

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	25 August 2021
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	SPA Oversight of Policing the Pandemic
Presented By	Lynn Brown, SPA Chief Executive
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide members with a report on the SPA oversight of policing during the pandemic. The report details the SPA organisational response, oversight and assurance activity and provides reflections and lessons learned.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In March 2020, the Authority set out its plans for exercising oversight and supporting policing during the response to the pandemic. This described an approach focused on clear assurance to the public, underpinned by light touch and proportionate oversight of both business as usual and the specific policing response to the pandemic. To deliver this the Authority enhanced its schedule of governance meetings, and ensured public transparency and access to oversight through the livestreaming of meetings and creation of a dedicated Covid19 publications page on the website.
- 1.2 In April 2020, the Chief Constable established an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to provide additional, human rights based, scrutiny on the use of the new emergency powers granted to Police Scotland. The IAG, supported by the Authority, was established and chaired by John Scott QC. The IAG has reported, in public, to the Authority over the period May 2020 – June 2021.
- 1.3 In June 2021 the Authority considered an [independent impact assessment on the work of the Independent Advisory Group on coronavirus powers](#), commissioned by the Authority and Police Scotland. That report confirmed that the IAG provided significant benefits to both the SPAs public scrutiny of policing and also the 'real time' transparency of police policy and operational decision making in a time of increased public health policing.

2. OVERSIGHT OF POLICING DURING THE PANDEMIC

It is evident that the establishment of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Coronavirus powers by the Chief Constable provided an additional layer of assurance both to the Authority and to the public, over the last eighteen months. The IAG has reported publicly through the Authority, complementing the existing governance and oversight of Police Scotland in place, and has considered detailed analysis and intelligence provided weekly by Police Scotland.

The Authority set out clearly, in March 2020, how it would exercise oversight and support for policing, committing [to providing effective and transparent governance and oversight](#) of Police Scotland's response to the Covid-19 emergency, recognising that members of the public required clear assurance that the police service has sufficient capacity and visibility to promote and protect their wellbeing during the pandemic. The Authority described a desire to enable and support the police service and its workforce to respond effectively to these unprecedented

circumstances, while ensuring that proportionate and visible scrutiny of policing took place allowing key issues of public interest continued to be raised and addressed.

As the Authority has reflected on the effectiveness of the IAG, it has also reflected on the effectiveness of its own oversight and support of policing during the pandemic. The report complied, attached as appendix A, details progress and success in delivering the commitments made by the Authority in March 2020, summarising and linking to the significant volume of data, information, insight and evidence that has been considered by our Board and Committees over the period.

As detailed in the report, the Authority maintained oversight and scrutiny of policing that was proportionate during the period, focused on both the policing of the pandemic but also the policing of Scotland overall. The continuation of business as usual was a key priority for the Authority and its staff, with the importance of business continuity, risk management and scenario planning evident as working practices developed.

This internal review has highlighted the value of the IAG model, which can be flexible and responsive in providing an additional layer of assurance on specific issues as it is required. This is useful learning which can be applied to future topics of specific public interest.

The report highlights that the focus on open, transparent and accessible governance by the Authority was critical to successful oversight and assurance, particularly in giving a public platform to the work of the IAG and the Chief Constable in relation to the policing of the pandemic. The reporting from the IAG to the public Board meetings of the Authority was the main public platform for the work of the IAG, and for the Chief Constable to respond to queries and questions around the policing of the pandemic. This ensured an accessible public platform for discussion of the evidence and assured clear and transparent accountability of this important public interest area of policing.

The report concludes that the Authority has used evidence effectively to hold the Chief Constable to account for the nature and proportionality of the policing approach being taken during lockdowns from the perspective of communities and their experiences and views. This has been done through the triangulation of data to ensure multiple sources of information have informed the Authority position, as described in the report and its appendices.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct reputational implications associated with this paper.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct social implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

There are no direct community impact implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equalities implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

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**SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY**

SPA Oversight of Policing during the Pandemic

August 2021

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Executive Summary

The Scottish Police Authority (the Authority) is the governance body for policing, responsible for oversight of strategy, performance, transformation and improvement activity across Police Scotland.

In March 2020, the Authority set out its plans for exercising oversight and supporting policing during the response to the pandemic. This described an approach focused on clear assurance to the public, underpinned by light touch and proportionate oversight of both business as usual and the specific policing response to the pandemic. To deliver this the Authority enhanced its schedule of governance meetings, and ensured public transparency and access to oversight through the livestreaming of meetings and creation of a dedicated [Covid19 publications page](#) on the website where briefings, bulletins and key information was published on a weekly basis.

The establishment of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Coronavirus powers by the Chief Constable provided an additional layer of assurance both to the Authority and to the public, during this time. The IAG reported publicly through the Authority, complementing the existing governance and oversight of Police Scotland in place, and considered detailed analysis and intelligence provided weekly by Police Scotland.

This report details our progress and success in delivering the commitments made by the Authority in March 2020, summarising and linking to the significant volume of data, information, insight and evidence that has been considered by our Board and Committees over the period.

- We maintained oversight and scrutiny of policing that was proportionate during the period, focused on both the policing of the pandemic but also the policing of Scotland overall;
- The continuation of business as usual was a key priority for the Authority and its staff, with the importance of business continuity, risk management and scenario planning evident as working practices developed;
- This review has highlighted the value of the IAG model which can be flexible and responsive in providing an additional layer of assurance on specific issues as it is required;
- The focus on open, transparent and accessible governance by the Authority was also critical to successful oversight and assurance, particularly in giving a public platform to the work of the IAG and the Chief Constable in relation to the policing of the pandemic;
- The rapid roll out of hardware and technology to support home working, remote access and the livestreaming of all Authority meetings was critical to our success

SPA Strategic Context

Policing in the Public Interest

As the governance body for policing, the [Authority's role and responsibilities](#) are wide-ranging including the setting of strategy, scrutiny and reporting of performance, supporting continuous improvement activity, and listening to and taking into account what people are saying about policing in Scotland. The Authority is also the legal employer of all police staff, securing best value on an annual budget of over £1.2 billion and the oversight of a national police service of over 22,000 police officers and staff.

We keep the state of policing under constant review, monitor performance, and seeks evidence about how Scotland is being policed based on data, analysis, professional policing knowledge, external and internal inspections, audit research and insight. Through a series of checks and balances Board is assured that major decisions about the policing of Scotland are made transparently and appropriately, with appropriate consideration given to any implications relating to human rights, ethics, equality and diversity. This helps to ensure that Scottish policing is based on public consent—in a way that builds respect, public trust and confidence in policing.

Policing the Pandemic in the Public Interest

The Authority set out clearly, in March 2020, how it would exercise oversight and support for policing, committing [to providing effective and transparent governance and oversight](#) of Police Scotland's response to the Covid-19 emergency. We recognised that members of the public required clear assurance that the police service has sufficient capacity and visibility to promote and protect their wellbeing during the pandemic. With this in mind, we published a '[strategy on a page](#)' for the oversight of policing of Covid 19. This light touch strategy described a desire to enable and support the police service and it's workforce to respond effectively to these unprecedented circumstances, while ensuring that proportionate and visible scrutiny of policing took place allowing key issues of public interest continued to be raised and addressed. To support this we created a dedicated [Covid19 publications page](#) on the website where briefings, bulletins and key information was published.

We were conscious of reflecting and balancing oversight requirements with the demands on operational leadership and service response, especially in early days of the pandemic and during a series of national, regional and local restrictions. Full support was given to the 4E approach being taken by Police Scotland, which sought to engage, explain and encourage with citizens based on discretion and empathy. Only if that approach did not work was an enforcement approach taken.

