

GD 2019/0027



# **CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**





Mr W Malarkey, MHK  
Minister  
Department of Home Affairs  
Tromode Road  
Douglas  
IM2 5PA

9th May 2019

Dear Minister

I am required by the Police Act 1993 to provide a report to you on the performance of the Constabulary. I have pleasure in attaching my report for the year to the end of March 2019.

During the year there was considerable evidence to show that the Constabulary enjoys great political support, which is important in terms of police legitimacy. I am therefore grateful to you for the important part that you have played in helping bring this about. The interest that you, your political colleagues in the Department of Home Affairs and members of the Council of Ministers have shown in policing has been of great encouragement to everyone in the Constabulary.

Yours sincerely

**Gary Roberts**  
**Chief Constable**



## **OVERVIEW**

A year ago I changed the format of my annual report in order to make it shorter and simpler to read. Generally speaking feedback on the changes was positive and I have retained the new style, which comprises an overview of the main issues affecting the Constabulary and its work to keep the Isle of Man safe, a high level interpretation of our performance data and a discussion of a handful of the most important strategic matters. The report contains a [link](#) to detailed performance charts and management information, which provide a wealth of data on crime, law enforcement, police activity and organisational performance.

In very broad terms there are some important headlines that summarise the last year. For example, the Isle of Man's position as the safest jurisdiction in the British Isles has been reinforced, despite an increase in recorded crime; the trend for our roads to become safer is continuing; mental health issues continue to occupy a lot of operational time; yet again record drugs seizures were made and, coincidentally, violent crime is increasing, albeit that it still a long way from levels seen a decade ago.

Behind the headlines there is growing complexity in terms of the demands facing the Constabulary. Demand – when measured by calls to the police – actually fell slightly, but recorded crime rose by 10%, albeit the reasons why are indeed complex. Offending by young people increased, in a way that was predicted when neighbourhood policing was reduced and when resources allocated by partner agencies to the prevention of youth offending were cut. However, in comparative terms the Isle of Man is even safer than a year ago when compared to England and Wales and to the Channel Islands. Minor collisions fell sharply, but the reduction in serious collisions was less precipitous. There was a 24% increase in incidents involving mental health issues, but there was sharp reduction in the time spent looking for people who had gone missing from home.

At the time of writing the Constabulary is in the throes of change: moving our focus from response to one largely predicated on prevention and harm reduction. Our ambition is set out in a new strategic plan for the four years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, which can be found [here](#). Hard work, collaboration with partner agencies, the imaginative thinking needed to tackle adverse childhood experiences (which I mentioned in my last annual report), and political and public support will bring success and the Isle of Man will remain an almost uniquely safe place to live. However, no one should be in any doubt that there are threats to this safety and it is incumbent on all of us who live here to work together to protect what we have.

Later in the report I will refer to several matters in some detail, particularly our efforts to tackle the threats caused by organised criminal groups, largely from Liverpool, who supply drugs to the Island. At this stage I want to pay particular tribute to a small team of intelligence and drug trafficking officers, whose work this year has been fantastic. They are simply the best of public servants.



## **JUST THREE THINGS**

In my report for 2017-18 I wrote at some length about the importance of new ways of thinking. In a section entitled "the biggest issue" I wrote about the changing nature of demand, the need for prevention to be at the forefront of operational and strategic thinking, the importance of neighbourhood policing, the complexity of the demands that we face, and about the financial challenges that have long been a part of how the Constabulary operates. All of the things I wrote a year ago still hold true.

Some progress has been made, but there is much to do if we are to create joined-up services that are locally based and which identify problems when they first appear, which put in place effective preventative solutions and which intervene at the earliest opportunity to help and support those most in need.

In the last year three major themes assumed even greater importance than before and all three of them require collaborative efforts across the public service in order to prevent and reduce harm: the trade in controlled drugs, increasing violence and the challenges in our community caused by mental health problems.

During the year the Constabulary seized more controlled drugs than ever before. We changed our tactics and reached out better than ever before to work with our policing partners in the United Kingdom. In three concurrent operations that straddled two years we took almost £2m worth of drugs, money and property (mainly vehicles used in the importation of drugs) from organised crime groups in the Merseyside area and from their operatives here in the Isle of Man. Some of the criminal prosecutions arising from this activity are sub judice, but some have already resulted in people receiving very lengthy prison sentences. Our focus has been as relentless as it has been effective, but it has highlighted the scale of the local drugs market which, even at a conservative estimate, is surely worth several £100,000s a month.

