



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Chief Constable's Accountability Report

to Northern Ireland
Policing Board

Report Date:

Covering Period of July up to
22 August 2022

Presented at Policing Board

Meeting:

01 September 2022



**we care
we listen
we act**

Contents

Foreword	2
Finance	4
Our Performance	5
Outcome One: We Have a Safe Community	10
Outcome Two: We Have Confidence in Policing	14
Outcome Three: We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities	17
Our People, Your Service	20
Forward Look	23

Foreword



Summer months are always a busy time for policing, none more so than July and August, during which we saw safe and successful policing operations at a number of key annual events. Over the 12th of July period alone, approximately 2,500 police officers and staff working with local communities and partners facilitated almost 600 parades in what was one of the safest and most peaceful in recent memory. Some other key events included the Belsonic music festival, Féile an Phobail and Mela Festival. For the first time, Northern Ireland were also hosts of the annual UK and Ireland LGBT+ Policing Conference, an event that celebrated 'empowering partnerships'.

Despite limited disorder at the majority of these important community events, some were sadly overshadowed by the tragic loss of life at the Larne

bonfire and evidence of continued sectarian behaviour that unfortunately remains an ongoing and disturbing feature across Northern Ireland communities. My personal thanks go to partners who supported the numerous events and to officers and staff who worked long hours, often in very challenging conditions.

Since my last report to the Board on 7 July, we have seen the sad passing of former First Minister, Lord Trimble and I want to take the opportunity to extend our sincere condolences to the Trimble family.

A warm welcome is extended to newly appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara. During our first meeting, I took the opportunity to raise my growing concern regarding the bleak financial position and lack of clarity on funding for the Police Service. I have written to the Permanent Secretary for the Department of Justice and the Chair of the Board and remain of the firm belief that this diminution of budget will result in further difficult decisions about what we do and how we deliver policing to communities across Northern Ireland as we will inevitably see increased delays in services and changes to our operating model.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

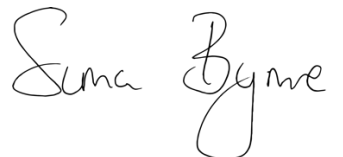
Regrettably, there has been continued media attention regarding officer misconduct. I have no doubt, the public and the Board were deeply disappointed and uncomfortable upon hearing these reports, as it again undermines the great work that is delivered every day and night across the Police Service. As criminal and or misconduct investigations remain ongoing and notwithstanding the impact on families involved, the wider public rightly expect the very highest standards from us, and the entire Police Service, led by the Service Executive Team, remain steadfastly committed to proactively tackling any form of misconduct or criminal behaviour detected within the organisation. We look forward to sharing the finer detail of the work of our Professional Standards Department at our planned meeting with the Board on 22 September.

Further contained within the report, are highlights from Crime Department who continue to tackle serious, organised and paramilitary crime and activity and notably their work to tackle the growing concern around drug related deaths, an issue I have highlighted with key partners as an emergent and potentially significant public health matter. You will also read updates on some of our critical operational challenges such as training and firearms licensing within our Operational Support Department.

As we look towards the Autumn, our thoughts go to the Donohoe family, who will be preparing for the Inquest into Noah's death. We also await the

outcome of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill, 2nd reading, in the House of Lords on 13 September - this will assist us in planning for the associated cost and resource implications for policing.

Our Strategic priorities have now been agreed and they will set the strategic direction for the Police Service. This report contains our 'Plan on a Page', which outlines how we intend to deliver and measure our performance against them. This, alongside our constantly improving security statistics, our renewed focus on leadership at every level and our fresh approach to neighbourhood policing, reflects that we have much to be proud of, as we strive to consistently demonstrate our values and reflect our aspirations to deliver a truly professional service to all communities of Northern Ireland.



Simon Byrne

Chief Constable
Police Service of Northern Ireland



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Finance Update

The Police Service continues to face significant financial challenges in the current year. As at the end of July, our projected full year pressure has risen to £34m. This reflects recent developments not anticipated in our Resource Plan, that were based on a range of assumed funding streams and a programme of planned reductions. This includes the likelihood of an average 5% pay award and ever increasing utility costs. These two issues alone make up £22m of the forecast financial gap.