The Authority committed to:

- track continued public confidence and consent for policing in Scotland;
- capture, review and report the short and medium-term financial impacts on policing from COVID 19; and
- raise, test, and understand key issues of public, employer and stakeholder interest

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Given this focus, we recognised the need to utilise existing governance arrangements, with a flexible approach to emerging requirements and circumstances which did not rely solely on the existing forward schedule of governance meetings. We drew upon a range of insights, perspectives and expertise to inform our scrutiny and advocacy, and committed to the regular communication of the outputs, maintaining public transparency and access to oversight.

In between regular formal Authority meetings, Members met even more frequently, especially during the first four months of the pandemic. These meetings enabled Members to consider information provided by Police Scotland, and Forensic Services, in terms of weekly operation analysis, data and updates, and identify areas for additional discussion and oversight through the work of the Authority's Committees. Meetings were attended as required by Authority Members, supported by officers from the Authority, Forensic Services and Police Scotland Executive teams. The meetings also maintained a focus on the wellbeing of policing the pandemic; setting expectations and providing strategic direction to the Authority's Chief Executive and senior officers regarding the priorities and information requirements of the Board.

The Strategic Landscape

On 9 April 2020, just over two weeks after the Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority announced that an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) had been established, by the Chief Constable, to provide additional, human rights-based scrutiny of Police Scotland's use of the emergency powers in Scotland. It was intended that the group would provide additional assurance, through the Authority, to the public about the proportionality, necessity and fairness of any use of the new emergency powers by Police Scotland.

The Chief Constable and Chair of the Authority agreed that this group would report, in public, to the Authority, with secretariat provided by the Authority. The work of the IAG was intended to complement the existing statutory governance and oversight arrangements for Police Scotland - provided on a permanent basis through the Authority - and the external independent review process of Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS).

The establishment of the group recognised the need for additional and visible focus on policing in light of the exceptional additional powers given to Police Scotland under the new legislation. It was felt that the IAG could provide a dynamic and more real-time forum for discussion and advice, as well as the additional expertise around human-rights based scrutiny which was required for these exceptional circumstances.

Underpinning the IAG was the Operation TALLA Information, Assurance and Liaison Group (OpTICAL), which met weekly from 20 April 2020 to provide analysis and strategic oversight of a wide range of information, intelligence and data. This group brought together a range of policing evidence on a weekly basis, allowing for near to real time discussion on emerging trends or variations in data. This additional layer of

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data and evidence specific oversight informed the work of the IAG and provided additional transparency and assurance to the Authority.

SPA Organisational Response

During the first few months of the pandemic the Authority continued to host Committee meetings using telephone conferencing but then moved to video livestreaming of meetings by the summer of 2020. This move brought about parity between Board and Committee meetings, with both streamed live to the public; and recordings available on the SPA website for anyone wishing to listen later. This ensured that we were able to continue our oversight of policing on a public platform; arguably more transparently and accessibly through livestreaming. Not all public bodies were able to continue their board oversight function in such a publicly accessible and transparent way during the initial period of lockdown.

We continued to develop capacity and capability during the pandemic to better deliver public oversight of policing, with a focus on policing in the public interest. The SPA 2020 development project was implemented in November 2020, resulting in increased capacity and capability in key functional areas of the Authority, such as planning and performance, change oversight, governance, and corporate management. This also enabled the Authority to successfully deliver the 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts to the required Audit Scotland timescales.

Staff of the authority have been supported throughout the pandemic to work productively from home through the provision of appropriate equipment, and the support of the Police Scotland ICT service in delivering this must be acknowledged. The Authority's Business Continuity Plan was implemented prior to the first national lockdown and has been adjusted on an ongoing basis to reflect experiences and organisational learning. The rapid provision of equipment to support home working arrangements provided consistency and continuity of service across the Authority, ensuring officers and members are able to maintain close working relationships with Police Scotland and other key partners and stakeholders.

The increased flexibility offered to staff supported an ongoing and enhanced focus on wellbeing which is informing an internal working group looking at future models and ways of working. This will include a reflection on lessons learned since March 2020, consideration of work/life balance and a review of how the office accommodation at Pacific Quay can best be used.

Throughout the period of home working, staff have been briefed at least once per week by the Chief Executive; additionally regular meetings are taking place with staff (and across teams) to cascade key organisational information and pandemic-related advice, and update staff on changes to working arrangements. The Chief Executive has also held a number of pastoral/wellbeing focused meetings on a 1-1 basis with all staff.

Independent Custody visiting Service

The Authority maintained the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (ICVS) during the pandemic, adapting the field-based methodology used by Visitors to comply with restrictions and guidance relating to social distancing. The primary change saw

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Visitors speaking to persons in custody virtually. Prior to the pandemic the Visitors carried out physical visits to custody centres across Scotland; with 1325 physical visits undertaken in 2019-20.

The pandemic presented many challenges to ICVS, as its work had been dependent on personal visits and face to face contact. As a result, we took the difficult decision to suspend custody visiting across the country on 18 March 2020 in order to comply with public health restrictions and ensure the health and safety of our Visitors, detainees, custody officers and staff. However we were clear that independent monitoring, oversight and feedback remain vital, particularly at this time, and therefore put in place an approach to support continued monitoring of the welfare of detainees held in custody by Police Scotland through remote methods.

In March 2020, the ICVS team began remote monitoring by reviewing custody records, with a specific focus on weekend custody, as well as suspected/confirmed Covid-19 cases; this monitored the level of care provided to detainees. From May 2020 ICVS introduced telephone monitoring through custody centres, which allowed direct discussion with detainees. Although not the same as seeing a detainee, it did allow for the recording of information from the detainee perspective. This was followed by the introduction of the Lifesize Device and Application, which allowed Visitors to carry out virtual visits to custody centres. While there are only currently 6 of these devices available in custody suites, the devices have added critical additional functionality to ICVS; and assurance to the Authority.

The innovation, and rapid evolution of the service ensured that there was continued oversight of custody, and detainee welfare, during a very challenging time. Learning from the telephone and virtual visiting processes put in place will inform approaches and ways of working for ICVS in future. The service recognised the added benefits of being able to undertake visits virtually and the need to rapidly digitise the ICVS service.

Oversight & Assurance through evidence

Policing performance and public confidence during the pandemic

The Authority has used evidence effectively to hold the Chief Constable to account for the nature and proportionality of the policing approach being taken during lockdowns from the perspective of communities and their experiences and views. This has been done through the triangulation of data to ensure multiple sources of information have informed our position.

Transparency has been a key focus for the Authority; with findings, reports and summaries shared timeously and in an accessible way with the public and stakeholders via the [website](#). Papers have been presented and discussed in public, outlining the main findings from analysis and weekly briefings on operation TALLA shared on the Authority website. These findings have also been discussed with Police Scotland's Public Confidence Governance Board and the Independent Advisory Group to inform operational delivery and policy development and review.

From the variety of external evidence sources available for assessment, we are assured that levels of public confidence in policing have been maintained throughout the pandemic, and that the policing approach adopted in Scotland received a high degree of support from the people of Scotland throughout the pandemic, with an evident desire for enforcement to be used more frequently as lockdowns lengthened.

This differs from the evidence for Great Britain more widely, where support for the police has been slightly lower and declined more across the winter 2020/21 lockdown, with a greater tendency for the public to say that the approach being taken by the police is too heavy handed rather than expressing a wish to see tougher action.

In March 2020 we began receiving daily bulletins from Police Scotland setting out a range of information in dashboard and narrative form (see appendix 1) to enable us to maintain an oversight of relevant information and data. Police Scotland then continued to provide data bulletins to the Authority on a weekly basis.