Cannabis was the drug most commonly seized. There will be people who disagree with the police spending time and resources on tackling the trade in cannabis. Any such view is naïve at several levels: cannabis is illegal and the Constabulary has no choice in what laws it enforces; our main focus is on traffickers, not on first time or low level users; the type of cannabis now being seized is much stronger than before and there are significant public health threats from its use, notably for young people; and – perhaps crucially – the dangerous, organised criminals who operate in Merseyside and who see the Isle of Man as being a lucrative marketplace for Class A drugs such as heroin and cocaine are the same people who supply cannabis. There is no such thing as a romantic, public –spirited cannabis trafficker: they are serious, often career, criminals.

Public debate about drugs has never been greater and the Isle of Man government is making bold steps to canvass public views about cannabis, medicinal use of cannabis products and about hemp. I will limit my comments to this: our current approach creates the environment within which organised crime flourishes. The only market is an illegal one which, by definition, is run by criminals, who happen to be violent. It is in their interests for the status quo to continue.



## **JUST THREE THINGS CONTINUED**

[Violence](#) is emerging as an issue for us. The Isle of Man is the safest of places and, while there was an upturn in recorded violence, levels are around half that of a decade or so ago. However, there are some signs of change that cause me concern. The use of cocaine appears to be increasing and there seem to be links between its use and more reports of assaults, especially at weekends and near to licensed premises. Capturing data to prove this is quite difficult and efforts are being made to obtain data from partner agencies, but operational officers routinely report greater levels of violence from people who are intoxicated, but who do not appear to have been drinking. There is a more worrying issue, though.

The Constabulary's undoubted success in tackling drug trafficking is creating changes in the drugs market. Seizures of drugs and cash create debt problems, as those arranging the importation of drugs have to pay up front for their supplies. When debt exists and when it cannot be repaid criminals often extract a form of payment through violence. The person owing the debt is often beaten and it is not unusual for considerable violence, including the use of weapons, to be exercised. Not all such beatings are reported to the police, but there is little doubt that a significant proportion of the increases in recorded violence is linked to drugs debt enforcement. We have not yet seen the criminal use of [firearms](#) in such cases, but some of the violence has been extreme and weapons have been used.

Ordinary people are most unlikely to fall victim to the kind of violence that I am describing. Random unprovoked assaults are very rare. However, as a society we need to be aware of the increasing challenges posed by drug trafficking and by its associated debt enforcement. Parents in particular need to be able to understand the signs that their children are starting to use drugs.

If drugs and violence are two important topics for discussion, then mental health is the third. I have previously written at length about the complex nature of demand faced by the police arising from community mental health problems. During the course of my tenure [mental health matters](#) have become one of the most seemingly intractable and growing causes of demand on the police. The 2018-19 year was no different than the previous six or seven: more and more of the calls that we received from the public were about mental health matters, more and more of the incidents that we attended had a mental health element to them (up 24% on the previous year) and more and more of those coming into our custody had mental health problems.

The year saw the continuation of close collaborative working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Whilst some of the effort involved the better training of officers on mental health matters, there was also a great deal of activity to help bring together a host of partner agencies, including the ambulance service and the emergency department of Noble's Hospital. In many ways, though, the most important (and surely the most welcome) development was the trial secondment by the DHSC of two mental health professionals to the Constabulary. They worked with operational officers and were able to give clear and unambiguous advice to officers, as well as providing an effective response to members of the public who had called the police for help. [Data](#) has been collated to show the demands that we faced during the year and this data will be used to help build a business case to obtain funding to make the trial permanent and to extend its reach.



## WHAT OUR DATA SAYS

There has long been a tendency to judge police effectiveness by the level of [recorded crime](#). Such a simplistic approach overlooks the complexities of modern policing. Nevertheless, the overall level of crime is important and this year it rose by 10% or 221 offences. This increase was composed of almost 80 extra [drugs offences](#), almost 50 more offences of [assault](#) and around 70 extra financial crime offences. The increase in [financial crime](#) has several explanations: (a) greater effectiveness – the Financial Intelligence Unit has grown in effectiveness since its formation and it now refers more matters to the police for investigation, an increasing number of which are recorded as crimes; (b) greater awareness of who has fallen victim to off-Island fraudsters – during the year the Constabulary concluded discussions with UK authorities, which allowed us to see (and record) for the first time reports made directly to [Action Fraud](#) by local residents; (c) changes to recording - the [Fraud Act](#) became effective during the year and this actually created new categories for offences.

[The composition of our crime is changing](#). In 2015-16 drugs offences accounted for just 13% of all recorded crime, whereas last year they comprised 18% of all offences. This is a significant shift in a short period of time.

