



Agenda Item 5

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>21 March 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>COSLA, Edinburgh</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Chief Constable's Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Jo Farrell Chief Constable</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Noting</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Appendix A – Chief Constable's Report March 2024</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

This report is submitted as a Standing Agenda Item.

**1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 The attached Chief Constable's Report provides the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

**2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC**

2.1 There are no further details on this report.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report. Any financial implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report. Any personnel implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report. Any legal implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Given the nature of the report there are reputational implications however all reputational implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct social implications in this report. Any social implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

8.1 Given the nature of the report there is potential community impact implications however community impact relating to subjects referenced have been fully considered at the time.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications in this report. Any equalities implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environment implications in this report. Any environment Implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to note the information contained in this report.

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**POLICE  
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

**POILEAS ALBA**

# Chief Constable's Report

## March 2024

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# **Chief Constable's Report March 2024**

## **Overview**

I want to reaffirm policing's apology to the family of Emma Caldwell following the conviction of Iain Packer at the end of February.

Emma Caldwell, her family, and many other victims, were let down by policing in 2005. I am sorry.

I am grateful that I was able to meet Emma's family and for the opportunity to offer that apology directly and to listen to their perspective and experience and I pay tribute to their dignity and strength in the years since her death.

It is important that Emma's family and the public get answers to the many questions they have.

On Thursday, March 7, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs set out that there will be an independent judge-led statutory Public Inquiry to understand what went wrong, to ensure lessons are learned for the future and to provide answers to the victims and survivors involved.

The Lord Advocate has indicated she is taking advice on instructing a police service from outside Scotland to look further at allegations against officers.

Policing in Scotland has reflected and learned from the initial investigation and subsequent re-investigation.

Significant changes have been made in recent years to improve organisational culture and our response, particularly in respect of investigative structures, victim care and processes to these types of crimes.

Our Violence against Women and Girls Strategy outlines our absolute commitment to tackling the violence and abuse that disproportionately affects women and girls.

We now await confirmation of the details of the Public Inquiry. I reiterate my support for the Inquiry and undertake unconditionally that Police Scotland will engage fully

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with that process. We will fully assist any further steps instructed by the Lord Advocate.

Organisational learning never ends and I am utterly committed to relentlessly improving how Police Scotland respond to and serve the public, and to ensuring officers and staff uphold our values and help to deliver justice for victims.

We will enter the new financial and reporting year with a refreshed leadership team, having appointed new Deputies and with plans for recruitment for Assistant Chief Constables. I will ensure the Force Executive shares and delivers on a change agenda for policing that puts our communities at the heart of everything we do.

My first Annual Police Plan as Police Scotland's Chief Constable continues to place trust, confidence and performance at the top of our agenda and reflects the priorities and commitments I have directed for the service in the year ahead.

Since taking command, I've been clear my operational focus is in three areas - first, addressing threat, harm, and risk; second, prevention, problem solving and proactivity; and third, looking after the wellbeing of officers and staff so they can deliver for the public.

This report shines a light on some examples of how Police Scotland is delivering for the public across the first two areas - securing important court outcomes following our response to murders and attempted murders in the west of Scotland; the latest sentence as part of a major public protection investigation into the sexual abuse of young and vulnerable people in Edinburgh; an initiative to tackle housebreaking and motor theft in Forth Valley; and drug seizures, as well as the safeguarding of 22 vulnerable people and 16 arrests during a County Lines week of action.

I've also highlighted a preventative programme of equestrian training for young people in the east end of Glasgow which was designed and arranged by a Sergeant based in the city.

The best of Scottish policing, as well as heroic acts by members of the public, was also celebrated at our Bravery and Excellence Awards, held at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan, on Friday, 23 February.

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It is inspiring to hear from officers who put themselves in harm's way to protect the public and, at the same time, energising to reflect on the support communities provide to policing.

The awards, and the daily police work I see and hear about, underlines that our officers and staff are our greatest asset.

My third area of focus is my duty to nurture and support officers and staff, provide clear leadership and give them the training, skills and best modern technology to do their job.

I will continue to update the Authority on progress around Body Worn Video, which is an absolute priority for me, and which is outlined as a key milestone in my Annual Police Plan.

My report today also outlines significant progress on a programme to increase the number of Specially Trained Officers who are trained and equipped to carry Taser from 500 to 2,000, an important tactical option which can de-escalate situations and support public and officer safety.