We are increasingly concerned about the financial gap, the lack of clarity on budgets and the shortening timeframe to take what limited mitigating actions are available. Whilst this is an issue shared by many public services, the Police Service asked the Department for direction as practical steps will need to be taken sooner rather than later.

The prospect of going into next year in a similar or worsening position is alarming and this will undoubtedly have a direct impact on headcount and services to communities.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Our Performance

Force Management Statement (FMS) - Strategic Planning Process 2022/23

As outlined in previous updates, FMS is an extensive self-assessment of our Service with the intention of developing a better understanding of the capacity to respond to the current and future demand. This will assist us in understanding our gaps and drive our future strategic planning and finance allocation. This is an extensive piece of work and our data collection started in June. An initial, high-level draft is anticipated by December.

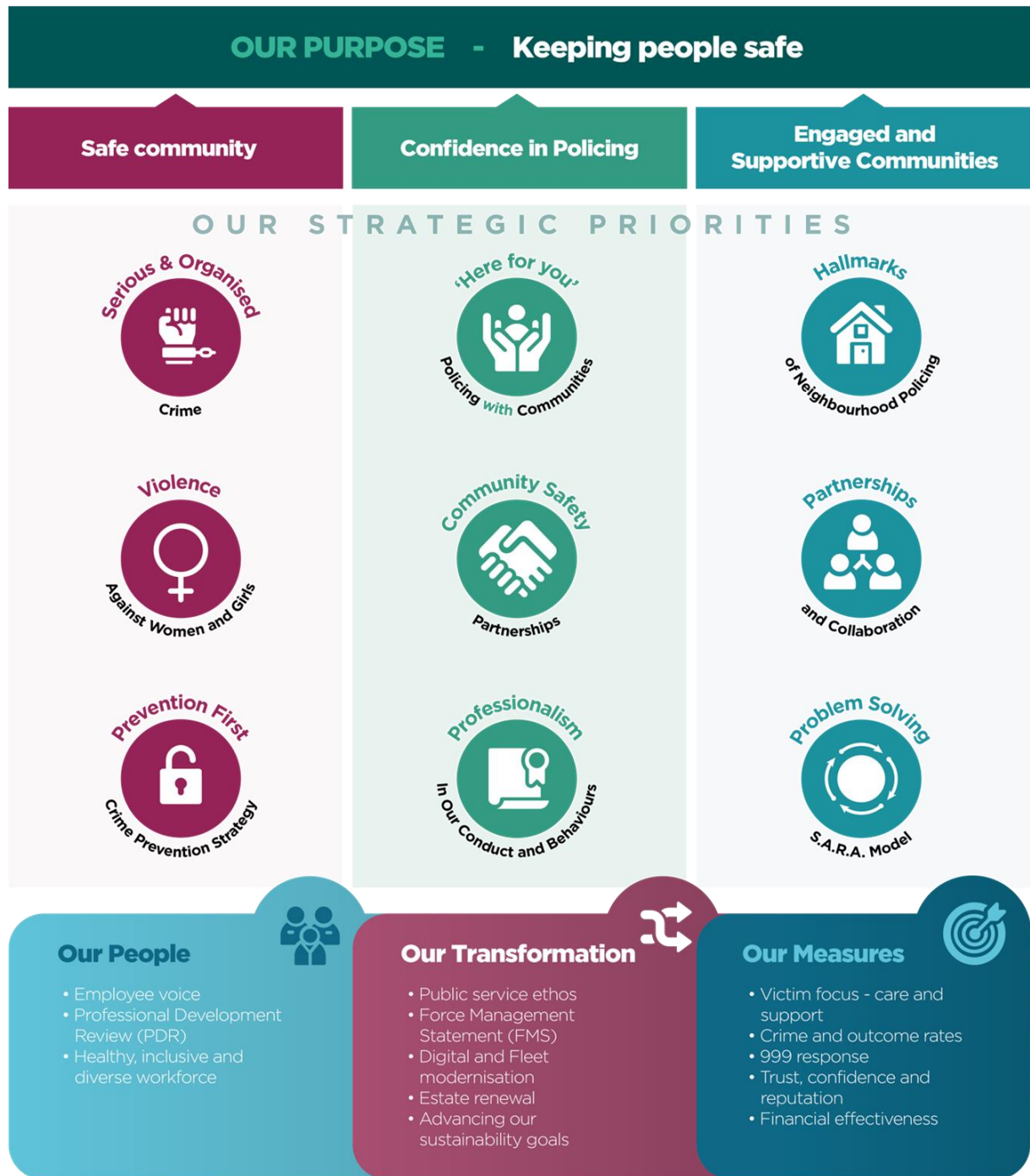
Whilst the FMS will help inform our future medium to longer term financial planning, we have progressed our plans for this year in the context of our current contingency finance budget and have consolidated the Police Service strategic priorities for 2022/23 into a single, easily-read, 'Plan on a Page' document.