This detailed, and close to real-time, data has been considered by both OpTICAL and the IAG on a weekly basis for over 12 months, providing consistency of understanding and insight into the trends of policing the pandemic; covering:

- the Coronavirus Intervention (CVI) system which was set up to record all pandemic-related policing activity,
- the citizen space public engagement portal, which enabled members of the public to provide feedback on their views and experiences of the policing of the pandemic;
- a Police Scotland system introduced in December 2020 to enable members of the public to report alleged breaches of COVID-19 legislation online;
- information on the views of police officers within Police Scotland about the experience of policing the pandemic, based on interviews conducted by HMICS; and

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- additional analysis carried out by Professor Susan McVie of the University of Edinburgh

The IAG have used this data to inform regular reports to the Authority, and have interrogated any variances or anomalies identified in the trend analysis over time. Not only has the data provided a strong basis for operational responsiveness but also a public transparency to the policing approach across Scotland.

It is important to note that the public Board meetings of the Authority were the main public platform for the reporting of the work of the IAG, and for the Chief Constable to respond to queries and questions around the policing of the pandemic. This ensured an accessible public platform for discussion of the evidence and assured clear and transparent accountability of this important public interest area of policing.

The work of the IAG provided ongoing and independent public assurance to the Authority through its regular reporting, enhancing and providing additional and wide ranging insight to the expertise and experience of the Board itself. This complemented the existing scrutiny and assurance role undertaken by the Authority, and provided an additional layer of assurance around the extraordinary additional policing powers provided to Police Scotland.

Additionally the IAG was used to provide independent assurance on wider public health policing matters during the pandemic, such as the policing of the Black Lives Matter protests, football fan celebrations, or other large public gatherings such as that in Kenmure St, Glasgow. This approach allowed the Chief Constable to ask the IAG to consider how specific events were handled, and for this independent assessment to be reported, in public, to the Authority.

Public Polling

Police Scotland routinely runs the in-house [Your Police](#) survey, a web-based survey designed to facilitate engagement and consultation activity, and adapted this in April 2020 to include questions on policing during the pandemic. Over the course of 2020/21 more than 36,500 respondents completed the survey. Data and insights from the Your Police survey have been reported to the Authority through quarterly performance reports to the [Policing Performance Committee](#). Additionally the Authority has representation on the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board, where up-to-date findings from *Your Police* are presented, discussed and translated into action.

To enhance the data available through *Your Police*, the Authority initiated a series of independent public opinion and attitudinal surveys during the course of the pandemic to keep itself informed and up-to-date on how the people of Scotland were experiencing policing. The Authority used the STV *ScotPulse* panel for this purpose, with findings reported to full [Authority meetings](#) and at meetings of the [Policing Performance Committee](#) as well as published on the Authority website.

The Authority has also continued to keep track of key developments in public confidence measures through analysis of the most up-to-date findings from the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey \(SCJS\) 2019/20](#) and the [Scottish Victimisation](#)

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[Telephone Survey \(SVTS\) 2020](#). External survey data relating to confidence in policing from other parts of the UK has also been taken into account as part of the evidence base to inform our oversight.

User Experience

We also sought assurance through Police Scotland's data regarding demand management in its call centres and service user satisfaction. More than 17,500 callers were asked about their satisfaction with Police Scotland following making contact with C3 Division (Contact, Command and Control). Throughout the year (2020/21) satisfaction levels averaged 76%, with levels of satisfaction maintained even during periods of additional demand. Satisfaction levels regarding different aspects of service provision remained extremely high across the year: 85% were satisfied with how they were treated by C3 staff; 80% were satisfied with how they were treated by attending officers; and 87% were satisfied that their needs were properly understood.

The main findings from all of these surveys are summarised at appendix 2. More detailed findings have been presented to the Authority in a range of [Board](#) and [Committee](#) papers throughout 2020/21, and continue to be developed as analysis and observation continues.

Oversight of change and operational policing

While the Authority has had a clear focus on the effectiveness of policing in the pandemic, and associated public confidence, we have also maintained a focus on 'business as usual' activity within policing. In addition to the focus on the response to the pandemic, we have continued to consider, discuss and oversee quality of service provision to the public, organisational health, the health and wellbeing of officers and staff, and ongoing service transformation, keeping agreed strategic outcomes for both Police Scotland and the Authority under review.

Performance Reporting

Reporting on public confidence and policing in the pandemic has enhanced the core business of the Authority, but has not replaced a focus on oversight of change and policing performance in its widest sense. We maintained an oversight of policing performance by scrutinising quarterly performance reports from Police Scotland, Forensic Services and the reports provided by the interim Chief Executive on SPA Corporate performance.

The Policing Performance Committee scrutinised the performance of Police Scotland on four occasions in 2020/21, including the routine end-of-year self-assessment of performance produced by Chief Constable in May 2020 and June 2021. These reports were also scrutinised at full Authority Meetings, along with the performance of Forensic Services. In addition to quarterly meetings of the Policing Performance Committee, a series of additional meetings were held in April and May 2020 to progress the finalisation of the policing performance framework to accompany the Strategic Police Plan and the Annual Police Plan 2020/21.

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COVID-19 has had a significant impact on crime and offence levels. Police Scotland recorded 225,532 crimes in 2020/21. This was 8.5% (or 20,984 crimes) lower than the 246,516 crimes recorded in 2019/20, and lower than the 5 year average recorded level of total crime (detailed results and analysis are shown in appendix 3).

Change and Transformation

During 2020/21 our Committees considered a range of operational policing reports and business cases which support change and transformation; as well as external inspection and review reports, and key publications from partners and stakeholders. This ongoing business of the Committees ensure there was a continued focus on the delivery of outcomes, as described in the Strategic Police plan. We recognised, and supported, the need for a review of transformation projects within Police Scotland; ensuring that key enabling activity continued as required while deploying essential resources to the pandemic response.

As a result of the project review the roll out of the Contact Assessment Model (CAM) was accelerated to ensure operation in all Divisions and mobile working for Forensic Services was accelerated to ensure devices were rolled out earlier than planned to ensure continuation of service. Both projects were essential in ensuring a comprehensive and continuous service during lockdown and pandemic regulations. In addition to the service focused acceleration described above, the deployment of Microsoft Teams was also accelerated, delivering service wide roll out between September 2020 and February 2021. This focus on providing the tools required to support collaboration and continuation of business facilitated both operational service delivery but also ongoing engagement between the Authority and Police Scotland. Critically the use of MS Teams also enabled the continuity of Authority business and the livestreaming of virtual meetings to maintain public transparency and accountability.

The Authority, and Committees, have had regular updates on delivery of planned change during uncertainty in the operating environment as a result of additional and competing pressures from the UK exit from Europe, the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) and most recently Covid-19.

Since March 2020 the Authority have overseen a number of areas of change and operational policing such as use of Digital Triage Devices, Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems, and Tasers; development of the Strategic Workforce Plan; the test of change on carrying naloxone and delivery of the North East Integration project. Additionally we have considered and approved the Cyber Strategy, endorsed the underpinning Cyber Implementation Plan and scrutinised the impact of the benefits being delivered through the Contact Assessment Model (CAM) and Mobile Working Phase One.

The Authority has also considered the final report of the Independent Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct Issues in relation to Policing which has a number of recommendations which require legislative and policy change not only in the SPA but across the wider policing family.

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This summary of ongoing change and transformation oversight, while not exhaustive, provides assurance that the Authority maintained its focus on oversight of policing in the public interest in its widest sense; recognising the need for enhanced focus on policing of the pandemic with maintained oversight, support and challenge on delivery of the aspirations of the Strategic Police Plan and support Annual Police Plan.

Reflections and Lessons Learned

As was described in the context section of this document, in March 2020 we committed as an Authority to tracking public confidence and consent for policing in Scotland during the pandemic; capturing, reviewing and reporting on the financial impacts on policing; and focusing on key issues of public interest.

This report describes our progress and success in doing these things, summarising and linking to the significant volume of data, information, insight and evidence that has been considered by our Board and Committees over the period. As can be seen from agendas for the Authority meetings which have taken place over the last fifteen months, the commitments made on March 2020 have been delivered.