Of course, to focus on these three areas we need a sustainable, fit for purpose service and the ability to better understand and explain how we can deliver for the public. This month we present two plans – my Annual Police Plan and the budget for policing – which will be important to ensure we progress a necessary second phase of police reform in 2024-25.

I share the Authority's commitment to producing and delivering balanced budgets for policing. There are positive indications that the 2023-24 budget will be delivered without the requirement of further contingency funding from the Scottish Government which policing had previously requested.

This has been achieved by significant focus right across the Service and driven by the Force Executive. It has been extremely challenging and has had operational implications.

We propose a balanced budget for policing for 2024-25 and progress on a second phase of police reform is crucial to live within funding while maintaining service and tackling threat, harm and risk.

Our funding allocation for 2024-25 allows us to restart police officer recruitment and next week I will welcome around 200 new recruits into Police Scotland.

The second phase of police reform will inform how we shape, train, enable, equip and deploy our greatest asset – our officers and staff – to best meet the evolving needs and complexities of our diverse communities at best value.

My Annual Police Plan outlines a new approach to performance reporting which will help us to better understand and explain our level of service, using hard data across key measures to also inform how we deploy resources and enable effective scrutiny and benchmarking to drive a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Our aim is to bring the frontline of Scottish policing to the strongest position possible within the resources available and that we tackle threat, harm and risk and move from being reactive to high volume but lower risk incidents towards greater prevention and problem solving.

In addition to the planning for a new operating model over next few years, we are beginning to consider longer term plans in terms of where policing will be by, for example, the end of this decade. This work is at a very early stage.

As I've been clear, ensuring Scotland continues to be a safe place to live and work is my commitment and priority as Chief Constable.

## **Change to prioritise frontline policing**

Policing must evolve to live within projected funding in future years and with an operating model that's fit for the challenges of today, and those coming down the line.



Some of our evolution will be in our structures and working practices. Everything we do will be about prioritising the frontline to deliver on prevention, problem solving and tackling areas of high harm.

As part of this, I want us to be the most digitally enabled police force in Europe, using technical capabilities to improve both our efficiency and effectiveness.

## **Policing in a Digital World**

Our Policing in a Digital World Programme will enable us to continue keeping Scotland's people, communities, businesses and assets safe in both the physical and digital world.

We presented progress under the programme earlier this month, outlining how we are enhancing our own capabilities and capacities as we respond to online child sexual abuse and exploitation and fraud.

Our first Policing in a Digital World Annual Report also outlined how we have forged strong partnerships with Cyber Scotland, the Cyber and Fraud Centre and agencies such as the Scottish Government's SC3 (Cyber Coordination Centre). This has included collaboration within academia – such as Abertay's Cyber Quarter and with the support of the Scottish Police Authority and particularly Caroline Stuart.

As part of the Policing in a Digital World programme and along with the Authority, we developed the Rights Based Pathway to define steps prior to introducing new capabilities. We have a positive duty to the public and victims of crime to embrace new technologies which help keep people safe in the digital world. The pathway ensures such capabilities are introduced with appropriate safeguards and in a way which adheres to our values and upholds human rights.

## **Enhanced CCTV survey - Aberdeen**

We are seeking views on a proposal to introduce the use of a CCTV system which can find missing or vulnerable people more quickly, trace suspects and significantly reduce the time officers spend on inquiries.

BriefCam makes use of enhanced search software to assist operators review large amounts of data over multiple streams quicker and can deliver more accurate description matches for further action.

The platform was jointly purchased in 2020 by Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council. It is used by the council to monitor traffic, journey time and footfall counting. It is not being used by Police Scotland currently.

Operators can enter and search for a specific description such as 'red jacket and black trousers' – the system will present all instances of the combination requested much more quickly to be included or eliminated from an investigation and help us to protect the public more effectively.

BriefCam does have biometric (facial) functionality, however this capability is disabled at an engineering/system level and cannot be accessed by Police Scotland or Aberdeen City Council. No Live Facial Recognition or Retrospective Facial Matching will be undertaken.

The proposal to use BriefCam has been progressed through the Rights Based Pathway which ensures robust processes are in place surrounding the introduction of technology in policing, focusing on human rights compliance, key ethical considerations and maximising stakeholder engagement and communication.

A survey has been opened for an initial seven weeks to gather public views and I encourage people to take part and share their views.