Reflecting the priorities of both the Northern Ireland Policing Plan (2020-25), as well as the Police Service Modernisation Plan (Horizon 2025), it sets out our ambitions in this current year but in the context of an overarching strategic approach. This is assessed as an effective way of communicating with the public and our people what we, as a Police Service will be focusing on for the year ahead.

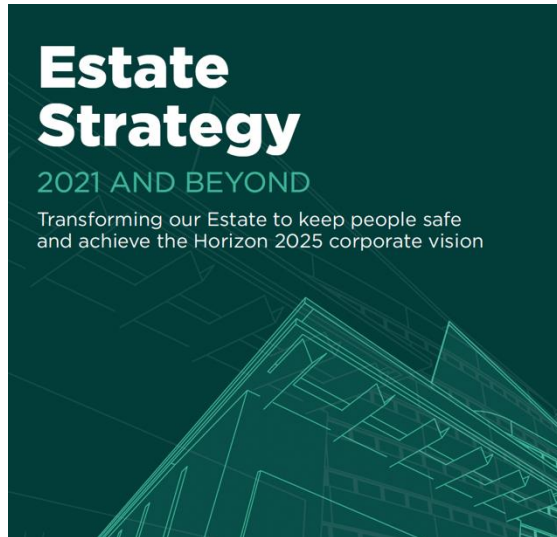


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of Northern Ireland

Plan on a Page 2022/23



Estate Strategy implementation and Capital Development Update



Wider strategic considerations continue to be explored in order to rationalise and optimise the Police estate. Through a combination of relocation, asset disposal and acquisition of more suitable accommodation, there continues to be an opportunity to reduce the estate size and create more efficient and sustainable assets.

Despite the current financial constraints on the capital resource budget for 2022/23 and the investment necessary to support implementation of the Estate Strategy over the longer term, significant work has been conducted to prepare and plan for future developments. This includes station perimeter improvement designs, strategic asset management planning and progress on the development of some key business cases.

Concept drawings have now been drafted for the proposed new Police Museum, with concept and a planning application due to be submitted in September 2022, and an anticipated build in 2025.

Corporate Information Branch

We are pleased to report improvements in our Corporate Information Branch. Chiefly due to resourcing challenges, in October 2021 an Action Plan was initiated following challenges in meeting our obligations to respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection requests within statutory timescales.

Currently the Police Service has met and exceeded its action plan targets to date. In August this equated to a compliance rate of 90% for Freedom of Information requests and 96% for Data Protection requests. Work is ongoing to implement six agreed strategic recommendations aimed at ensuring longer term resilience within this area of work.



Firearms Licensing

The Chief Constable is statutorily obliged to deliver a firearms licensing service. The Firearms Branch regulates over 57,000 Firearm Certificate (FAC) holders and over 180 firearms businesses across Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland has approximately four and a half times as many FAC holders per head of population as England and Wales.

Previously the struggle to meet demand had been assessed as manageable. However, just as FEB was facing its highest 5-year demand cycle, the COVID health pandemic reduced staff capacity by up to a quarter. In response to this, a restructuring of resources and the development of streamlined processes has resulted in increased levels of productivity, one that now meets pre-pandemic demand. However, demand is growing and it is now approximately 23% higher than pre-pandemic levels and is outstripping any productivity improvements.