Crime rose in [all areas of the Island](#), except for the west where there is evidence to show that a robust approach taken to a handful of young, recidivist offenders, including the obtaining against them of [Anti-Social Behaviour](#) Orders, made a difference. Our approach to [youth offending](#) is being overhauled across the Island and I am confident that we will make inroads into it in a way that will bring sustainable reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour. This overhaul will include extra focus being given to those aged 18-25, with the aim being to stop them from offending by using the sorts of diversionary schemes that formerly were only used for young offenders. The changes in approach follow the demise of the [Youth Justice Team](#) in the autumn of 2018 and, whilst little would be gained by conducting a public post-mortem, it is clear that there is not yet a consensus across the public service about the importance of prevention and early intervention. We must get our approach to youth offending right and the year saw the launch of a new team designed to fill the gap left by the ending of the Youth Justice Team. It has plenty of work to do: the number of individuals referred to the team once rose from 144 to 176; the number referred twice from 19 to 36; the number referred three times from 7 to 16; and the number four times from 13 to 22. One young person was referred 28 times!

A critical aspect of our approach to crime recording is the comparative work that we do. [Data](#) unambiguously shows that crime levels here are now at a quarter the level of England and Wales, compared to a little more than a half four or five years ago. It also shows that there is less crime per 1000 population here than in the Channel Islands, where crime recording standards used in the Isle of Man since 2001 have now been adopted.

Further analysis of crime to look at the harm caused by different types of offences continues to show that sexual offences are the most harmful in the Isle of Man. The year saw further reporting of non-recent [sexual offences](#) and further excellent work was undertaken by specialist detectives, who undoubtedly supported many vulnerable victims and who obtained some notable and important convictions.



## WHAT OUR DATA SAYS CONTINUED

The [detection rate for crime](#) was the highest for several years at 49.6% and this [compares favourably](#) with 13.8% in England and Wales, 30.6% in Jersey and 19.1% in Guernsey.

Calls to the [emergency services joint control room](#) fell by 14%, but this is misleading. For example, there were fewer major weather events in 2018-19 than in the previous year and both the TT and the Manx Grand Prix / Festival of Motorcycling periods were comparatively quiet.

[Road traffic collisions](#) fell by 12% and at 776 for the year the overall level was low. There were, though, six fatal collisions and, whilst serious collisions declined by 7%, there is much work to do to make the Island's roads safer. The year saw Tynwald approve a new road safety strategy, which can be found [here](#). As can be seen, the strategy requires improvements in data collection and analysis, but it will also necessitate greater enforcement activity by the police. This will be handled in a sensitive way and it is important that the public is able to see a link between safety and enforcement, instead of one between income generation and enforcement. However, the data clearly shows that more enforcement activity is already underway: for example there was an increase in [drink-driving arrests](#) and a very sizable increase in the number of people prosecuted or given an [endorseable fixed penalty](#) notice for speeding.

Some other interesting things to arise from our data include the following:

- The [drug arrest referral scheme](#), designed to divert first time and low level offenders from the criminal justice system, has seen a trebling of persons entered onto the scheme since 2014-15.
- A doubling of the street value of [cannabis bush seized](#). (Over £0.5m.)
- An upturn in the [taking of vehicles without consent](#) from 36 to 51, all of which involved cars and vans being left unlocked and with the keys inside.
- A further reduction in reports of [anti-social behaviour](#), which fell by 13%. However, drunkenness rose slightly.
- [Arrests](#) rose by 19%, but are still some way below the levels seen before legislative changes designed to bring human rights tests into police arrests powers. Arrests for breach of court bail showed a worrying increase: from 49 last year to 86 this year.
- [Complaints against police officers](#) were very low – just seven in the year.
- Close working with St Christopher's the body responsible for care facilities for young people helped bring about a 43% reduction in the hours spent by officers looking for [missing people](#). Almost 1500 officer hours were saved during the year.
- [Police officer sickness](#) remains generally low, but there was a slight increase during the year.
- Our deployment of [armed officers](#) rose to 15 times in the year, the highest level for some considerable time. This reflects better training and confidence amongst operational commanders, but it also touches upon the [violence](#) I have mentioned elsewhere and an increasing propensity for people to use (or at least threaten to use) weapons.



The page is framed by a border of Isle of Man One Pound banknotes. The border consists of a top row of four notes, a bottom row of four notes, and vertical columns of three notes on the left and right sides. Each banknote features the profile of Queen Elizabeth II, the Isle of Man coat of arms, and the text 'ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT' and 'One Pound'.