## **Taser uplift progress**

Police Scotland has a duty to protect life and ensure the safety of police officers and the public. Taser gives officers an additional tactical option to keep people safe. Following a rise in officer assaults, we made a commitment in 2021 to increase the number of Specially Trained Officers from 500 to 2,000 by 2024. Our final initial courses will take place next week, completing this uplift.

The presence of an officer with Taser can help de-escalate a situation – in 85 per cent of our Taser uses, which includes drawing and aiming, the Taser isn't actually discharged. Officers will attend, they'll use their communication skills and assess whether it's appropriate or not to use Taser. Officers undergo thorough training that is heavily focused on de-escalation.

Taser can be a useful tool in safely subduing violent and unpredictable people. Other more traditional methods such as baton strikes and direct contact can lead to injury to both the officer and to the person. Taser allows officers to keep that distance and avoid direct physical contact.

The nature of policing means officers often respond to incidents that are fast paced and dynamic, where information is limited and time is critical. The priority is removing the risk posed by that person to themselves or others.

Equipping our officers with this tactical option is a tangible example of Police Scotland investing in officer and public safety and I thank those who stepped forward for this additional training and everyone involved in implementing it.

## **VR/VER update**

During a window for applications for voluntary redundancy and voluntary early retirement, we received 756 notes of interest - 72 per cent of these were for voluntary early retirement and 28 per cent for voluntary redundancy.

Assessment of which posts the Service can release as part of the programme continues. We will notify those who have noted their interest and are in posts that

can be released, as well as those in posts which cannot be supported for release from 1 April onwards. We expect releases to take place from the summer.

We continue to engage with colleagues and communicate about this process and timeline and regular consultation with trade unions is also ongoing. Our commitment to no compulsory redundancies remains.

## **Tackling threat, harm and risk**

### **Convictions following serious incidents in the west of Scotland**

In February, three men were convicted following a number of serious incidents across the west of Scotland, including the murders of Gary More and Rafal Lyko. Barry Harvey (35), Thomas Guthrie (28) and Darren Owen (23) all appeared in the High Court in Glasgow on Tuesday, 20 February, 2024, following a trial which lasted 15 weeks.

This was a very challenging investigation which spanned five years. Similarities in the criminal tradecraft for each of the separate incidents were identified which resulted in them being investigated and reported to prosecutors under a single operation. The identification of this pattern of behaviour ultimately culminated in the convictions.

Although these were all targeted attacks, these individuals showed no regard for the communities and families affected. These convictions show those intent on committing crime that no matter how much preparation you make, how many steps you take to frustrate an investigation, or how long it has been since the crime has been committed, that we will not give up and I thank everyone who contributed to this significant outcome.

## **Murder of Brian Maley – conviction**

Earlier this month people were jailed having previously pleaded guilty to the murder of 52-year-old Brian Maley in Glasgow in February 2022.

James Houston (35), Maria Gardiner (47) and Michael Anderson (40) appeared at the High Court in Glasgow on Monday, 4 March, and were each sentenced to 18 years in jail.

Brian was a father and grandfather and the offenders showed an utter disregard for his life. I would like to thank all officers involved for their dedication and commitment throughout the investigation as well as those members of the public who assisted with our enquiries.

## **Operation Aversa**

On Tuesday, 27 March, John O'Flaherty (67) was sentenced to an Order of Lifelong Restriction, with a minimum punishment part of five-years in prison and placed on the Sex Offenders Register indefinitely for various sexual offences against women and girls in Edinburgh during the 1980s and 1990s.

O'Flaherty is the latest individual to be convicted as part of Operation Aversa, a major public protection investigation into the sexual abuse of young and vulnerable people in Edinburgh. The convictions secured as part of Operation Aversa underline our ongoing commitment to protecting vulnerable people from harm and abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice.

## **Drugs recoveries – Ayr and Glasgow**

On Tuesday, 20 February, a cannabis cultivation with an estimated value of around £920,000 was discovered in a disused shop in Ayr.

Later that same week, on Thursday 22 February, drugs with an estimated street value of £108,000, and cash totalling £25,000 were recovered in a pre-planned operation which took place in Glasgow.

Three men, aged 24, 32 and 35, were arrested and charged in connection with that find and appeared at Glasgow Sheriff Court the following day.

These separate operations underline our commitment to the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce and the country's Serious Organised Crime Strategy.

## **Prevention, problem solving and proactivity**

### **County Lines Intensification Week**

County Lines is criminal activity by those from larger cities who expand their operations into smaller towns. They exploit young and vulnerable people to sell drugs, carry cash and weapons – bringing violence, coercion and abuse. They can also take over a vulnerable person's house – known as cuckooing.