FEB is currently reviewing options to address this through external engagement with partners to identify learning and good practice, as they seek to develop and deliver an Action Plan by October 2022.

Firearms Training Licence - College of Policing

Following a firearms training licence inspection by the College of Policing (CoP), a number of issues were raised by the inspection team and can be categorised into the following broad headings: common national standards; staffing levels; training material and records.

As a result, in August, we hosted representatives from the College of Policing and demonstrated the measures that are in place to address the matters raised. These range from new leadership in all areas overseeing this work and suitable interim measures to mitigate the risks, for example a review of training, accreditation and records management. The Board will be kept fully updated as we continue to engage with the College of Policing.

Mandatory Training

Firearms Training

Firearms training and its delivery is governed under the Firearms and Explosives Strategic Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland holds a unique position within policing in the United Kingdom, in that it is the only routinely armed Police Service. A review of business processes is currently being conducted to ensure the



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

maximum delivery and uptake of allocated courses.

Each of our officers undergoes an initial intensive ten day firearms training programme whilst at the Police College and regardless of rank, each is required to undergo additional refresher training throughout their service. Currently, 968 officers are overdue to complete their refresher training. In the majority of these cases this training is overdue by less than six months. Of the overall figure, training can be progressed with approximately half of this figure and the remainder are overdue for a variety of reasons, for example but not limited to: maternity, duty adjustments, or sickness.

The backlog of training relating to these officers is predominantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and training is now being prioritised and risk assessed according to role and area of work. Notably, any officer who is not trained, competent and capable will not be deployed in a specialist firearms role.

Driver Training

The College of Policing Basic Police Driver qualification has been in place on a temporary basis within Local Policing since April 2020 to address a shortage of standard drivers and ensure continued service delivery. This basic category allows officers to drive police vehicles operationally, but not for response purposes, and

the provision has been regularly reviewed. This position has predominantly resulted from the social distancing restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Traffic and Driver Training Unit are updating a timeframe for delivery of the required standard driving courses in line with the planned uplift of driving instructors and the priority remains with Response Teams for course allocation, to address the greatest areas of need and a working group continues to meet to monitor for compliance purposes.



Outcome 1

We Have a Safe Community

Parades and Bonfire Events

As Pandemic related restrictions have eased, this year has seen a return to the normal tempo of parades and events across Northern Ireland. Throughout the summer our officers engaged positively with local communities, partner agencies and parade organisers to maintain public safety at a wide range of events.

This 12th of July saw over 2,500 police officers and staff working with local communities to facilitate almost 600 parades in what was one of the safest and most peaceful in recent memory. There were approximately 250 bonfires on the 11th Night and 57 investigations are ongoing into potential offences. Many of these incidents relate to the theft and destruction of political material, flags, hate slogans and effigies on bonfires.

The Féile an Phobail ran from 4-14 August, with a significant number of events throughout the City. Despite some incidents that have resulted in investigation, overall, this too, was a successful event.

On 13 August the annual Apprentice Boys of Derry parade took place, commemorating the 333rd Anniversary of the Relief of Londonderry. One band member was the victim of a minor assault in the course of the main parade in Derry/Londonderry and there were two instances of disorder on trains, resulting in five arrests. Amongst other parades, we have also seen the return of large scale entertainment events, such as the Belsonic series of concerts and the Mela Festival that will run until 28 August.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Security Situation

Whilst the Northern Ireland related Terrorism (NIRT) threat level remains *SUBSTANTIAL: an attack is likely*, there has been a continued decline in the number of NIRT attacks and attempted attacks in Northern Ireland since 2009. This reflects the significant effort of police and partners in tackling the threat.