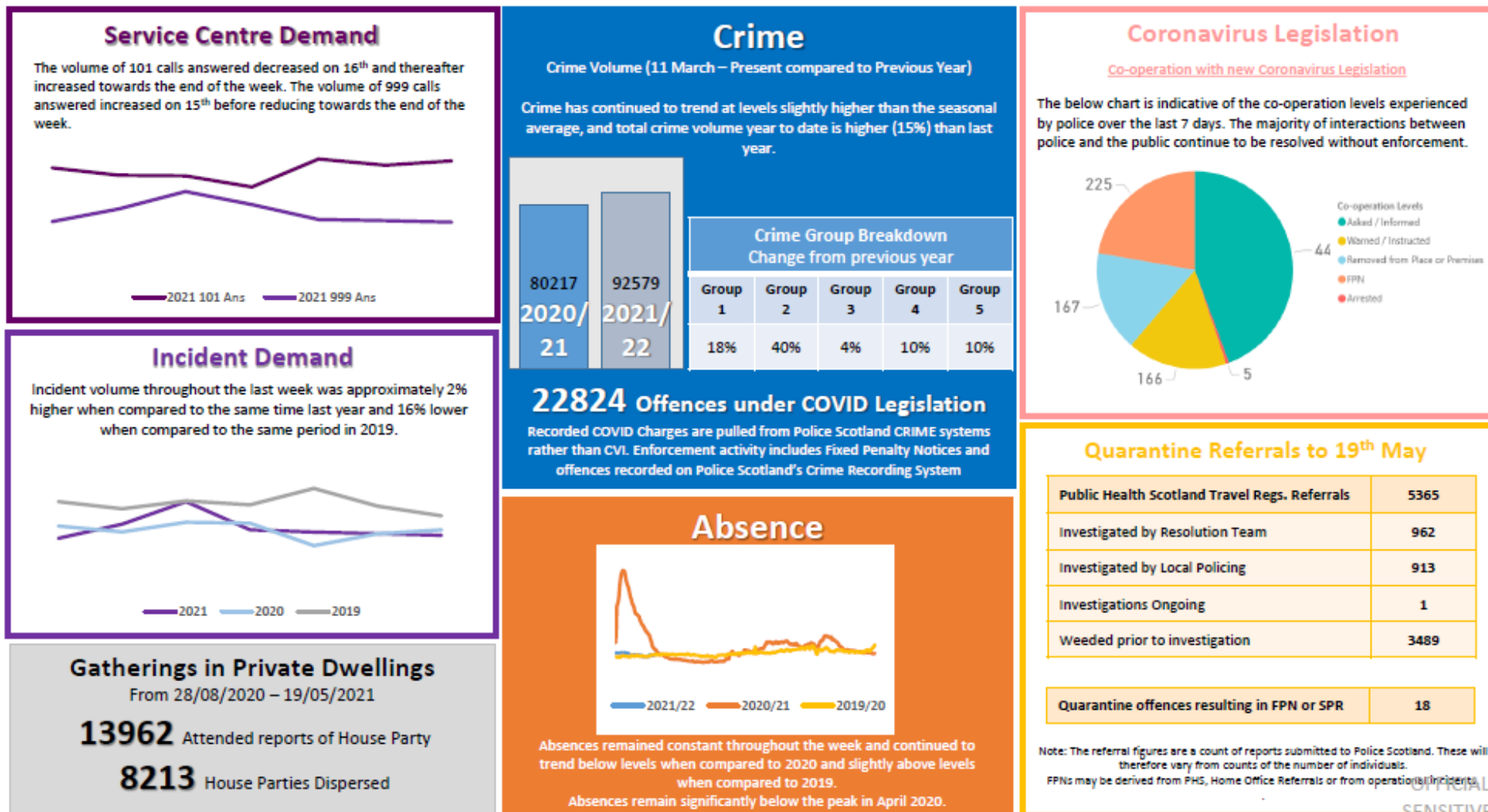
We maintained oversight and scrutiny of policing that was proportionate during the period, focused on both the policing of the pandemic but also the policing of Scotland overall. The continuation of business as usual was a key priority for the Authority and its staff, with the importance of business continuity, risk management and scenario planning evident as working practices developed.

As the independent impact assessment of the work of the IAG reported, it is now commonplace to refer to the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus crisis, and the associated challenges; with the creation of this IAG a unique response to unique circumstances. However this review has highlighted the value of the IAG model which can be flexible and responsive in providing an additional layer of assurance on specific issues as it is required.

The focus on open, transparent and accessible governance by the Authority was also critical to over successful oversight and assurance over the last fifteen months. It was important that all available information was made available in the public domain, through our website, and discussed in a public forum though Board and Committee meetings. The Authority did not take decisions out with its public platform, with a continued, and increased, focus on policing in the public interest during the pandemic.

It is clear that the rapid roll out of hardware and technology to support home working, remote access and the livestreaming of all Authority meetings was critical to this success, providing support for the continuation of business as usual while also ensuring efficiencies of time and cost could be realised. Underpinning this was the resilience and continuity planning already in place in the Authority, which ensured that all essential functions were identified and prioritised.

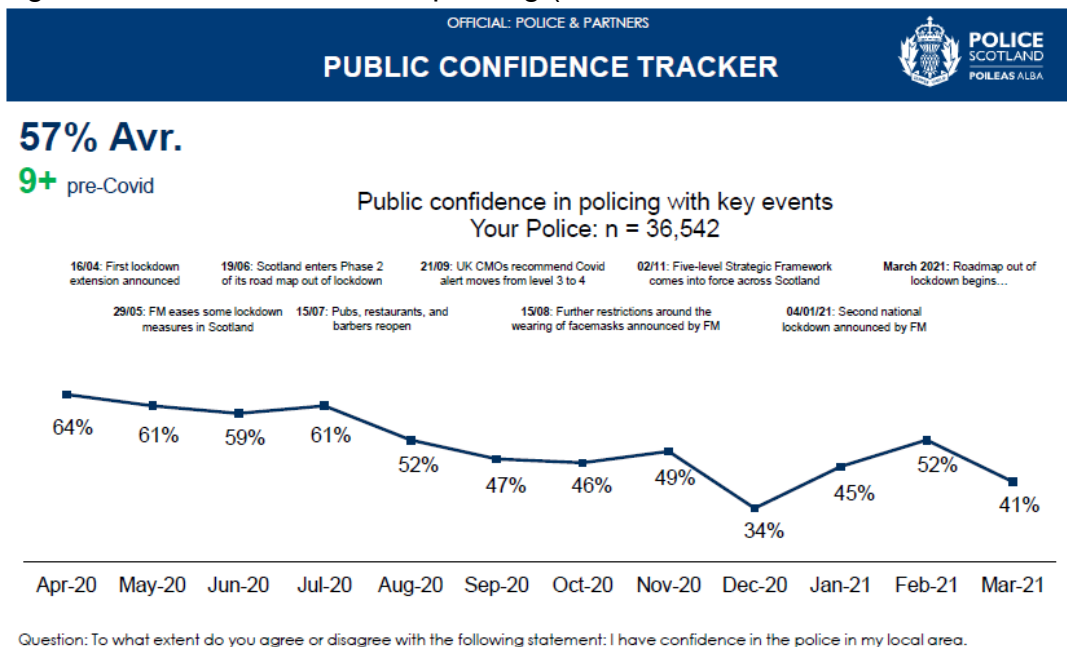
Figure 1 – Example dashboard from an Operation TALLA bulletin



CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE SERVICE

One of the key questions in Police Scotland’s *Your Police* survey relates to public confidence, with respondents asked whether they agree with the statement “I have confidence in the police in my local area”. As an average across the year, 57% of respondents have agreed with this statement, which is 9% higher than pre-pandemic levels measured through *Your Police* (see Figure 1). The level of confidence has varied throughout the year, being particularly strong during the spring of 2020 and the first national lockdown. Confidence levels notably dipped during the winter of 2020/21, coinciding with an increase in cases of coronavirus in Scotland, an increase in hospitalisations and ICU admissions, and the instigation of a second national lockdown as from December 2020.