During a national County Lines intensification week between Monday, 4 March and Sunday, 10 March, Police Scotland took action to protect vulnerable people and targeted the drugs dealers who exploit them. Officers identified and safeguarded vulnerable people across the country. Illegal drugs, cash, and offensive weapons, including a firearm, were also recovered.

Officers in Scotland safeguarded 22 vulnerable people and engaged with another 1,070. Throughout the week, 14 men and 2 women were arrested for a variety of offences and 15 drug and evidential search warrants were executed.

Illegal drugs, including around £25,000 worth of cocaine and crack cocaine, £35,000 worth of heroin, cannabis and amphetamine were seized as well as over £4,200 in cash. Several offensive weapons including an imitation pistol, two machetes and eight knives were recovered. 57 mobile phones were also seized.

## **Project Shield - Forth Valley**

Thirty people have been arrested and charged, and a further 37 people have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal, in connection with acquisitive crime across the Forth Valley area following a two week-long initiative. Project Shield saw officers working with partners to help prevent and detect crimes such as housebreakings and thefts.

In total, 67 crimes were detected, including twelve housebreakings, seven motor vehicle thefts, six attempted housebreakings, twenty-four shoplifting thefts and a variety of other incidents.

This result highlights our continuing commitment to tackling acquisitive crime. By working closely with our partners, we aim to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place, making our communities safer for everyone.

## **Equestrian education - Greater Glasgow Division**

Building positive relationships with communities and identifying diversion opportunities is an essential part of how we prevent crime.

I want to recognise and thank Sergeant Lauren Semple for her work with organisations including the Scottish Racing Academy (SRA), Tannoch Stables, Horse Scotland, the Scottish Police Recreation Association, Hooves and Paws Equestrian Centre, and campus officers across five schools to identify individuals suitable for a programme to provide young people in the east end of Glasgow with the opportunity to undertake equestrian education, with 22 young people enrolled in the first year.

Lauren secured funding to facilitate the programme and equip participants with yard attire. Taster sessions commenced aimed at building trust, confidence and to break down barriers between police and the young people, with campus officers also taking part.

The young people undertook a Scottish Qualifications Authority qualification in horse care as part of the programme, forging potential future career pathways and opportunities.

The programme focused on four learning outcomes; horse identification and care, grooming, tacking up and stable management, with further opportunities to develop on to the level 5 and 6 qualifications. To date, four participants have progressed to these higher levels, with a 100% success rate for all participants on the original programme.

Last month, Lauren was recognised for her work, winning the Community Award at the annual Godolphin Thoroughbred Employee Industry Awards.

## **Road Safety Summit**

On Wednesday, 28 February, Chief Superintendent Hilary Sloan represented Police Scotland to join key road safety partners in Edinburgh to identify new ways to improve road safety.

Road safety is a priority for Police Scotland and we are part of a crucial partnership approach. Our officers are out every day educating road users and carrying out enforcement.

We have dedicated intelligence-led patrols on targeted routes to take action against dangerous drivers and respond to community concerns. We also support a national calendar of road safety activity, deliver campaigns and work with partners to develop prevention.

Police Scotland is committed to supporting the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to reduce road deaths and injuries. We will continue to make sure we are doing all we can to improve road safety.



## **Policing Together and working with communities**

### **Police anti-corruption and abuse reporting service**

Earlier this month, Police Scotland joined other UK police services to establish a new service to give the public an anonymous and confidential route to report concerns about criminal behaviour by individuals in policing.

The police anti-corruption and abuse reporting service is run by the independent charity Crimestoppers and covers information relating to officers, staff and volunteers who:

- Provide information or influence in return for money or favours.
- Use their policing position for personal advantage - whether financial or otherwise.
- Cross professional boundaries or abuse their position for sexual purposes.
- Abuse or control their partner, or those they have a relationship with.
- Engage in racist, homophobic, misogynistic or disablist conduct, on or off duty, in person or online.

Reports can be submitted online or by telephone and reporters can choose to remain anonymous, or leave their details if they are willing for investigators to contact them.

Police Scotland fully supports the establishment of the service which complements the range of reporting mechanisms already available to the public and to officers and staff.

Our safeguarding of values and standards through rigorous recruitment; enhanced vetting; more visible conduct outcomes; and a focus on prevention has never been stronger. We continue to build on the cultural progress which has been made in recent years through investment in leadership and a focus on our values and standards driven through our Policing Together Programme.

