daily basis, with police to police contact and the availability to offer assistance to apprehend persons who commit harm in our community being an inbuilt element of this collaborative approach. The operational work of the JATF forms part of the Cross Border Policing Strategy 2016 which sets out that the

co-ordination of the joint activity in critical areas and the combined use of resources and expertise will play a major part in disrupting criminal activity.⁴

With regard to the JATF, measure 3.3.1 in the 2019-20 Policing Plan focuses on the specific contribution of the PSNI across its six (6) priority areas, which are: rural crime; drugs; human trafficking; financial crime; excise fraud; and organised immigration crime.

The border between Northern Ireland and Ireland is the only land border within the Common Travel Area (and will be the only land border in the UK with an EU Member State post Brexit) and this border (at this time) is completely open. The UK leaving the EU has the potential to increase cross-border criminality. A number of Northern Ireland based Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) have the expertise to adapt and change, both to avoid detection by law enforcement partners and to exploit changes in profitability (including potential changes to trade agreements, etc.). It is likely that they will attempt to profit from any of these changes.

⁴ Cross Border Policing Strategy 2016
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/cross-border-policing-strategy-2016.pdf>

5. NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD CONTRIBUTION

i. Commitments

During 2019-20 the work of the Board in relation to Tackling Paramilitarism consisted of:

- i) the commitments made within The Board's Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Annual Business Plan 2019-20;
- ii) the Board being represented by Board Officials on the three (3) Tackling Paramilitarism Delivery groups;
- iii) PCSPs reporting to the Joint Committee on their progress on tackling paramilitarism issues; and
- iv) the Partnership Committee's function in relation to the Policing Plan 2019-20 was to scrutinise the PSNI's role in the following measures:
 - Demonstrate an effective contribution to the implementation of the EAP and to the JATF; and
 - Demonstrate an effective contribution to the elimination of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland in collaboration with partner agencies, local communities and PCSPs through co-design of programmes and interventions.

This report examines the work undertaken in 2019-20 contributing to the delivery of two (2) Measures from the 2019-20 Business Plan, namely:

- **3.2.1:** Produce a six (6) monthly report on the Board and PCSPs' contribution to A5 to A8 recommendations of the Tackling Paramilitarism Action Plan; and
- **3.2.2:** Report as required to the Independent Reporting Commission on paramilitarism.

As the Board consider this a very important area of work it is reflected in three (3) of the four (4) Objectives in the Board's current Corporate Plan 2020-23:

Objective A - To monitor resourcing plans for the PSNI; advocating on issues which support policing, including transformational change, and delivery of a representative service;

Objective B - To monitor, oversee and assess the performance of the PSNI through the Board and its Committees and ensure the delivery of Human Rights based, community focussed policing; and

Objective C - To work collaboratively with the community, PCSPs and partners, to deliver the outcomes for policing and allow them to be informed and engaged with the Board's work.

These are underpinned by specific actions in the Board's Draft Engagement Strategy for reporting to the Partnership Committee on the recommendations specific to the Board and for delivering this Committee Review.

ii. Executive Action Plan Specific Recommendations for the Board

The Northern Ireland EAP states four (4) recommendations which specifically refer to the role of the Board. These are detailed at **Annex C** along with those that are specific to the PSNI.

The Partnership Committee has been provided with updates on the work against each recommendation. PCSP Action Plans outline the activity undertaken in respect of Recommendation A6⁵. During the reporting period ten (10) out of eleven (11) PCSPs had allocated funding towards initiatives to embed a culture of lawfulness and tackle paramilitarism. The majority of these (with a total spend of just over £100,000 collectively) are through Strategic Priority 3: To support community confidence in policing. Newry, Mourne and Down PCSP did not directly allocate funding to this area.

iii. Review of Work

Tackling Paramilitary Programme Team (TPPT)

The TPPT were invited to the October 2019 Partnership Committee meeting to provide Members with an update on the overall Tackling Paramilitarism Programme, including background on the programme, an update on programme delivery, locality working, the protocols for engagement in relation to A8 and the future focus for implementation.

Committee members were advised that the TPPT are currently developing a review of programme implementation to date. Areas of discussion included:

⁵ Recommendation A6 - "In setting the strategic objectives of PCSPs, the Department of Justice and Policing Board should ensure that the partnerships focus on building community confidence in the rule of law and embedding a culture of lawfulness"

- The statistics provided in respect to attitudinal change;
- The need for governance around some restorative justice agencies;
- A need for more progress in developing a protocol for engagement in relation to A8;
- The importance of early intervention activity; and
- The status of the internal review and whether it will be available to the Board.

In relation to the implementation of B4⁶ the following update was provided by the TPPT:

- Work is ongoing to develop an effective accreditation process in relation to restorative justice agencies;
- Recognise the challenges around A8 and partnership working will continue to progress this area;
- Update on the projects and programmes that are up and running in areas such as early intervention work, however, work is currently ongoing with groups to identify areas where vulnerable youths are not as obvious; and
- As part of the annual review undertaken by the Programme Board, one of the areas of work with a successful outcome which was highlighted by the DoJ is Outcome B 'Building confidence in the justice system'. For example, almost 1,200 people have completed the training programme for police and community partners which support new approaches to problem solving and policing with the community. In addition, the delivery approach for "*strategies and powers to tackle criminal activity*" relates specifically to the work being undertaken by the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)⁷.

The DoJ published the 'Perceptions of Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland' report⁸ in March 2019, which will act as a baseline for measuring progress on the EAP. The DoJ also carried out research in respect of those areas most impacted by so-called PSAs in May 2019 to provide an indication of the effectiveness of the 'Ending the Harm' campaign and to take an updated snapshot of attitudes towards the attacks. The initial survey was carried out in 2017

⁶ B4 - The Executive should establish a fund to support ambitious initiatives aimed at building capacity in communities in transition, including through developing partnerships across civil society and across community divisions.

⁷ Executive programme for tackling paramilitary activity and organised crime

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/articles/executive-programme-tackling-paramilitary-activity-and-organised-crime-0>

⁸ Perceptions of Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland' report, March 2019

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/8-2019-nilts-perceptions-paramilitarism.pdf>

with a further survey in 2019. It is important to note that the definition of PSAs changed between the two (2) surveys, therefore, caution is to be exercised in terms of drawing a direct comparison between results.

	2017	2019	Change
PSAs are justified/justified in certain circumstances	35%	19%	46% decrease
PSAs just involved a good kicking	25%	18%	28% decrease
PSAs deliver swift justice	34%	15%	56% decrease
A PSA is a good way of giving an offender a warning	35%	17%	51% decrease
There is normally a good reason for a PSA	44%	20%	55% decrease

The % figures above indicate the percentage of people who agreed with the statements noted on each line of the table

Visit to the PCTF

Members of the Partnership Committee, supported by Board Officials, visited the PCTF in Grosvenor Road Police Station as part of the November 2019 Partnership Committee. This included a presentation from the PCTF with discussion centring around:

- Links between the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) and the PCTF;
- Clarification on the role of MI5;
- Potential overlap between the organisations involved;
- The legal tools available to HMRC and the NCA and their current use in Northern Ireland; and
- Impacts and successes of the teams’ work including threatening behaviour towards the team by known paramilitaries or criminals.

The PCTF were invited to the January 2020 Partnership Committee which allowed for more in-depth discussions on the issues raised with the PCTF during the visit to the JATF.