Figure 1 – Confidence in local policing (Police Scotland’s *Your Police* Survey)

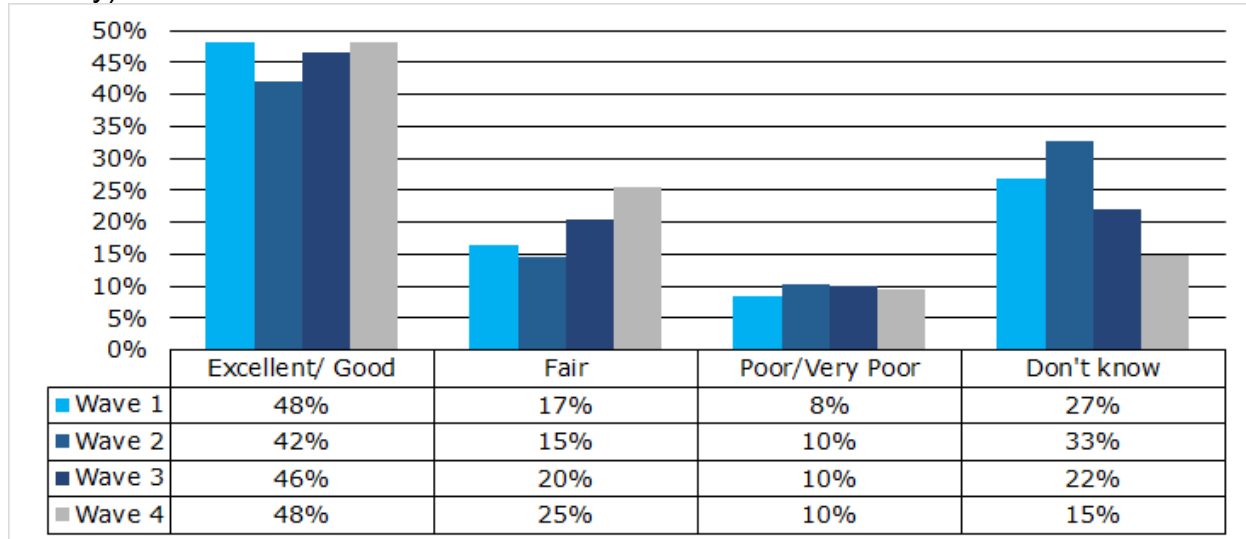


The Authority conducted public opinion surveys in four waves during 2020/21 where the public were asked about how good a job they thought the police were doing in their local area. The majority of respondents felt that the police in their local area were doing an ‘Excellent/Good’ job (between 42% and 48% between survey waves) see Figure 2.

These levels are slightly lower than findings produced by the pre-pandemic SCJS 2019/20 (where the same question was asked and produced a result of 55%) and the SVTS conducted in September 2020 (60%), however a relatively high proportion of people responded “Don’t Know” to the Authority’s online survey question. Once these “Don’t Know” responses are discounted, the average level across all four of the Authority’s surveys is 54%, with a peak of 59% in Wave 1. It is possible that the high proportion of ‘Don’t know’ responses in Wave 2 are a manifestation of sustained shielding, self-isolation and limited social interaction and leaving of the home. The

survey mode (online versus face-to-face or telephone interviewing) may also be partly responsible for the high rate of Don't Know responses.

Figure 2 – Opinion of local policing performance (the Authority's independent Survey)



SUPPORT FOR THE POLICING APPROACH DURING THE PANDEMIC

Police Scotland's *Your Police* survey also asked respondents for their opinions on the approach being taken by the police to the policing of lockdown restrictions. For the year 2020/21 as a whole, 44% of respondents have said that they fully support the police, with 38% of respondents saying that they would like to see the police taking tougher action to ensure public compliance (see Figure 3). Only 4% of respondents said that they believed the police to be too heavy-handed, or that the police should have no role in promoting compliance.

Figure 3 – Support for the Policing Approach (*Your Police*)



Public Opinion Statements	Percentage of Respondents
I fully support the approach taken by the Police	44%
The Police should take tougher action to ensure public compliance	38%
I support the approach taken by the Police but in some cases they are going too far	9%
The Police have no role in enforcing the lockdown, compliance should be a matter for individuals	3%
The approach taken by the Police in enforcing the lockdown is too heavy handed	1%
None of the above	4%

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The Authority’s independent survey found that 42% of people fully supported the approach taken by the Police across the four waves of surveying (see Figure 4). The level of support was stronger at the beginning of the pandemic (46%), falling to 35% in Wave 4. An increasing proportion of people said that the police should be taking tougher action to ensure the public’s compliance with restrictions: 33% of people for the year as a whole, rising to 39% in Wave 4.

Comparable data collected by YouGov/CREST indicates that the police service in Scotland has had a higher level of support than the rest of Great Britain throughout the pandemic (see Figure 5). Additionally the survey findings suggest that in Scotland there has been less widespread opinion that the police are being too “heavy-handed” or “going too far” with enforcement. The trend highlighted by the Authority’s survey findings regarding the Winter 2020/21 trend of wanting the police to take tougher action was not experienced across Great Britain as a whole to the same extent.

Figure 4 – Support for the policing approach to lockdown (the Authority’s independent Survey)