	Paramilitary	Paramilitary	Security Related Incidents						
	Style Shootings	Style Assaults						Persons	Persons
	Total	Total	Shooting Incidents	Bombing Incidents	Bombings: Devices Used	Incendiarie: Incidents	Incendiarie: Devices Used	Arrested	Charged
<i>Aug-21</i>	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	7	0
<i>Sep-21</i>	2	5	3	0	0	0	0	14	5
<i>Oct-21</i>	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	9	1
<i>Nov-21</i>	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	20	4
<i>Dec-21</i>	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	3
<i>Jan-22</i>	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	4	0
<i>Feb-22</i>	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	5	0
<i>Mar-22</i>	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	16	1
<i>Apr-22</i>	1	2	5	1	1	0	0	16	1
<i>May-22</i>	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	8	0
<i>Jun-22</i>	1	5	4	0	0	0	0	13	2
<i>Jul-22</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
TOTAL	10	31	26	4	4	0	0	120	17



Serious Crime



July and August have sadly been marked with a number of very tragic murder enquiries.

- Victor Hamilton received a fatal stab wound on 26 July in Ballymena. Detectives have charged three men from the Portadown area with this murder and are actively seeking a fourth suspect.
- Detectives from the Major Investigation Teams also led a high risk missing person investigation into the disappearance of Damien Heagney who was last seen in December 2021. A murder investigation was launched and arrest has been made to date. Both investigations remain ongoing.

Separately, Detectives continue to work closely with the Crown Solicitors Office and Coroners

Office following the death of Noah Donohoe. They are working at pace to facilitate the Inquest process that is scheduled for 28 November 2022.

Drug Related Deaths

The most recently published drugs death data (NISRA 2022), reports that during the calendar year of 2020, 218 drug related deaths were registered within Northern Ireland. This figure is the highest on record to date. In the context of the UK, Northern Ireland was second to Scotland in terms of the highest rate of drug related deaths (DRD) in 2020, with more than twice as many deaths per 100,000 than England and Wales. This is a concern for policing and we have written to key partners, raising this as a potentially emerging risk.

The police have continued to tackle the illicit supply and misuse of controlled drugs with Operation Dealbreaker yielding record seizures. However, an enforcement approach alone is unlikely to lead to long term positive outcomes. Delivering a whole-system approach through partnership working is key to achieving sustainable impact in tackling the harm that drug criminality causes in communities. We are continuing to work through a range of partnerships, to maximise impact in order to protect the public.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland remain active members of the Organised Crime Task Force, representatives of which, are actively



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

engaged with the Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drugs Alliance (NIADA) 'Drugs Related Deaths Task Force', the purpose of which is to develop a multi-agency response to the issue. This work has included a visit to Blackpool to examine their multi-disciplinary public health protocols for drug related deaths and non-fatal overdoses.



Outcome 2:

We Have confidence in Policing

Operation Pangea: Organised Crime Task Force

In July, officers from our Organised Crime Unit participated in Operation Pangea, an annual international event that is aimed at combating the global trafficking of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, marketed and sold online. Operation Pangea also raises public awareness of the risks associated with buying medicines from unregulated websites. We have worked in conjunction with our colleagues in UKBF and the Medicines Regulatory Group, with the aim of intercepting pharmaceuticals travelling within the postal system. During a 'week of action', officers from the Organised Crime Unit and Local Policing carried out 15 searches and arrested 10 people. In total over 240,000 pills were seized, with an estimated street value of £250,000.



Image showing results of Operation Pangea

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) continue to tackle the criminality and activity of paramilitary groups. The following are some examples of the work of the PCTF in this period:

- In July, three men pleaded guilty at Laganside Crown Court to various drug supply offences. This was a result of an investigation by the PCTF of drugs criminality linked to the East Belfast UVF.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

- In July, officers from the PCTF recovered an amount of cash and drugs following proactive searches at two residential properties in the Rathcoole area of Newtownabbey. This is linked to the South East Antrim UDA.
- In July, Lagside Court awarded the Police Service the forfeiture of jewellery worth £6,148. Police seized these items as part of an investigation into West Belfast UDA, following the search of residential premises in Belfast City centre in 2021.

Operation Dealbreaker

The Police Service of Northern Ireland remain committed to tackling the harm caused by drugs in communities.