Discussions included:

- The Policing Plan 2019-20 Report on Measures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 (JATF and contribution to the elimination of Paramilitarism);
- The limited progress which has been made in relation to Recommendation A8;
- The teams strong record of arrests and recent successes in terms of drug seizures;

- Developments in the North West to tackle the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA);
- The benefits of the partnership approach being taken to tackle paramilitarism;
- How the PCTF has undertaken work regarding the disruption of controlled drugs by links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs subgroup;
- Civil Recovery powers and the IRC's recommendations for a separate agency;
- Legislation required to be implemented by the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- Criminal Finance Act/unexplained wealth orders;
- PSNI resources to tackling paramilitaries – are they sufficient?
- The actions the PCTF take in relation to preventative measures and the need for a collaborative approach in tackling paramilitarism to include the Departments of Health, Education and Justice;
- The overall impact of the PCTF and how A8 works in practice;
- Detail around the working relationship and links with the OCTF and co-working between the OCTF and the PCTF;
- How the removal of drugs disrupts paramilitary activity and organised crime structures;
- Clarification that any separate Agency, for example the Assets Recovery Agency, would be working under the same powers and legislation as the NCA;
- The difference in how PSNI differentiates between organised crime gangs and paramilitaries;
- Re-emphasis around paramilitarism being a much bigger responsibility than that of just PSNI and that the Department of Health, Education, Justice and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) all have an important role to play; and
- Practical examples of PSNI working with representatives from communities on the ground and the difficulty in establishing any protocol and how this causes a dilemma around the workings of A8.

Many of these issues were investigated to inform development of the new Policing Plan 2020-25.

6. PSNI PERFORMANCE

This review analyses PSNI's performance against the Policing Plan 2019-20; Strategic Outcome 3.3: Tackle Paramilitarism, which includes the following measures:

- **Measure 3.3.1:** Demonstrate an effective contribution to the implementation of the Executive Action Plan and to the Joint Agency Task Force; and
- **Measure 3.3.2:** Demonstrate an effective contribution to the elimination of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland in collaboration with partner agencies, local communities and PSCPs through co-design of programmes and interventions.

It should be noted that the Performance Plan 2020-21 for the 2020-25 Policing Plan contains eleven (11) measures focusing on key identified priority issues, which will allow PSNI to provide more focused qualitative and quantitative information to enable the Board to assess progress made in the specific area/s throughout the year.

The Partnership Committee discussed the key issues and ways forward at its November 2019 and January 2020 meetings:

1. As was first highlighted at the Cross Border Organised Crime Annual Conference in November 2018, and again at the same conference in October 2019, the UK leaving the EU has the potential to increase cross-border criminality.
2. The first IRC report published in October 2018, highlighted that PSNI have much work to do in addressing their specific measures in the EAP. The second report, published in November 2019, acknowledges the work undertaken to date and while action is underway, follow up is required for two (2) of the five (5) recommendations specific to PSNI.
3. PSNI have not provided any narrative regarding the finances contributed to the JATF nor the staffing makeup. Reporting only states there is no specific budget allocated to the JATF by the Governments. It would be beneficial for the Partnership Committee to understand what level of PSNI's budget and workforce is being allocated to the JATF.

4. PSNI's report against Measure 3.3.2 largely focuses on the activities and successes of the PCTF, however, it does not provide evidence of the work carried out in collaboration with partner agencies (apart from NCA and HMRC), local communities and PCSPs. This should be included in future reports.
5. The 'Together Project' is a bespoke intervention training package to enhance confidence and trust in policing. Funded by the TPPT, and hosted and supported by PSNI PwC Branch through evidenced based practice research; the project is delivered in partnership with international facilitators; Robert Örell (Sweden Senior EXIT worker and member of the steering committee of the EU RAN programme) and Jorge Rodriguez and TJ Jordan, (Engage 2 Empower, Chicago).
6. A number of bespoke area-based interventions such as the 'Together Project' have been referenced by PSNI under the A5 stream, but there has been limited evidence of addressing the indicator in relation to co-design of programmes and interventions with local communities.
7. Although PSNI have provided some examples of the recent activity of the PCTF, further examples of the work they are undertaking in all areas would be worthwhile. An update on how work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs subgroup may also be useful to request.
8. The Board requested information from PSNI on the number of OCGs frustrated, disrupted or dismantled. This was subsequently provided by PSNI.
9. In respect of the successes of the PCTF, the conviction outcome rate is currently 13%, The Partnership Committee's request for conviction data to be made available had been highlighted to the Enhancing Performance Project within PSNI for feasibility assessment and report.

- 10.** Security Situation statistics are used by PSNI to provide quantitative data for the number of offences recorded linked to paramilitaries. The Partnership Committee may wish to request more detailed information in relation to PSAs and shootings as well as receiving statistics.
- 11.** The continuation of paramilitary violence remains a concern and should be considered alongside the level of work of the PCTF along with partner and other agencies.
- 12.** In 2016, PSNI provided a rationale for the low outcome rates for PSAs. Following the creation of the PCTF in 2017, the Partnership Committee may wish PSNI to provide an update on work being undertaken to address barriers to achieving convictions.
- 13.** PSNI have not provided sufficient detail in their report to address the process undertaken towards the full implementation of recommendations C1 and C4⁹. Board officials have requested further information in respect of these recommendations.

Further details in relation to taking forward these discussion points are included in the Recommendations section of the review (**Section 8**).

⁹ C1 - The strategies and activities of the PSNI and other law enforcement agencies should be updated to reflect a shift in focus from 'paramilitary activity' to criminality.

C4 - The PSNI should prioritise investment in its investigative capacity for tackling criminality linked to paramilitary groups and work with the NCA and other agencies to tackle all organised crime linked to paramilitary groups across Northern Ireland.

7. IRC REPORTS

i. First report – October 2018

The IRC first annual report was published in October 2018¹⁰. It highlighted that the absence of political decision making in Northern Ireland, since January 2017, has had a major adverse impact on the implementation of the Fresh Start Agreement commitments to tackle Paramilitarism, as a key factor in bringing paramilitarism to an end and achieving community transformation is political leadership.

Following the report, a delegation of three (3) Board Members Board met with the IRC on 22nd February 2019. The discussion centred on the Board's activities in relation to the Tackling Paramilitarism EAP and the four (4) recommendations relating directly to the Board - A5, A6, A7 and A8.

While focus of the measures under Strategic Outcome 3.3 of the 2019-20 Policing Plan relates to PSNI performance (A13, C1, C4, C6 and C8 as detailed at **Annex C**), the Board itself still has a key role to play alongside the Executive and PSNI to implement recommendations A5, A6, A7 and A8 from the EAP.

PSNI had provided the Board with performance monitoring reports against the Policing Plan during 2017-18 and 2018-19, reporting against Outcome 3.3.2 and the specific recommendations in the EAP which relate to PSNI. However, Board officials determined that the information provided by PSNI did not explicitly outline progress achieved, and as a result, Officials monitoring Police Performance amended the performance indicators in the 2019-20 Policing Plan in order to ensure that the Board was provided with information which would more obviously refer to the recommendations in the EAP.

Measure 3.3.2 includes activity towards the full implementation of recommendation C1 (a shift in focus from 'paramilitary activity' to criminality) and recommendation C4 (resource allocation, dedicated funding received, training and development as it pertains to investigative capacity etc.).

¹⁰ IRC Report 2018
https://www.ircommission.org/sites/irc/files/media-files/IRC-%20First%20Report_0.pdf

In their first report in relation to C1, the IRC welcomed the creation of the PCTF in November 2017, as such a Task Force has never existed before. The IRC noted the encouraging start it has made and its potential to have significant impact against paramilitary crime and that as more cases come to trial the work of the Task Force also has potential to build public confidence in what can be achieved.

When considering C4 and the work of PSNI, the IRC have endorsed the PCTF concept of a co-located law enforcement task force (which combines officers from the PSNI, NCA and HMRC) with a focused remit to target paramilitary activity. Alongside this the IRC welcomes the work of the Cross Border JATF and the OCTF to tackle criminality.