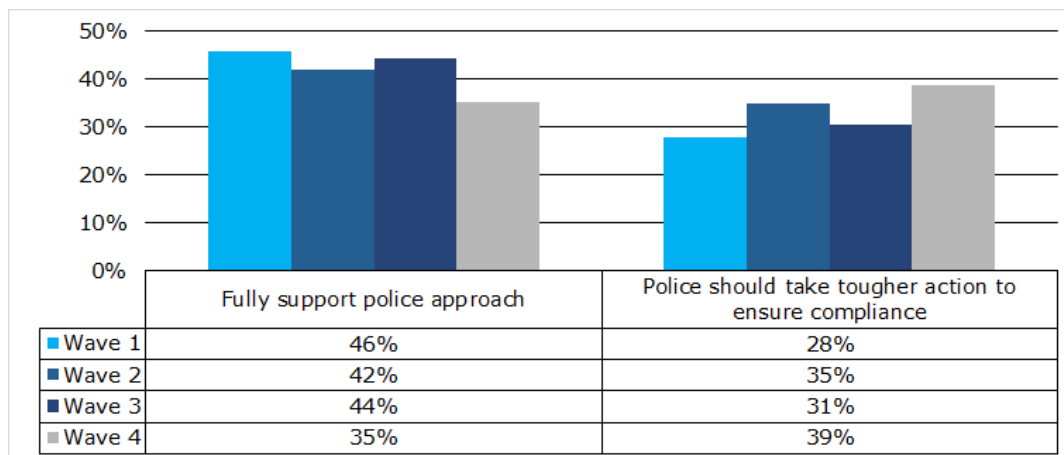


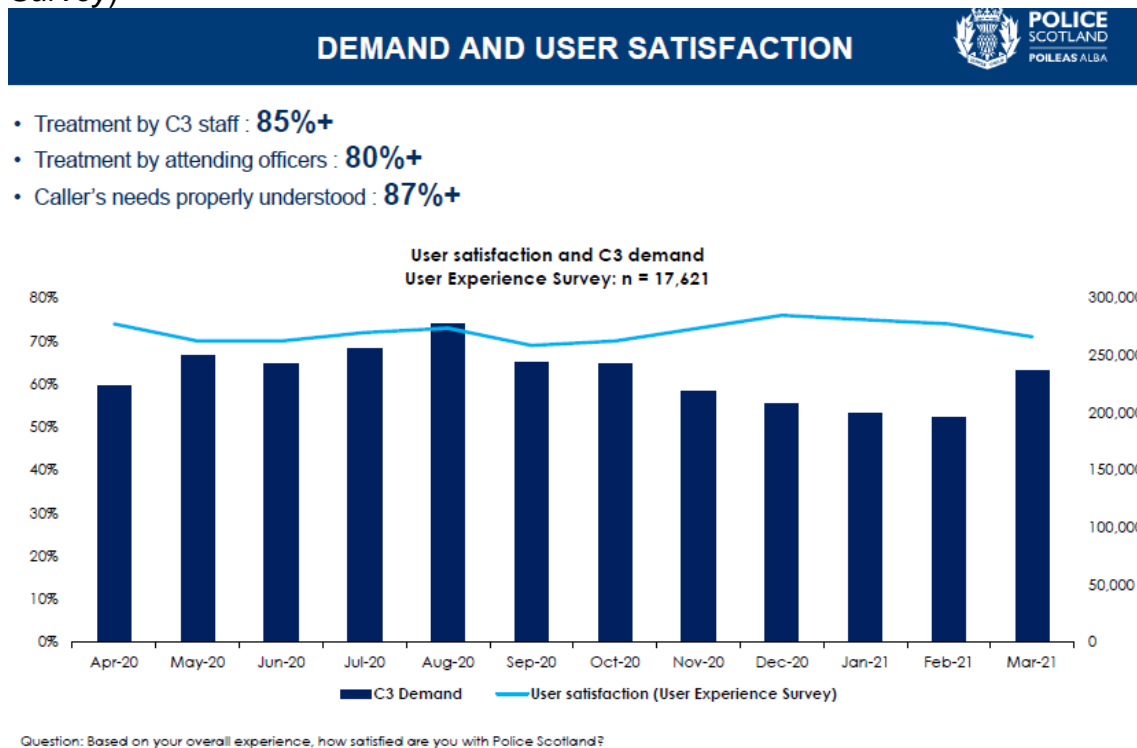
Figure 5 – Support for the policing approach to lockdown (YouGov / CREST Survey of Great Britain)

YOUGOV / CREST ADVISORY PANEL	Fully support the policing approach	The Police should take tougher action to ensure compliance
<u>April 3-5 2020</u>	42%	14%
<u>April 17-18 2020</u>	36%	16%
<u>January 13-14 2021</u>	27%	22%
<u>March 15-16 2021</u>	21%	18%

USER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

The Authority also sought assurance from Police Scotland’s data regarding demand management in its call centres and service user satisfaction. More than 17,500 callers were asked about their satisfaction with Police Scotland following making contact with C3 Division (Contact, Command and Control). Throughout the year satisfaction levels averaged 76%, with levels of satisfaction maintained even during periods of additional demand such as July and August 2020 (see Figure 6). Satisfaction levels regarding different aspects of service provision remained extremely high across the year: 85% were satisfied with how they were treated by C3 staff; 80% were satisfied with how they were treated by attending officers; and 87% were satisfied that their needs were properly understood.

Figure 6 – Caller Satisfaction and Demand (Police Scotland *User Experience Survey*)



WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS

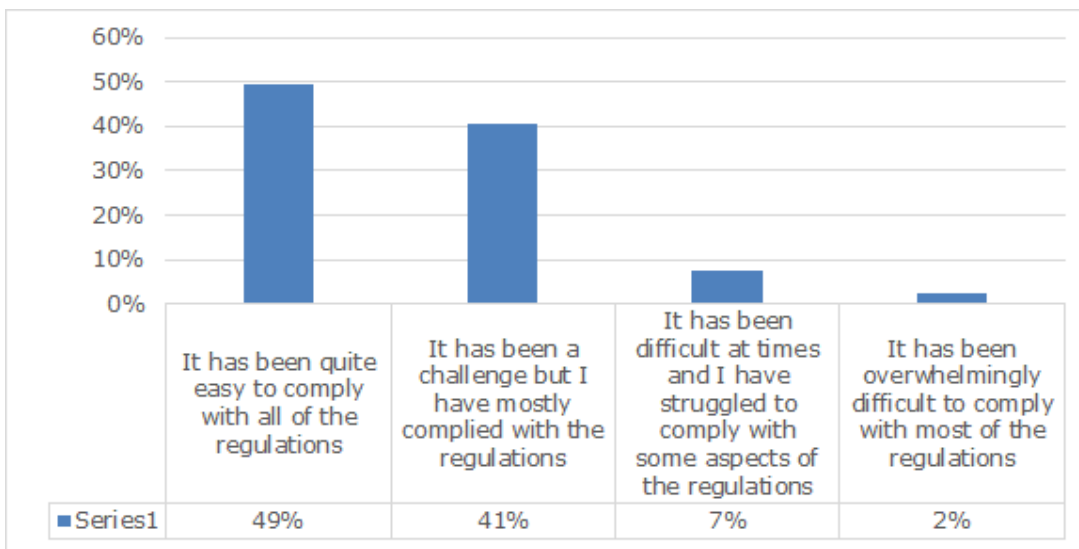
The effectiveness of the Operation TALLA policing strategy (the 4Es) is dependent largely on a combination of individual willingness and ability to comply with lockdown regulations. The main focus of the police service has been to engage with citizens, educate them on risks and the restrictions in places to manage risk, and encourage citizens to comply with regulations. The fourth E – enforcement, is only used when the first three stages are unsuccessful.

Through collection and analysis of evidence, the Authority has been satisfied that the people of Scotland have been, in the main, willing to comply with regulations and co-operate with the police service. Nevertheless the Authority also sought to

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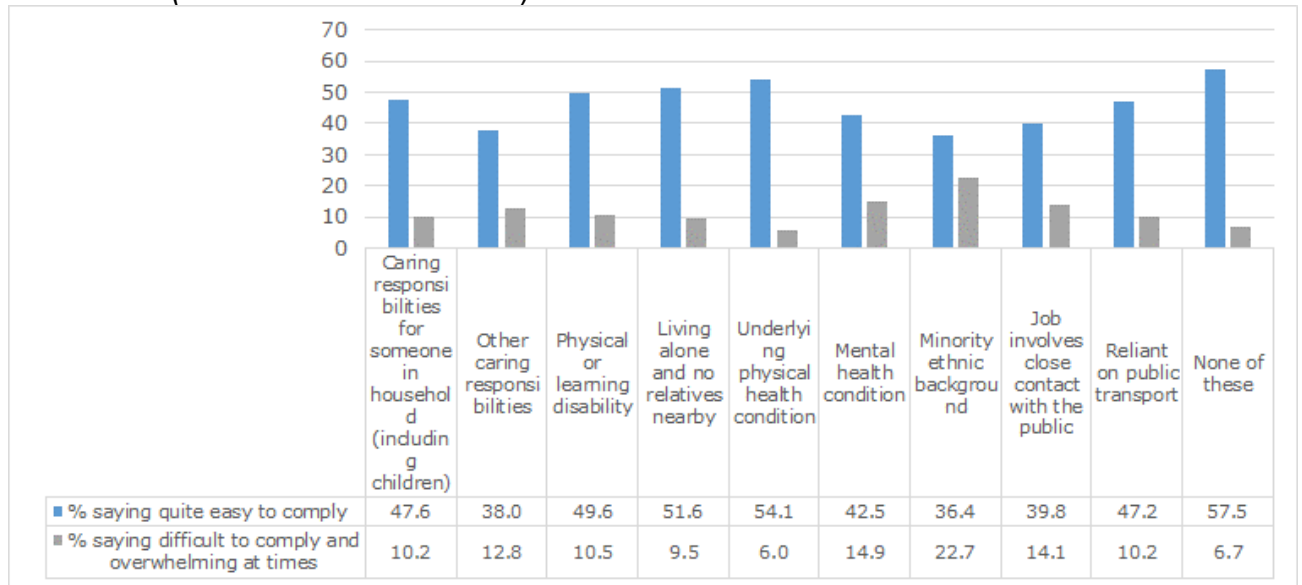
understand some of the factors that may be associated with instances of non-compliance, and work with Police Scotland to encourage greater compliance. Wave 3 (October 2020) of SPA commissioned polling asked people about their experience of complying with regulations in combination with their personal circumstances and areas of day-to-day challenge that could make compliance with regulations more difficult. For the population as a whole, 49% of people said that it had been quite easy to comply with all of the regulations – see Figure 7. A further 41% indicated that they had mostly complied with the regulations but found it challenging. Only a small proportion of the population had found compliance a struggle or overwhelmingly difficult (9%).