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- During July, a 51 year old man was arrested at Belfast International Airport on suspicion of drugs offences, as a result of having two suitcases containing herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of £138,000 in his possession. He was subsequently charged to appear before Coleraine Magistrate's Court for the offences of Possession of Class B Controlled Drugs and Possession of Class B Controlled Drugs with Intent to Supply.
- During July, Officers from Organised Crime Unit arrested four men following the seizure of suspected Class B Drugs with an estimated street value of £275,000 and Class A Drugs with an estimated street value of £2,000. The drugs were located during searches of two vehicles and four properties in Belfast and Lurgan. Cash and other items were also seized during the searches. Two of the males were subsequently charged to appear in Court in relation to numerous drug related offences.





Some of the cash and suspected drugs seized in Belfast

- During July, following a stop and search by police, a quantity of suspected Class A and B Drugs were seized. The male was arrested for numerous drugs offences. Officers from Organised Crime Unit further searched a property in the Belfast area, resulting in the seizure of approximately 5.35kgs of suspected Methamphetamine and 1kg of suspected Cocaine. The seized drugs were found to have an estimated street value in excess of £600,000. The male was charged in relation to various drugs related offences.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)

Many MSHT offenders operate in plain sight and often victims have numerous encounters with police during the time they were being exploited. As a result, the Police Service has developed a Mobile App 'Unseen' and an Aide Memoire that

will support local officers to detect MSHT offences at an early stage, through the application of a victim-centred approach.

Case example:

On 20 July a man, was sentenced to five years in prison for trafficking 12 young local women throughout Northern Ireland for the purpose of sexual exploitation.



Outcome 3:

We Have Engaged and Supportive Communities

Key Events and Campaigns

Safe Place Agreement



In August, officers from the Police Services' Public Protection Branch, signed the Safe Place Agreement with ONUS, to reaffirm our commitment to support the Safe Place pledge to never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic abuse. The initiative is supported by a wide range of organisations and businesses. The Safe Place campaign asks businesses and organisations to display the Safe Place logo and provide confidential signposting information to victims of domestic abuse or concerned members

of the public, directing them to the wide range of support services available. The Police Service have been involved with ONUS since the launch of their Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence in 2010. We have been a Safe Place Partner since 2014, and have received a platinum award every year since.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Celebrating Foyle Maritime Festival

The award-winning Foyle Maritime Festival took place in July and with local people and visitors from far and wide. The Police Service contributed by providing a mobile police station, mobile foot patrols and free bike marking sessions.



Officers at Foyle Maritime Festival

Operation Relentless

Launched in July, Operation Relentless aims our response and resources at locating individuals who are wanted on bench warrant, for arrest or interview, to better protect the wider community through effective offender management.

Summer Safety

The 2022 Summer Safety campaign has been running across social media throughout July and August. The objective of online activity was to inform and educate the public on a range of crime

prevention messages relevant to the summertime. With the relaxation of rules around Covid-19 restrictions and the increase in events and travel, the campaign messaging was to encourage the public to be mindful of keeping their home secure as well as remembering to be safe when at the beach, caravan and within the local community in general. To engage the audience further, a series of videos were used to feature helpful tips on the various elements of security that communities could consider within the home, garden, car and caravans.

The campaign also helped to inform education platforms about general ASB and personal safety around exam results days.

Campaign Social Media Performance

1st July - 19th August

Facebook

Reach	337,444
Impressions	341,826
Engagements	11,263

Instagram

Reach	37,316
Impressions	39,610
Engagements	354

Twitter

Reach	92,012
Engagements	1,316



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Top performing posts included visiting beaches, holiday scams, child sexual exploitation, child internet safety and protecting your home and property.

World Police and Fire Games

Following the spectacular opening ceremony in Stadion Feyenoord, Rotterdam, the World Police and Fire Games tournament commenced. One of the highlights was a gruelling three days of rugby in temperatures soaring to 32 degrees, resulting in the team succeeding in qualifying for the semi-finals. They beat North Vancouver Fire Service 26-5, leading to a final match against Pompiers de Paris resulting in silver medals for the Police Service of Northern Ireland



Our People, Your Service

Professional Standards

The Police Service recognises professional standards of police officers and staff is a concerning and emotive issue for the Board and the public. Since the last Board meeting on 7 July we can report the following:

There have been eight new faculty investigations reported in July 2022, five of which fit into the categories:

- Assault
- Data Breach
- Drunk-in charge
- Domestic
- Sexual Offences

With regard to duty adjustments:

- 44 officers are currently suspended
- 66 repositioned
- There were no new suspension in July

In August to date, two Special Case Hearings have been heard by the Chief Constable. In both cases the outcome was a final written warning.