The IRC commentary against C8 states that the Cross Border JATF, the PCTF and the OCTF are all central in this regard and are aware that the work of these groups is co-ordinated in the PSNI, through the Head of Criminal Investigation Branch to ensure a cohesive approach.

In the first IRC report it was noted that visible neighbourhood policing has a key role to play in tackling paramilitary activity, this was based on engagement with a wide range of groups from civic society who believe there are not enough dedicated and visible neighbourhood police officers on the ground in communities most adversely impacted by paramilitary activity.

The IRC welcomed the Chief Constable's commitment to direct more resources into neighbourhood policing and reiterated the importance of neighbourhood policing, recommending that increased provision of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams should be fully resourced, and that the neighbourhood policing models currently piloted in some of the areas where paramilitaries operate should be intensified in those areas as a policing priority. The IRC noted that when they visited both the Carrickfergus and Foyle PSNI stations during the year, they saw the impact of good neighbourhood policing and have outlined that if neighbourhood policing requires additional resources, this should be supported.

In respect of the cross-border dimension to tackling Paramilitarism, the IRC have commented that the structures set up under the umbrella of the JATF, bringing together the relevant authorities North and South to tackle organised and cross jurisdictional crime, continue to function well.

ii. Second report – November 2019

The second IRC report¹¹, highlighted that paramilitarism remains a stark reality in Northern Ireland, with difficulties created by the political vacuum in Northern Ireland and continuing uncertainty regarding Brexit making the task of ending Paramilitarism immeasurably more difficult.

In the report the IRC are clear that the policing and justice response remains a critical component of the overall approach in terms of the broader role of policing in tackling Paramilitarism. However, there continue to be concerns about the pace of enhancing neighbourhood policing and the IRC have renewed their call for more resources in this area. In addition, they have called for greater use of asset recovery powers, given the impact this can have on tackling criminality, including that linked to paramilitary activity, and have recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of an agency that focusses solely on civil recovery of the proceeds of crime in Northern Ireland.

In their second report specifically in relation to C1, the IRC again welcomed the work of the PCTF but stated the need for the additional powers to tackle criminality under the Criminal Finances Act, including the power to make Unexplained Wealth Orders, be extended to Northern Ireland without further delay, and for full use to be made by law enforcement of existing powers including Serious Crime Prevention Orders. In addition they have noted that the collaborative use of OCGs Mapping across law enforcement would assist in prioritising law enforcement effort on the gangs which cause the most harm.

The IRC have called for progress on the review of OCG legislation to be expedited without

¹¹ IRC Report 2019
<https://www.ircommission.org/publications/irc-second-report>

further delay, noting that the availability of legislative provisions, similar to those enacted in Scotland, could assist in terms of tackling criminality linked to paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. This may deter some from re-engaging in criminal acts, and would clearly brand the activity as criminal rather than paramilitary activity.

With regards to C4, the IRC have stated that it is imperative that robust law enforcement activity against paramilitary groups continues in order to tackle the harm they cause to society generally in Northern Ireland and to the communities in which they operate. The continued impact of the PCTF will not only help to build confidence in policing but will also assist in building confident communities.

The IRC Secretariat attended the January 2020 Partnership Committee meeting to provide an overview of some of the key findings and recommendations from the IRC's second report.

Discussions undertaken included:

- The IRC being two years into a four year programme;
- Commissioners expectations around progress at this stage;
- A need for a whole of Government approach being emphasised;
- The impact of the impediments of having no devolved Government and the impact of Brexit;
- The importance of the restoration of the Executive and the potential to accelerate the implementation of the EAP;
- Reference to the six (6) new recommendations of the report:
 - Tackling Paramilitarism to become a dedicated outcome for the Programme of Government;
 - Enhancing the law enforcement response;
 - Enhancing Neighbourhood Policing;
 - Improving the effectiveness of the Justice System;
 - Dedicated transition process for paramilitaries; and
 - A major public debate on ending Paramilitarism.

Members discussed:

- The role of the Irish Government in Tackling Paramilitarism;
- The importance of joined up working across Government to make the IRC recommendations happen;
- The difficulties in relation to the Civil Recovery of Criminal Assets and the Commissioners intention to look at establishing a Civil Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland;
- Priority rating of the IRC recommendations;
- That the report highlights some good practice but more needs to be done to tackle the systemic issues;
- The importance of the twin track approach of using a Criminal Justice response as well as focusing on the systemic social economic issues in communities where paramilitaries operate;
- The opportunity now that Ministers are back in place to take a whole of Government approach;
- In relation to B4, the Commissioners are concerned at the lack of progress and felt that not enough risk is currently being taken in this area; and
- The IRC should prioritise recommendation A1 in that Tackling Paramilitarism should become a dedicated outcome for the draft PfG.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPERATIONAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Partnership Committee has made **five (5) Recommendations along with eleven (11) operational areas for improvement** which specifically relate to the performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) with the aim of developing the work undertaken so far:

i. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: A8

The Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team should consider revising the wording of A8 as a principle rather than a protocol as it suggests a set of rules

Recommendation 2: Support for Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)

That officers working in the PCTF continue to be given full organisational support and assistance where there are threatening behaviours towards the team by known paramilitaries and/or criminals.

Recommendation 3: Funding

With the current phase of funding ending in 2021, it is essential that long term funding is arranged with the Department of Justice to ensure longevity and stability of this programme.

Recommendation 4: Civil Recovery Agency

That the Board supports the IRC recommendation to establish an agency that focuses solely on civil recovery of the proceeds of crime in Northern Ireland. This should be progressed by the Department of Justice without delay.

Recommendation 5: Legislative powers for policing

The power to make Unexplained Wealth Orders extended to Northern Ireland without further delay, and for full use to be made by law enforcement of existing powers including Serious Crime Prevention Orders. Steps also need to be taken to protect law enforcement activity in tackling organised crime post EU Exit.

ii. Operational areas for improvement in relation to PSNI Performance

All relate to the points in **Section 6 – PSNI Performance**:

- i. It is not clear from the review conducted by the Committee how funding and resources are allocated to the work of the JATF and further information on this point will be sought from PSNI. (Point 3)
- ii. The Partnership Committee would welcome PSNI providing evidence of the work carried out in collaboration with partner agencies (outside of the NCA and HMRC), local communities and PCSPs in relation to Measure 3.3.2. of the 2019-20 Policing Plan. (Point 4)
- iii. Further information will be sought on how the learning from the ‘Together Project’ is being implemented and measured specifically in relation to tackling paramilitarism. (Point 5)
- iv. Evidence provided by PSNI to the Board with regards to evidence of co-design of programmes and interventions with local communities needs to be relevant to the indicators. (Point 6)
- v. Much of the public information currently provided by PSNI in relation to the work of the PCTF relates solely to operations in respect of drugs. In order to build confidence in the community further examples of the work that the PCTF are undertaking in all areas, for example, extortion and money laundering should be publicised. (Point 7)
- vi. The Partnership Committee would welcome clarification of how the work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs sub group. (Point 7)
- vii. The Partnership Committee would ask PSNI to provide quantitative data regarding convictions such as, a breakdown of the offences to which these convictions relate, given the numerous types of criminality for which these groups are involved. (Point 9)

- viii. The Partnership Committee will request qualitative information in relation to paramilitary assaults and shootings outside of the statistics to better understand what the role of statistics is in relation to informing and measuring the work of the PCTF. (Point 10)

- ix. The Partnership Committee understand that the continuation of paramilitary violence remains an issue of concern and will explore further with PSNI to ascertain if there is any intelligence or explanation for the rise in the statistics for PSAs and shootings. (Point 11)

- x. Despite the creation of the PCTF in 2017, outcome rates for PSAs remain low. The Partnership Committee will explore with PSNI the reasons for this and identify what work has been undertaken to address some of the barriers to achieving convictions. (Point 12)

- xi. The Partnership Committee will request further information from PSNI with regards to the process undertaken towards full implementation of recommendations C1 and C4. (Point 13)

Review Summary

The 12 month review of Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime has evidenced good progress against the Actions A5 to A8 which the Board are responsible for overseeing, and also evidences progress in relation to the actions for which PSNI are responsible.