Figure 7 – Experience of complying with Lockdown regulations after the first six months (*Scottish Police Authority Survey (Wave 3 – October 2020)*)



A closer examination of the data by personal circumstances finds that there has been variation of experience among the population (see Figure 8). Respondents were provided with a long list of options to select to signify that a particular set of circumstances was applicable to them. 33% of people said that none applied to them, and for this group, 58% said that it had been quite easy to comply. People with at least one of the personal circumstances listed had found it less easy to comply, although overall compliance levels were very high. Factors such as having a caring responsibility, a job that involves close contact with the public, or having a mental condition were linked to the experience of trying to comply being more of a struggle or overwhelming. For people from a minority ethnic background, more people indicated difficulty in complying than the population more generally, however the sample size of 22 out of 3,791 means that this value should be considered with caution.

Figure 8 Personal Circumstances – ease of compliance versus difficulty after the first six months (Wave 3 – October 2020)



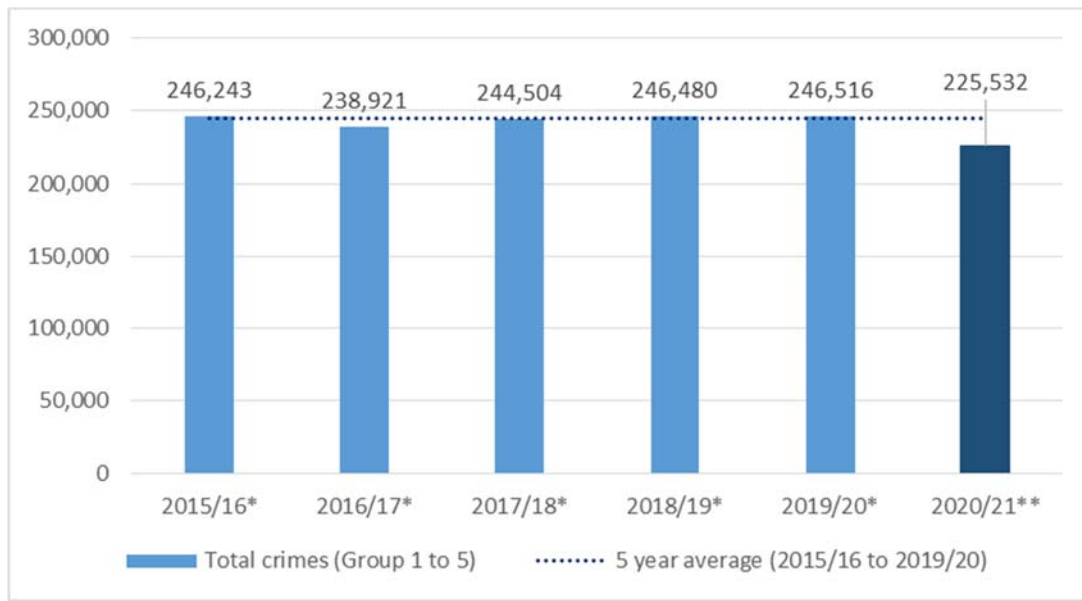
In summary the evidence collected has provided the Authority with an assurance that the public had, by October 2020, been complying (or trying exceptionally hard to comply) with lockdown regulations. The evidence does show, however, that compliance has proven much more challenging for some people because of their personal circumstances. The Authority is in the process of looking more closely at personal circumstances alongside social and demographic aspects of the data arising from the four survey waves and is due to report to the Policing Performance Committee in September 2021. Findings will be shared with the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board and its subgroup on Seldom Heard Voices.

For the following trend graphs at charts 1 to 7, note that the source of data is marked as follows:

Scottish Government Recorded Crime Data *

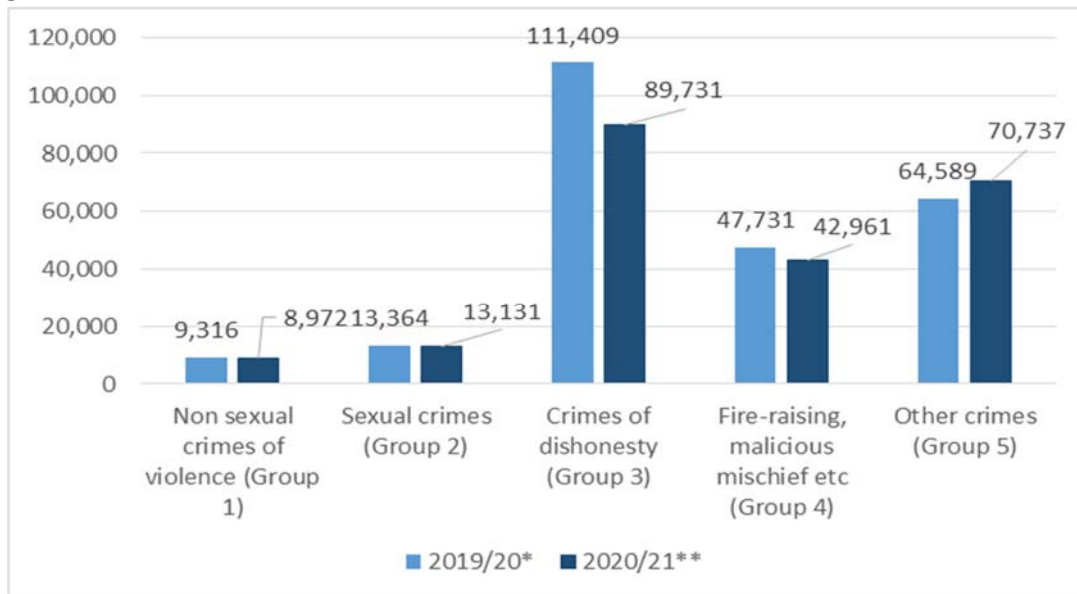
Police Scotland Management Information Data **

Chart 1 – Total crimes (Group 1 to 5), 2015/16 to 2020/21



Four out of the five crime groups had a reduction in the number of crimes in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20, as shown in chart 2 below.