We look forward to providing further detail to the Board on 22 September.

Leadership Faculty

A new Management, Leadership & Organisational Development Faculty has been established within the Police Service's People and Organisational Development Department (POD). The Faculty is focused on enhancing the quality and timeliness of management and leadership training and building a culture where leaders at all levels are supported to manage their own development.

Work has already commenced on developing a new talent management strategy that will seek to ensure that the Police Service of



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland can attract, develop and retain high performing, motivated and inspirational officers and staff.

Cultural Audit

The People Strategy Action Plan sets out our ambition to create a workplace culture where colleagues are engaged, included and empowered to deliver high quality professional services with and for the communities we serve. Under the principles of 'Being Representative and Inclusive' and 'Valuing Health and Wellbeing' we have committed to delivering a cultural audit and series of pulse surveys.

Organisational leads have been appointed to work in conjunction with People & Culture delivery groups and the overall objectives will be:

- To identify key areas for further exploration.
- To establish an external benchmark against other public sector / service delivery organisations.
- To provide data to inform future line manager development, team engagement and performance initiatives through the use of survey information and action planning for managers.
- To provide a baseline of current workplace culture and colleague engagement levels within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.
- To provide an 'Employee Voice' evidence base for future delivery of the People Strategy action plans.
- To understand the current culture so that future programmes of work can build on our strengths and ensure areas requiring improvement are addressed.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

Annual Pride and UK and Ireland LGBT+ Policing Conference



The Police Service of Northern Ireland was delighted to host, for the first time, this year's annual UK and Ireland LGBT+ Policing Conference. The event was centred on the theme of 'Empowering Partnerships' and sought to inspire and generate reflection. It was an important opportunity for policing colleagues and partners from across the UK and Ireland to share ideas and perspectives and to generate learning on a range of topics such as diversity in policing, community engagement and community cohesion.



Forward Look

National Police Memorial Day and Celebration of 100 Years of Policing

On Saturday, 24 September, the Police Service of Northern Ireland is hosting an event at the Police College to Celebrate 100 Years of Policing in Northern Ireland. The Chief Constable will be joined by the extended police family, colleagues and partners to recognise this very significant milestone. A programme of speakers, music, and outdoor displays will mark the occasion.



On Sunday 25 September, Northern Ireland will host the National Police Memorial Day. This is an important date in the policing calendar where we will join with colleagues from across the United Kingdom to remember police officers who have

been killed or died on duty and to recognise the dedication to duty and courage displayed by all police officers.

Problem Solving Awards



Effective problem solving involves understanding the root causes of a problem and addressing them. To highlight and embed our problem solving approach in policing, applications are open for the Police Service of Northern Ireland Problem Solving Awards in partnership with the Northern Ireland Policing Board. These awards aim to recognise and celebrate effective problem-oriented crime prevention and problem solving projects within the organisation.



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

The awards are open to all officers and staff across four categories:

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Initiatives involving a partner agency
- Investigations led by PIP trained investigators of Level 1 or above
- Business Support and Volunteers – led by business support within the police.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 31 August, with the overall winner having the opportunity to attend the National Problem Solving Conference and Tilley Awards next year.

Violence Against Women and Girls - Action Plan Launch

Save the date - The Police Service will be joined by key partners at the formal launch event of our Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan on the morning of 27 September in the Lyric Theatre.

Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) Awards

We are pleased and proud to have been shortlisted for the CIPD Northern Ireland (announced 6 October) and CIPD National (announced 22 September) 'Best Resourcing Initiative' Awards.

This relates to our 2021 Student Officer Recruitment Campaign which was also shortlisted for the Digital DNA Northern Ireland award for 'Best Marketing of the Year'.



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