The review also provides a number of recommendations to further enhance work in this critical area.

9. FEEDBACK

If you would like to provide the Board with feedback on the issues discussed in this Committee Review, please contact us at:

- Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast
BT1 3BG

- Tel : +44 (0) 28 9040 8500

- Email : information@nipolicingboard.org.

ANNEX A

LINK TO TACKLING PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY EXECUTIVE ACTION PLAN

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/publications/tackling-paramilitary-activity-criminality-and-organised-crime-executive-action-plan>

ANNEX B

PSNI RESPONSE TO 11 OPERATIONAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

As part of the process for finalising the Tackling Paramilitarism Committee Review for 2019/20, the draft report was sent to PSNI to review for factual accuracy. In addition to providing factual assurances, the PSNI have also provided responses to the 11 operational areas for improvement, cited in the review, which specifically relate to PSNI performance.

The operational areas for improvement can be found in section 8 of the TP Review document. Each link to points provided in section 6 of the review which provides an assessment of PSNI performance.

- i. It is not clear from the review conducted by the Committee how funding and resources are allocated to the work of the JATF and further information on this point will be sought from PSNI. (Point 3)***

Point 3 of Section 6 states: PSNI have not provided any narrative regarding the finances contributed to the JATF nor the staffing makeup. Reporting only states there is no specific budget allocated to the JATF by the Governments. It would be beneficial for the Partnership Committee to understand what level of PSNI's budget and workforce is being allocated to the JATF.

PSNI Response:

The Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) is not an operational task force in the same sense as the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) (it has no staff or budget allocation). The JATF exercise an oversight and co-ordination function only, akin to a steering group. The Assistant Chief Constable for Crime Department represents PSNI on the Strategic Oversight Group; while the Detective Chief Superintendent for Criminal Investigation Branch represents PSNI on the Operations Co-ordination Group. In addition a Detective Chief Inspector for Criminal Investigation Branch holds the JATF portfolio and facilitates contact between partners and PSNI, while also providing support to the Detective Chief Superintendent on JATF related matters. Officers perform these functions in addition to and alongside their allocated role and

duties within PSNI. It is not practically possible to breakdown salary costs so as to illustrate the financial cost of the time spent by these officers on JATF related matters. No other police officers or police staff member is given over to the functions of the JATF.

As stated the JATF does not consist of a body of police officers or police staff and therefore has no deployable resource in the same fashion as the PCTF. When a cross-jurisdictional organised crime threat/risk is identified either by PSNI or by a JATF partner agency, PSNI will assess this threat/risk. If assessed to require a PSNI response, then the threat/risk will be managed by an appropriate resource. For example the appropriate resource may be a team or individual from Criminal Investigation Branch, it may be a team or individual in a Local Policing District or it may be a team or individual within the Operational Support Department etc.

The nature of threat/risk will determine the type and extent of any activity undertaken. This activity can be wide ranging and may include; a one-off targeted vehicle checkpoint, a temporary increase in police patrols, appropriate use of stop and search, or may involve the launch of a full proactive investigation into an identified Organised Crime Group (OCG). Any such activity undertaken will be done so by police officers as part of their normal policing role and will be woven into their daily duties. It is therefore not practically possible to breakdown in financial terms the cost of time spent by these officers on such activities.

ii. The Partnership Committee would welcome PSNI providing evidence of the work carried out in collaboration with partner agencies (outside of the NCA and HMRC), local communities and PCSPs in relation to Measure 3.3.2. of the 2019-20 Policing Plan. (Point 4)

Point 4 of Section 6 states: PSNI's report against Measure 3.3.2 largely focuses on the activities and successes of the PCTF, however, it does not provide evidence of the work carried out in collaboration with partner agencies (apart from NCA and HMRC), local communities and PCSPs. This should be included in future reports.

PSNI Response:

The Board's Partnership Committee has been provided with details regarding local engagement and community cohesion initiatives.

iii. Further information will be sought on the learning from the 'Together Project' and how it is being implemented and measured specifically in relation to tackling paramilitarism. (Point 5)

Point 5 of Section 6 states: The 'Together Project' is a bespoke intervention training package to enhance confidence and trust in policing. Funded by the TPPT, and hosted and supported by PSNI PwC Branch through evidenced based practice research; the project is delivered in partnership with international facilitators; Robert Örell (Sweden Senior EXIT worker and member of the steering committee of the EU RAN programme) and Jorge Rodriguez and TJ Jordan, (Engage 2 Empower, Chicago).

PSNI Response:

The Together Project provided an opportunity for improved engagement between police, partner agencies and young people. It further helped build confidence in policing, encouraged collaborative working and enhanced early intervention to identify and reduce vulnerability of those who may be susceptible of becoming involved in paramilitary activity.

An Outcome Based Accountability Evaluation was completed at the end of the input and 97.5% of participants confirmed they will use the training in their work. 98% confirmed that their understanding of issues relating to vulnerability increased and are now better placed to identify vulnerabilities. Qualitative feedback included "I wasn't sure what to expect from the session but I have learnt a great deal about the areas of Violent Extremism" (Anonymous evaluation comment referring to Sweden input).

The input was provided interactive learning and was considered to be a fresh, innovative approach towards engagement with key partner agencies and statutory bodies. This input

was intended to reduce the fear of crime, intimidation and harassment from local crime gangs and paramilitaries. It also provided for a much more tailored and targeted programme to assist in identifying and reducing vulnerability and radicalisation, particularly amongst young people.

iv. Evidence provided by PSNI to the Board with regards to evidence of co-design of programmes and interventions with local communities needs to be relevant to the indicators. (Point 6)

Point 6 of Section 6 states: A number of bespoke area-based interventions such as the 'Together Project' have been referenced by PSNI under the A5 stream, but there has been limited evidence of addressing the indicator in relation to co-design of programmes and interventions with local communities.

PSNI Response:

The Together Project improved skills for collaborative working, leading to enhanced early intervention to identify and reduce vulnerability. Police Officers and staff were upskilled in mentoring, coaching and engagement skills to help, support and signpost young people in local communities. Partners included a Senior EXIT worker and member of the steering committee of the EU RAN programme and previously Fryshuset, Sweden and Engage 2 Empower, Chicago, with links to Youth Guidance, Chicago who delivered the input in September 2019 with 80 PSNI personnel participating.

The Project provided an opportunity for increased constructive engagement between police, partner agencies and young people, building confidence in policing. PSNI officers increased their skills and ability to have honest and open conversations with young people about local issues and the impact that their actions may have on their own community.

PCSP managers, independent members, local councillors and representatives from Health Trusts were all involved in the Project. The Project provided:

- enhanced opportunities for engagement between key partners to reduce the fear of crime, intimidation and harassment by local crime gangs

- assistance in identifying and reducing vulnerability or radicalisation in local communities
 - upskilled police officers, staff and key partners in mentoring and coaching techniques, including: relationship building, communication & listening skills, reflective practice and motivational interviewing
 - knowledge of early intervention techniques, experiential learning and examples of real life experience of violent extremism/radicalisation
 - understanding of very specific localised challenges that encourage young people to become involved in Organised Crime and Violent Extremism
- v. *Much of the public information currently provided by PSNI in relation to the work of the PCTF relates solely to operations in respect of drugs. In order to build confidence in the community further examples of the work that the PCTF are undertaking in all areas, for example, extortion and money laundering should be publicised. (Point 7)***

Point 7 of Section 6 states: Although PSNI have provided some examples of the recent activity of the PCTF, further examples of the work they are undertaking in all areas would be worthwhile. An update on how work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs subgroup may also be useful to request.