Chart 2



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Members of the Policing Performance Committee expressed concern regarding the following trend variations and sought assurance on changes in patterns of crime and the potential for overall crime volumes to increase post lockdown:

- Increasing levels of fraud (particularly online)
- Increasing levels of online child sexual abuse
- Decreasing levels of domestic abuse resulting from possible under-reporting
- Increasing levels of assaults of emergency workers

Crime data trends

Chart 3 – Crimes of fraud, 2015/16 to 2020/21

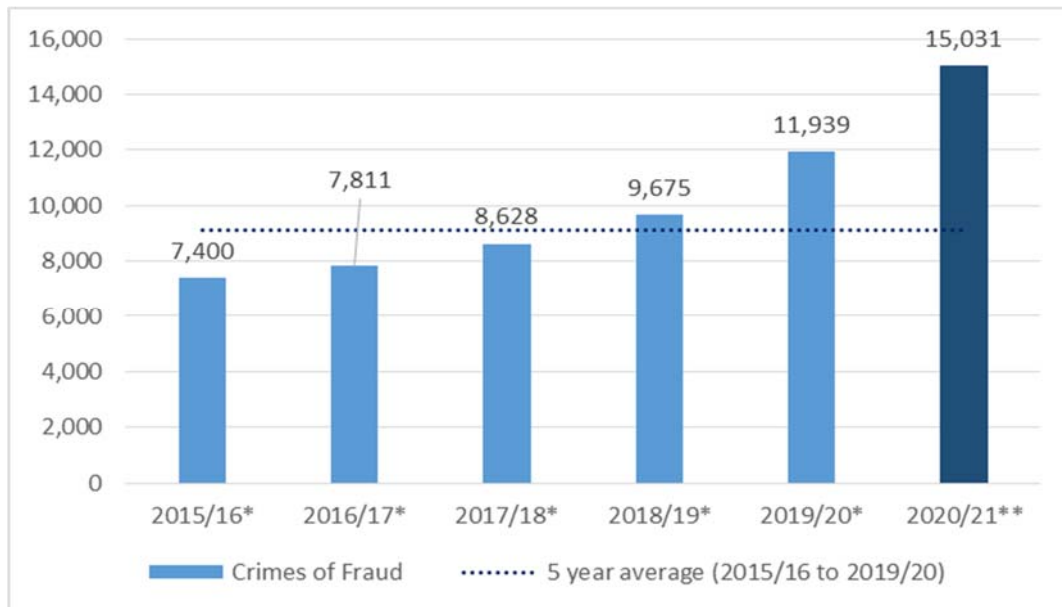


Chart 4 – Online child sexual abuse, 2016/17 to 2020/21

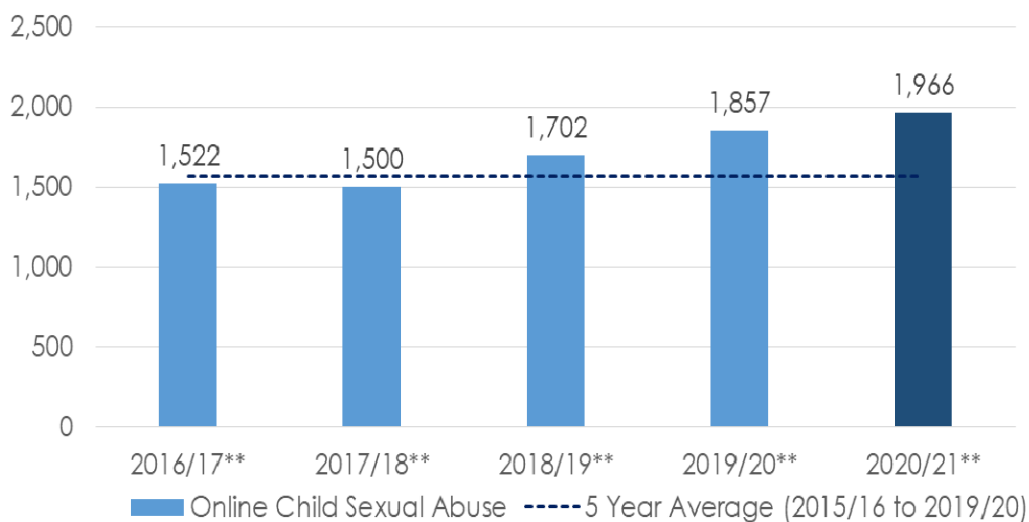


Chart 5 – Domestic abuse crimes, 2016/17 to 2020/21

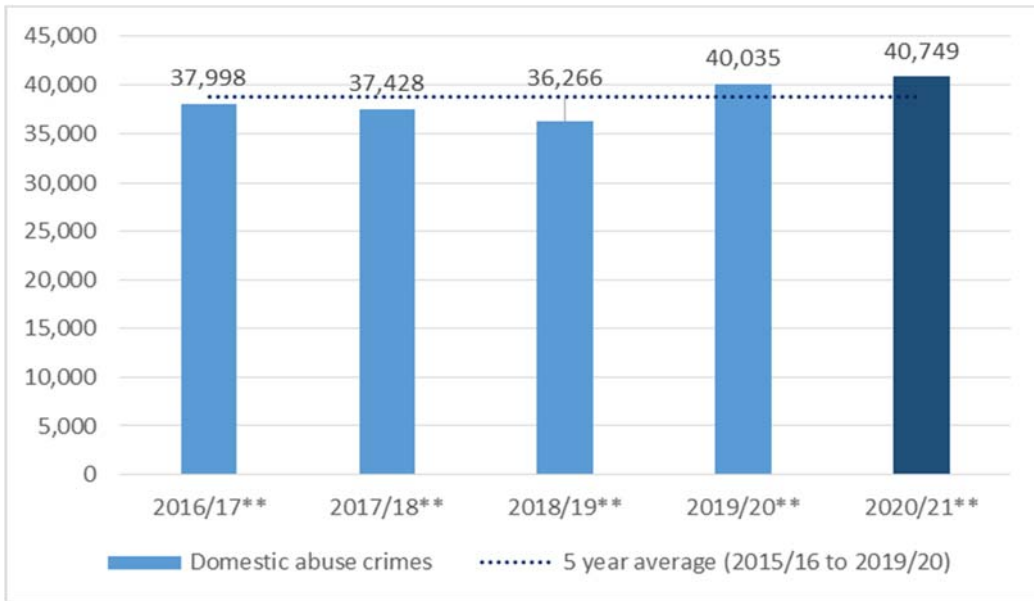
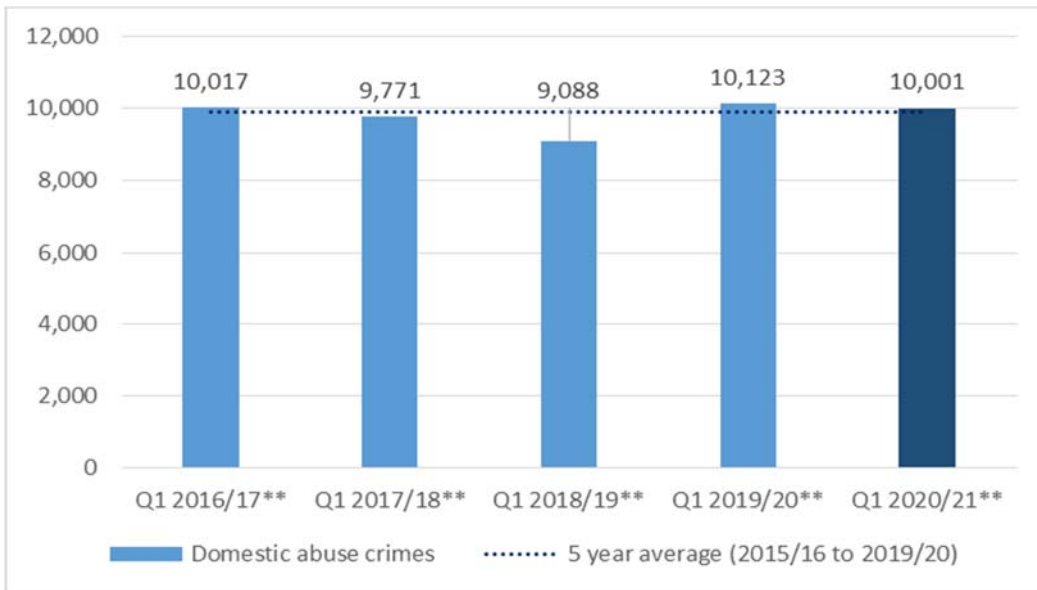


Chart 6 – Domestic abuse crimes Q1, 2016/17 to Q1 2020/21



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Chart 7 – Common assaults of Police Officer/Staff, 2016/17 to 2020/21