Policing Together includes a clear and consistent message that there is no place in Police Scotland for those who reject our values of integrity, fairness, respect and a commitment to upholding human rights.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training**

A new learning package to help colleagues uphold those values and increase understanding of institutional and anti-discrimination was launched earlier this month. 'Upholding our Values' was designed in collaboration with officers, staff and staff associations and provides colleagues with guidance on how they can apply our values in their everyday roles.

## **Celebrating inclusion in Police Scotland**

Recognising the various cultural and religious events that are important to our people and the communities we serve is an important part of our commitment to becoming an anti-discriminatory service.

This month we celebrated International Women's Day by hosting a number of online panel and information events for colleagues. I also took part in a podcast with the Scottish Women's Development Forum where I spoke about how we advance inclusion in Police Scotland.

I met with colleagues during a closing event for LGBT History Month on 29 February and. I also spent time with our Christian Police Association, to discuss institutional discrimination and policing culture among other matters.

We are marking Ramadan and have shared content and guidance across the Service that raises awareness and includes practical policing considerations and information on fasting for all colleagues and managers.

Understanding that our colleagues who are neurodivergent have unique and valuable skills that they bring to policing can be a real source of strength for Police

Scotland. We are shining a light on that this week (18 to 24 March) as we mark Neurodiversity Celebration Week across the organisation.

Under the leadership of Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland, we have formed a Neurodiversity Strategic Working Group that will bring together key business areas and staff associations to help us better support those with neurodiversity in policing and the communities we serve.

## **Global Policing Exchange Leadership Programme**

In February, I welcomed and spoke with a group of delegates from the Global Policing Exchange (GPX) leadership programme at Police Scotland Headquarters.

Delegates attended Tulliallan for the latest part of an ongoing two-year scheme, which has seen law enforcement agencies across the world come together to share experience, insight and best practice across a number of policing themes.

## **Supporting officers and staff**

### **Bravery and Excellence Awards**

My Bravery and Excellence Awards took place last month at a ceremony at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan (Friday, 23 February). The awards are one of the most important days in the Police Scotland calendar. It is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate acts of bravery, professionalism and our shared commitment to supporting our communities and helping people at times of need.

Since taking command of Police Scotland I have been impressed by the incredible dedication our officers and staff show while serving their communities and working with the public.

Those recognised include Finlay Johnston, now 20, who, while still a teenager helped at the scene of a serious road collision in June 2022 when he noticed a man trapped, bleeding and unconscious in a vehicle in Edinburgh. Finlay held the man in

an upright position to keep his airway passage open until an ambulance arrived. He also provided comfort to the other passenger in the car.

Others recognised, include officers who rescued a woman in the sea in Saltcoats, Ayrshire and a sergeant and constable who saved a woman from a house fire in Lerwick, Shetland.

These awards shine a light on the great value policing brings to communities: keeping people safe from harm, protecting the vulnerable, bringing criminals to justice, solving problems and reducing offending.

Equally, we recognised acts of bravery by members of the public who have gone above and beyond what can be expected of a citizen. I am deeply grateful to them for their courage - stepping-forward when necessity arose.

## **Leadership appointments**

Alan Speirs and Bex Smith have been appointed as Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) following the retirement of Fiona Taylor in February and Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham's impending retirement in April.

DCC Speirs will continue to lead our Professionalism, Strategy and Engagement work while DCC Smith now leads Crime and Operational Support. DCC Jane Connors has strategic oversight of Local Policing and, as previously outlined, is leading our next phase of policing reform.

## **Promotion events**

During three events held at Dalmarnock, Dundee and Glenrothes at the beginning of March, I, DCC Connors and DCC Speirs separately met with over 60 colleagues who had been promoted.

These sessions were smaller and less formal than previous promotion events and provided opportunities to visit colleagues near to where they work to personally

thank and congratulate them for their work and to listen to their experiences and perspectives.

## **Recruitment intake**

As previously outlined, we are recruiting - particularly for police officers in rural areas and for Contact, Command and Control (C3) Division staff such as service advisers.

We will welcome our latest cohort of 200 probationers on 25 March to begin their 12 week-long training programme. On successful conclusion of their training, they will deploy to communities across the country.

Policing is a demanding yet rewarding vocation and I would encourage anyone who wants to make a positive difference to people's lives and who shares our values of integrity, fairness, respect and a commitment to upholding human rights to consider joining Police Scotland. More details are available on the recruitment page of our website.