PSNI Response:

Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) is committed to publicising operational activity and successful outcomes achieved. PCTF proactively highlighted operational activity and successful outcomes by way of social media and traditional media releases. This includes publicising search and arrest operations and the charging and subsequent conviction of suspects. In addition PCTF provide face-to-face interviews to various news outlets.

The principal crime type in which all paramilitary organised crime groups are involved is drug supply; this is reflected in the nature of the information that is publically available.

Investigations into suspected money laundering are often based on predicate offending such as drug supply or other acquisitive crime i.e. crime that has been perpetrated in order to generate the money that is subsequently laundered. Money laundering offences are often charged and publicised alongside the predicate offences. Investigations into suspected 'standalone' money laundering are highlighted at the time of search, arrest, charge and again on conviction. The seizure of suspected 'criminal cash' (a form of money laundering) is also regularly highlighted through media releases, frequently alongside other offences.

Blackmail (extortion) is assessed to be an under reported crime. This can be attributed to the level of community control, coercion and violence employed by paramilitaries against victims. Victims fear retribution if they report blackmail (extortion), while witnesses similarly fear the consequences should they be seen to assist a police investigation. This combination makes blackmail (extortion) a challenging crime to identify, investigate and prosecute.

The nature of blackmail (extortion) investigations means they do not easily lend themselves to publicity. Blackmail (extortion) by its very nature involves greater risk to victims and witnesses. Careful consideration must always be given when highlighting individual cases of this type, balancing the needs of the victim with those of the wider community. PSNI will continue to highlight search and arrest operations, along with the charging and subsequent conviction of suspects for blackmail (extortion) offences, when it is assessed to be appropriate to do so.

The PCTF are committed to and will continue to highlight operational activity and the successful outcomes achieved across as wide a range of criminality as possible.

vi. The Partnership Committee would welcome clarification of how the work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs sub group. (Point 7)

Point 7 of Section 6 states: Although PSNI have provided some examples of the recent activity of the PCTF, further examples of the work they are undertaking in all areas would be worthwhile. An update on how work undertaken by the PCTF in respect of the disruption of controlled drugs links with both the work of the JATF and the OCTF drugs subgroup may also be useful to request.

The OCTF and JATF provide essential forums for strategic leadership and ensuring a collaborative response is taken to tackling the organised crime threat impacting Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland. The work of the OCTF and JATF complements and aligns with work being undertaken through the delivery of the Executive Action Plan to Tackle Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime, as well as with the operational focus of the Paramilitary Crime Task Force.

A draft new Organised Crime Strategy for Northern Ireland has been developed by the Department of Justice in partnership with OCTF members. The strategy has been written to reflect the Outcomes Delivery Plan framework on reducing crime, as well as the strategic responses to tackling paramilitary activity, Northern Ireland related terrorism and organised crime. The strategy has been informed by the six priorities of the Department of Justice and as such will help to embed a culture of lawfulness, support safe and resilient communities, address harm and vulnerability, challenge offending behaviour and support rehabilitation, deliver an effective justice system and secure confidence in the justice system.

PCTF is represented on the JATF and OCTF by a Detective Superintendent from Criminal Investigation Branch. The D/Superintendent is the PSNI lead for both the PCTF and Drugs, and also chairs the Drugs Sub Group of the OCTF. This ensures a single strategic approach is adopted and applied in respect of all illegal drug supply impacting on Northern Ireland.

vii. The Partnership Committee would ask PSNI to provide quantitative data regarding convictions such as, a breakdown of the offences to which these convictions relate, given the numerous types of criminality for which these groups are involved. (Point 9)

Point 9 of Section 6 states: In respect of the successes of the PCTF, the conviction outcome rate is currently 13%, which in comparison to the overall crime outcome rate for charge/summons in 2017-18 at 20%, appears low. The Partnership Committee may wish to ask PSNI to provide quantitative data regarding convictions, for example, a breakdown of the types of offences to which these convictions relate.

PSNI Response:

Conviction data is input, held and managed by the Northern Ireland Court Service, PSNI do not hold conviction information as structured data and do not routinely report convictions figures. PSNI reports providing conviction information are caveated to the effect that the data may be incomplete and should not be wholly relied upon.

To provide quantitative data on convictions including offence type as it pertains to a specific team would require significant modifications to be made to PSNI computer systems. Any resulting data produced following these modifications, would still need to be provided with a caveat as to its completeness and accuracy, given that the data is not input or managed by PSNI.

The request from the Partnership Committee for conviction data to be made available has been highlighted to the Enhancing Performance Project within PSNI for feasibility assessment and report.

Crime outcome rates are a standard measure by which the performance of police services in the United Kingdom is measured. Crime outcomes are distinct and separate from convictions and the two do not bear comparison against each other. For example, a suspect may be charged and then prosecuted for an offence. At trial the suspect/defendant is found not guilty of the offence charged. In this example an outcome (charge) has been achieved by PSNI and is recorded and reported on in-line with Home Office Counting Rules for crime; this is the case even though a conviction has not been secured.

In Point 10 of the report 2 different measures are being compared against each other i.e. overall PSNI outcomes in terms of charges & summons is compared against the PCTF ‘conviction outcome rate’. As stated above these 2 figures are not comparable and the ‘conviction’ figures cannot be relied upon for the reasons stated.

An accurate comparator would be the overall PSNI outcomes in terms of charges & summons and PCTF outcomes in terms of charges & summons. These figures are provided in the table which follows for the previous 2 financial years.

	Outcome Rate	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
PSNI	Charge/Summons	21.0	21.4	21.4
PCTF	Charge/Summons	27.7	53.3	46.1

viii. The Partnership Committee will request qualitative information in relation to paramilitary assaults and shootings outside of the statistics to better understand the role of statistics in relation to informing and measuring the work of the PCTF. (Point 10)

Point 10 of Section 6 states: Security Situation statistics are used by PSNI to provide quantitative data for the number of offences recorded linked to paramilitaries. The Partnership Committee may wish to request more detailed information in relation to PSAs and shootings as well as receiving statistics.

PSNI Response:

Paramilitary Style Attacks (PSAs) are defined as:

- *Paramilitary style assaults are usually carried out by Loyalist or Republican groups on members of their own community as a so-called punishment. The assault will involve major or minor physical injury to the injured party typically involving a group of assailants armed with, for example, iron bars or baseball bats. Paramilitary style assaults that result in death are counted as ‘security related deaths’ and are not reflected in the paramilitary style assault figures.*

- *Paramilitary style shootings usually result in the injured party being shot in the knees, elbows, feet, ankles or thighs and the motive is supposedly to punish the person for anti-social activities. These paramilitary style shootings are generally conducted by Loyalist or Republican paramilitary groups on members of their own community. Paramilitary style shootings that result in death are counted as 'security related deaths' and are not reflected in the paramilitary style shooting figures.*

It is important to acknowledge the complexities and challenges involved in preventing and detecting PSA's. It is recognised by the Independent Review Commission that social deprivation and paramilitary activity are related, and that this is particularly strong in relation to Education & Skills and Health & Disability. To effectively tackle these issues and achieve societal transformation requires a whole system approach. It is only through such an approach that a significant reduction and an eventual end to PSA's will be achieved.

The level of violence attributable to a paramilitary Organised Crime Group (OCG) e.g. involvement in PSA's, is a factor that informs the assessment of the threat and harm posed by a particular paramilitary OCG. This assessment is used to determine if that particular paramilitary OCG is adopted for investigation by the PCTF.

A significant reduction and an eventual end to PSA's will only be achieved by genuine societal transformation; achieved through a whole system problem solving approach. The use of PSA statistics to measure the effectiveness of the PCTF alone in tackling this complex issue does not properly reflect the complexity and challenging nature of the problem.

PSAs are often perpetrated by organisations not subject to investigation by the PCTF. This includes Dissident Republican groupings and a variety of other Loyalist organisations. The retrospective investigation of PSA incidents is the primary responsibility of local CID teams and not the PCTF. PCTF activity is focused on reducing the capability and capacity of paramilitary OCGs, by frustrating, disrupting and dismantling their criminal enterprises.

It must also be noted that PSAs are not a defined crime type in their own right, meaning the identification of a shooting or assault incident and its classification as a PSA is subjective and often based on limited information. Similarly, attribution of incidents to a specific Republican or Loyalist groupings can also be subjective. In making these assessments recourse is had

to the attending circumstances as well as to the information supplied by the victim, who may be unable or unwilling to provide reliable and accurate information.

For these reason PSA statistics are no longer assessed as an appropriate measure of PCTF effectiveness. Although not a reliable measure of performance, PSA statistics do remain useful in monitoring trends over time and may be used as an indicator of the organisational response to violent extremism as a whole. It must be acknowledge that a reduction in the number of PSAs will not be achieved by PSNI activity in isolation.

ix. The Partnership Committee understand that the continuation of paramilitary violence remains an issue of concern and will explore further with PSNI to ascertain if there is any intelligence or explanation for the rise in the statistics for PSAs and shootings. (Point 11)

Point 11 of Section 6 states: The continuation of paramilitary violence remains a concern and should be considered alongside the level of work of the PCTF along with partner and other agencies.

PSNI Response:

Please refer to response above.

The most recent statistics published by PSNI Statistics Branch (Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020) indicate that there was a decrease in the number of PSA casualties from 80 to 70 when compared to the previous rolling 12 months.

viii. Despite the creation of the PCTF in 2017, outcome rates for PSAs remain low. The Partnership Committee will explore with PSNI the reasons for this and identify what work has been undertaken to address some of the barriers to achieving convictions. (Point 12)

Point 12 of Section 6 states: In 2016, PSNI provided a rationale for the low outcome rates for PSAs. Following the creation of the PCTF in 2017, the Partnership Committee may wish PSNI to provide an update on work being undertaken to address barriers to achieving convictions.

PSNI Response:

The use of PSA statistics to measure the effectiveness of the PCTF alone in tackling this complex issue does not properly reflect the complexity and challenging nature of the problem. PSAs are often perpetrated by organisations not subject to investigation by the PCTF. This includes Dissident Republican groupings and a variety of other Loyalist organisations. The retrospective investigation of PSA incidents is the primary responsibility of local CID and not the PCTF. PCTF activity is focused on reducing the capability and capacity of paramilitary OCGs by frustrating, disrupting and dismantling their criminal enterprises.

The low outcome rate for PSAs is attributable to a number of factors; these include the forensic awareness of offenders, the limited information received by police in respect of PSAs and primarily the level of cooperation provided by the victim. It remains a sad reality that PSAs are often carried out by 'appointment' with the victim and offenders meeting at an agreed time and location for the PSA to take place. The PSA is only reported to police after the fact and often by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. Victims are often unable or unwilling to assist the investigation in to the attack on them, this leads to large information gaps in the investigation. To effectively tackle PSAs requires a whole system approach that encourages a culture of lawfulness and brings about societal transformation.

In an effort to improve criminal justice outcomes PSNI established a Steering Group to help identify areas where PSNI could make improvements, with the view to achieving increased outcomes for victims. This Steering Group was chaired by the Detective Chief Superintendent for Serious Crime Branch.

PSNI undertook a review of all PSA incidents to identify any new or outstanding lines of inquiry. Victims of PSAs were also revisited by police in an effort to fill information gaps; with further sign posting to support services being offered to victims in an effort to encourage cooperation with the police investigation. No increase in criminal justice outcomes was achieved. It is through a culture of lawfulness that significant reductions in PSAs will be achieved alongside increased positive criminal justice outcomes. The recent survey by the Department of Justice highlights the gradual transition in view pertaining to PSAs; in time it has to be hoped that this will manifest itself in the ability of victims and witnesses to come forward and fill information gaps that help prevent positive criminal justice outcomes being achieved. PSNI will continue to highlight support services to PSA victims and work with partners to prevent PSAs taking place.

ix. The Partnership Committee will request further information from PSNI with regards to the process undertaken towards full implementation of recommendations C1 and C4. (Point 13)

Point 13 of Section 6 states: PSNI have not provided sufficient detail in their report to address the process undertaken towards the full implementation of recommendations C1 and C4¹². Board officials have requested further information in respect of these recommendations.

PSNI Response:

PSNI have updated its Serious and Organised Crime Control Strategy to include the criminality associated with non-national security paramilitary groupings. Those groups assessed as posing a national security threat, remain subject to PSNI Violent Extremism Control Strategy.

¹² C1 - The strategies and activities of the PSNI and other law enforcement agencies should be updated to reflect a shift in focus from 'paramilitary activity' to criminality. C4 - The PSNI should prioritise investment in its investigative capacity for tackling criminality linked to paramilitary groups and work with the NCA and other agencies to tackle all organised crime linked to paramilitary groups across Northern Ireland.

Investigations and activity against paramilitary Organised Crime Groups emphasises the use of non-terrorist related legislation and powers. Only when deemed relevant to the offence under investigation are Justice and Security Act and Terrorism Act powers exercised.

The Independent Review Commission (IRC) in its second report has commented on the need for additional powers to tackle criminality under the Criminal Finances Act, including the power to make Unexplained Wealth Orders. In addition the IRC called for progress on the review of organised crime group legislation to be expedited; highlighting that the availability of such legislative provisions, similar to those enacted in Scotland in relation to organised crime groups, could assist in terms of tackling criminality linked to paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, and that this may deter some from re-engaging in criminal acts. It would also clearly brand the activity as criminal rather than paramilitary activity. These matters are before the Department of Justice and more properly sit under C2 of the Action Plan. It should be noted that that an Unexplained Wealth Order is a civil power. PSNI can provide referrals and agencies such as HMRC, NCA and Financial Conduct Authority are designated enforcement authorities.

PSNI will seek to make increased use of existing powers including Serious Crime Prevention Orders.

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force was established by PSNI in September 2017 and became fully operational in November 2017. The PCTF provides additional dedicated investigative capacity to tackle criminality linked to paramilitary organised crime groups. The 3 Agencies PSNI, HMRC and NCA share capability and capacity on a daily basis to tackle the threat and harm cause by paramilitary related criminality. Each Agency uses available legislation and bespoke powers to mount a collaborative approach on paramilitary organisations and individuals. These powers included the use of Civil Recovery powers where criminal cases have failed or prosecutions are not possible. All individuals subject to PCTF investigation are assessed for the potential of Civil Recovery, with suitable cases being progressed accordingly.

ANNEX C

NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	
REC NO	DESCRIPTION
SPECIFIC TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD	
A5	The Executive, the Policing Board and the PSNI should review the resourcing and operation of policing in communities to ensure that policing is visible and resourced to fully engage in those communities most vulnerable to criminal control.
A6	In setting the strategic objectives of PCSPs, the Department of Justice and Policing Board should ensure the partnerships focus on building community confidence in the rule of law and embedding a culture of lawfulness.
A7	The designated organisations (PSNI, NI Housing Executive, Probation Board NI, Youth Justice Agency, NI Fire and Rescue Service, Education Authority, Health and Social Care Trusts) should also ensure that their representatives are sufficiently senior and committed to building effective partnerships.
A8	The Executive and the PSNI, in conjunction with the Policing Board, should review their protocols for engaging with representatives of paramilitary groups. This change in approach should also apply to other public and community bodies and public representatives.
SPECIFIC TO THE PSNI	
A13	Law enforcement agencies and others involved in the process of bringing prosecution cases to court should ensure that they have appropriate systems and procedures in place to enable cases to progress as expeditiously as possible.
C1	The strategies and activities of the PSNI and other law enforcement agencies should be updated to reflect a shift in focus from 'paramilitary activity' to criminality.
C4	The PSNI should prioritise investment in its investigative capacity for tackling criminality linked to paramilitary groups and work with the NCA and other agencies to tackle all organised crime linked to paramilitary groups across Northern Ireland.
C6	The NIEA, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Ireland, should be included in the cross-border Fresh Start Joint Agency Task Force, including the Operations Co-ordination Group.

NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

REC NO	DESCRIPTION
C8	The UK Government, the Executive and law enforcement agencies, working with their partners in Ireland, should ensure that tackling organised criminal activity is an integral part of their efforts to deal with Northern Ireland related terrorism.

ANNEX D

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS A5, A6, A7 AND A8

The information below is a reflection of the engagement and applicable progress to date for these actions, including an overview of upcoming activities:

A5

“The Executive, the Policing Board and the PSNI should review the resourcing and operation of policing in communities to ensure that policing is visible and resourced to fully engage in those communities most vulnerable to criminal control”.

BACKGROUND

- This recommendation has been taken forward within Partnership Committee under the Local Policing Review 2018 work area. The Board agreed the Local Policing Review 2018 Response Document at their 4th September 2019 meeting.
- The Local Policing Review Action Plan was launched by the Chair of the Board and the Chief Constable at a Board hosted event on 5th November 2019. The Action Plan consists of six (6) headline actions and forty-five (45) delivery actions that are led by either the PSNI, the Board or in partnership by both organisations.
- The Local Policing Review Action Plan serves as the basis for the Board to hold the PSNI to account on delivery; with updates on progress presented to the Board through the Partnership Committee.
- Progress has been made against each of the six (6) headline actions, however, some of the actions are more strategic and long term in nature and progress will continue over the next eighteen (18) months.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- **Visibility** – additional number of Neighbourhood Police Team officers has had an impact on visibility as well as the development of new liveried vehicles. A review of the uniform has started along with a pilot of single officer patrolling. The Board has contributed

significantly to exploring the potential involvement of volunteers in policing by delivering a framework paper and hosting a conference in December 2019 with this theme.

- **Neighbourhood Policing** – significant progress has been made in relation to increasing the Neighbourhood Teams across Northern Ireland. PCSP Chairs and Managers have reported to the Board the significant impact that the additional 400 officers in Neighbourhood Teams are having at a local level.
- **Vulnerability and Mental Health** – progress has been made in this area in relation to the development of the Support Hubs with 10 established in the District Council areas. The introduction of the nurse led model to custody healthcare has been a success.
- **Call Handling** – a number of reviews have been completed with recommendations to implement improvements to call handling and online reporting.

UPCOMING

- **Visibility** – work will continue to exploring the potential involvement of volunteers in policing in partnership with the Board and PSNI via a dedicated team within PwC.
- **Vulnerability and Mental Health** – with the successful introduction of the nurse led model to custody healthcare, plans to develop ongoing strategic partnerships with Health are being considered.
- **Call Handling** – recommendations to implement the improvements to call handling and online reporting are to be approved by the relevant project boards.
- **Collaboration and Multi Agency Working** – research to be agreed to inform future implementation in the area of multi-agency partnership working aligned to the new Policing Plan 2020-25.
- **Competing Police Demands** – in the context of the recently published 2020-25 Policing Plan, work is underway to develop a new PSNI Communications and Engagement

Strategy and the Board is working to finalise its Engagement Strategy. Both will be key documents in the implementation of this action.

- **Local Policing Review Action Plan** - The last progress report on the Action Plan document was provided to the Partnership Committee in February 2020, with the next update due for the October 2020 meeting.

A6

“In setting the strategic objectives of PCSPs, the Department of Justice and Policing Board should ensure that the partnerships focus on building community confidence in the rule of law and embedding a culture of lawfulness”.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- The Joint Committee has provided ongoing support to PCSPs to recognise their potential to build community confidence in the rule of law and therefore, contribute to embedding a culture of lawfulness. Four (4) Culture of Lawfulness workshops were given by the Joint Committee during February and March 2019. The sessions were attended by PCSP staff and PCSP members including elected, independent and designated members. The agenda included a strategic overview, a presentation from the Department for Communities (DfC) and an interactive session on good practice examples from PCSPs.
- As a consequence, reporting has been more meaningful and reflective of the positive contribution PCSPs make to this action. The 2019-20 implementation year saw an increase from previously eight (8) out of ten (10) PCSPs to all PCSPs including “build community confidence in the rule of law and contribute to embedding a culture of lawfulness” in their annual Action Plans.
- Whilst it is recognised that this can be a contentious intervention area, PCSPs have utilised key partnership working, particularly with the PSNI, to deliver initiatives that focus on deterring individuals and particularly young people from engaging in or supporting paramilitary activity.
- ‘Banjaxed’, a hard hitting play about the dangers posed to children from paramilitaries and criminal gangs was rolled out by all PCSPs with a total of forty-four (44) performances

delivered in almost forty (40) venues to over 4,000 predominantly young people. 903 (86%) attendees felt this was a good way to learn, with 636 (54%) stating they were much more aware of the issues and risks for young people.

- PCSPs continued to deliver a number of projects in relation to antisocial behaviour, youth diversionary work and drugs and alcohol to contribute to embedding a culture of lawfulness, which included a number of awareness raising campaigns such as “Drug dealers don’t care” and “Crimestoppers”.
- The new PCSP Recognition Awards held in May 2019 gave an opportunity for PCSPs to submit an entry for the “Award for contribution to embedding a culture of lawfulness”. In total four (4) PCSPs submitted an entry in this category, two (2) were shortlisted with Derry and Strabane winning the award for their production of the short film “Recruited”.
- PCSP specific initiatives, delivered over this period, which focused on building community confidence in the rule of law and embedding a culture of lawfulness have included:
 - Following the success of the production of “Recruited” by Derry and Strabane PCSP during the 2017-18 implementation year, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC) PCSP hosted an evening for teachers and students from Brownlow College in Craigavon IMAXX where they ran the “Recruited” film, followed by a number of the Fearless.Org adverts and talked to the students about how to make use of this service. This followed with a Q and A panel including Youth Justice Agency and PSNI and 91% of the students stated the event had discouraged them from becoming involved in criminality or with paramilitaries.
 - Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP delivered ten (10) performances of “Recruited” to 1000 participants. As a result 87% agreed or strongly agreed that the performance made them more aware of the risks of taking alcohol or drugs; and 91% agreed or strongly agreed that after watching the show they were more likely to think about the consequences of their decisions/actions.
 - Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP also delivered thirty-seven (37) workshops with young people in schools on Drug and Substance misuse. Over 900 people

engaged and as a result 100% of participants are more aware of the impact of drug misuse and dealing.

- Ards and North Down PCSP have been delivering a number of projects through a small grants programme to “embed a culture of lawfulness”. To date ten (10) programmes, with over 3000 participants have resulted in 100% increased confidence/knowledge in the rule of law.
- Belfast PCSP and DPCSPs issued a number of small grants for projects to increase confidence in policing. Forty-five (45) programmes were delivered with participants indicating their confidence in police increased by between 78% and 100% as a result.
- Fermanagh and Omagh PCSP held five (5) Participatory Budgeting events. The groups were asked to deliver programmes to support community and police engagement and where relevant Fresh Start principles will be integrated. 600 people attended across the five (5) events and voted for programmes in their own communities. Of those surveyed at the event, an average of 43% agreed or strongly agreed they were confident in the ability of the police to tackle crime in their area. Whilst this might seem low, it should be noted the communities where the events were held would have extremely low confidence in police. Therefore, it is hoped by running these events a rise in confidence will occur.

UPCOMING

- Belfast PCSP are in the planning stages of a project entitled “Conversation Piece”. This project will seek to engage young people across the city in conversations about confidence in policing and embedding a culture of lawfulness. This project will continue into the 2020/21 financial year when an evaluation will take place to consider further work in this area.

A7

“The designated organisations should also ensure that their representatives are sufficiently senior and committed to building effective partnerships”.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- During 2019, the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJINI) carried out a follow up review on the effectiveness of PCSPs. It identified one (1) strategic and one (1)

operational recommendation relating to the involvement of designated organisations as follows:

- The Designated organisations of the PCSPs should increase recognition of the role of PCSPs and delivery of shared positive outcomes in their corporate planning (strategic); and
 - The representatives of the designated organisations attending the PCSPs should have direction from their organisation and internal lines of reporting within their organisation to report on achievement through the PCSP (operational).
- The Joint Committee has accepted both recommendations. In November 2019, the Joint Committee met with Chief Executives and Senior Officials from the designated organisations to discuss the recommendations and seek their collaboration going forward. In addition, DoJ and Board officials have commenced one to one meetings with Chief Executives of the designated organisations to further discuss their role on the PCSPs.
 - Support Hubs, also known as Concern Hubs have provided an excellent and meaningful example of collaborative multi-agency working with most of the PSCP designated organisations participating to provide early intervention and support for individuals and families.
 - Support Hubs are now fully operational in all PCSP areas except Belfast where there are ongoing discussions between the PSNI and the PCSP to establish a Hub.
 - The initial observations support the fact that once vulnerable persons are being supported in a collaborative manner via the Support Hub, calls for service may well increase in the short term and then as their vulnerabilities are addressed/supported, calls for service decrease. The following highlights the work and success of Derry and Strabane and Antrim and Newtownabbey Support Hubs up to March 2020:
 - **Derry and Strabane Support Hub**
The Multi-Agency Support Hub (MASH) for Derry and Strabane was established to provide the most vulnerable in the community with support. This includes young

people susceptible to paramilitary attack/influence or organised crime gang influence; repeat victims of ASB or hate crime; and older people subject to repeat incidents etc. Initially the partners, with Council were PSNI; Youth Justice Agency (YJA); NIHE; Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCCT); and Education Authority NI. It now also includes Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS); Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS); Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI); A and E; Mental Health; Child Safeguarding; and Primary Care Hubs.

From its establishment the Support Hub has held thirty-five (35) meetings, dealt with 129 of the most vulnerable individuals in the community, delivered 553 PSNI actions, 1084 partner actions and has signposted to other services on 182 occasions. The youngest person managed through the Hub was aged eight (8) with the eldest referral being eight-three (83).

Key impacts include:

- Individuals managed for +6 months have shown a 17.5% reduction in incidents over a twelve (12) month period.
- Repeat missing persons managed for +6 months have shown a 37% reduction in missing person reports over a twelve (12) month period.
- Estimated resource saving of £616,500/annum in dealing with missing persons.

Some service users' feedback includes:

- *With Police and my mental health workers speaking to each other they all understand how each other can help me to get well.*
- *I know things would be a lot worse for me now if I had not been on the (Support) Hub.*
- *Through the work of the PSNI and the Support Hub I now manage my addictions and my family has been given a second chance.*

○ **Antrim and Newtownabbey Support Hub**

Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub (MASH) deals with small numbers of people, but they are some of the most vulnerable in the Borough so

there are many anecdotal reports and quotes from individuals about how the Hub has saved their life or has helped them in some way. Eighty-two (82) ‘clients’ referred to Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub since its inception in July 2017 with seventy-one (71) ‘clients’ being ‘accepted’ onto the Hub.

Category	Number of ‘Clients’	Percentage
ACTIVE	14	20%
REVIEW	11	15%
REMOVED WITH A ‘SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME’	27	38%
REMOVED CONSENT	7	10%
REMOVED FOR DISENGAGEMENT	6	8%
DECEASED	4	6%
MOVED OUT OF Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	2	3%
	71	100%

PSNI are reporting a 58% reduction in calls for service in the Antrim and Newtownabbey area, including concern for safety, high risk and substance misuse. Police have quoted “*The reduction highlights the need for collaborative working and signposting persons to more appropriate services that in turn reduce their vulnerability. The PSNI are fundamentally about Keeping People Safe and the Support Hub plays a significant role in helping the service reach out to those in the local community*”.

NIAS are also reporting significant reductions in calls for service but this has focused on the individuals as opposed to all calls for service. The table below shows some of the highest frequency caller statistics in the year before and after consenting to the Multi-Agency Support Hub.

Calls – Year before MASH consent	Calls – Year after MASH consent	Percentage change
104	18	-83%
109	0	-100%
125	37	-70%

NIAS have quoted *“The Support Hub provides a readymade network of agencies who have the ability to make a difference. Through collaborative working in the Hub, NIAS have been able to connect with key partners on behalf of clients and work together to establish a care pathway which provides tailored support for vulnerable individuals”*

Antrim and Newtownabbey Multi-Agency Support Hub currently has eleven (11) member organisations¹³.

In July 2019, DoJ Permanent Secretary, Peter May and DfC Permanent Secretary, Tracey Meharg, attended the Antrim and Newtownabbey Support Hub meeting, and took part in a ‘Mock Support Hub’ activity. As a result of the visit, Jobs and Benefits Office are keen to be involved with Antrim and Newtownabbey Support Hub, and are currently in the process of becoming a Member Organisation.

UPCOMING

- The Joint Committee will continue to work with designated organisations to ensure their effective role on each PCSP. As part of this, the Joint Committee will seek to ensure that each organisation’s Corporate Plan includes their participation on the PCSP and as such, sufficiently senior ‘decision makers’ represent their organisations on the PCSP.

A8

“The Executive and the PSNI, in conjunction with the Policing Board, should review their protocols for engaging with representatives of paramilitary groups. This change in approach should also apply to other public and community bodies and public representatives”.

¹³ Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT); Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Antrim and Newtownabbey PCSP; Community Safety Partnership; PSNI; NIHE; NIAS; EANI; YJA; PBNI; and NIFRS

PROGRESS TO DATE

- Discussed with the Chief Constable at a meeting with all Government Departments (27 September 2016).
- At a meeting of the TPPT in June 2018, which the Board attended, it was agreed that appointing an independent expert to draft protocols was not an appropriate step. Instead, focus should be on ensuring the dialogue on engagement in the context of transition should be broadened, and the next steps to be considered by all relevant Departments and statutory agencies should be:
 - Unpack the complexity of the recommendation;
 - No official protocols exist regarding engagement as implied in the recommendation, however, there is a need to seek confirmation from all relevant Departments and agencies that protocols are not currently in place;
 - A need for the B4 participatory design phase to seek further community views, and what an appropriate way forward would look like in a neighbourhood context; and
 - A need to understand the underlying issues for statutory agencies that may be perceived to be engaging with representatives of paramilitary groups. This will involve engagement across a number of statutory agencies, and should include a discussion on funding.
- Due to the complexity of this issue and the limited progress to date, at a meeting with the IRC in February 2019, the Board delegation made the suggestion that it may be better to regard A8 as a principle rather than a protocol as it suggests a set of rules.

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DOCUMENT TITLE

**Northern Ireland Policing Board
Committee Review on Tackling Paramilitary Activity,
Criminality and Organised Crime**

ONLINE FORMAT

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