## FINANCIAL CRIME

It is important that I again make specific mention of financial crime matters, given the considerable international scrutiny under which we continue to operate. In order to help illustrate the demands that we routinely encounter and in addition to the charts found under the earlier link, I have included on the next page an infographic that shows the type of work under taken by the Constabulary's Economic Crime Unit (ECU).

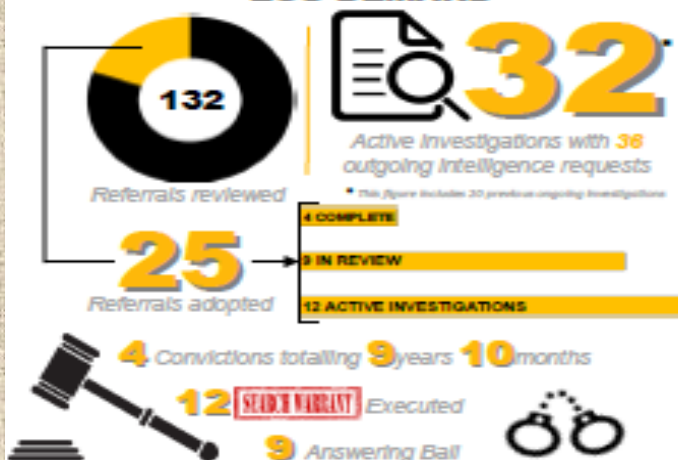
The infographic does not tell the whole story: the types of work being dealt with by officers from the ECU and complex and investigations often take years. For example, one investigation, which has run for a decade, is hugely active and continues to make good progress. There is an interesting issue in terms of how the Constabulary demonstrates its effectiveness when challenged by international bodies: simply obtaining convictions seems to be a measure favoured by some scrutiny bodies, but this approach brings the temptation of picking low hanging fruit in the form of convictions for minor matters, rather than for the lengthy, high value, cross-jurisdictional cases. Our focus will be on these major matters, which often have the greatest potential to cause harm to the Island's reputation. It is this approach which has helped the Island in its successful work with various international bodies during the year.

Support from the Treasury has meant that, after several difficult years, a proper plan is now in place to ensure that the ECU's resources match the demands that it faces. This includes the provision of effective technological solutions to enable faster investigations when vast amounts of data are involved.

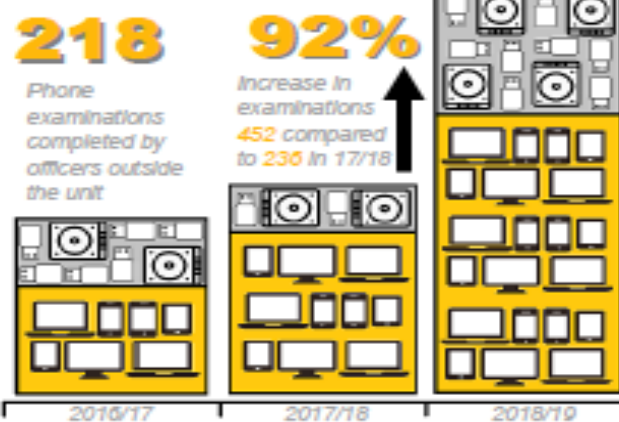


## 2018/19 YEAR REVIEW

## ECU DEMAND



## HTCU DEMAND

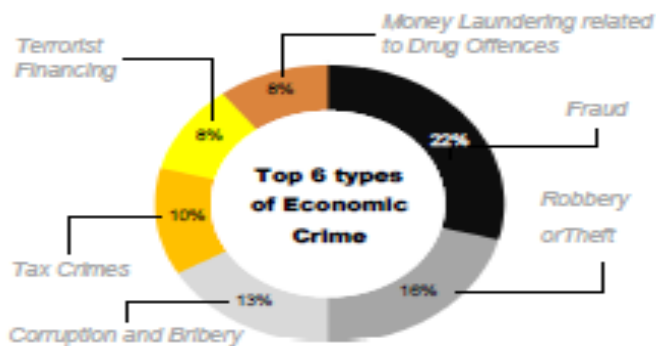


**Formulations are categorized:**

## WORKING WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS AND AGENCIES



## WHAT THREATS ARE WE FACING?

**MONEY**

**£47m**

Total amount the  
ECU has in  
restraint

**£78k**

Total amount  
confiscated in  
2018/19

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



Data range: April 1, 2018 - March 30, 2019.

**Economic Crime Unit**  
**High Tech Crime Unit**





## **ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS**

It is a privilege to lead the Constabulary. I say this because of the things that I see being done every single day by police officers, Special Constables, members of our support staff and community volunteers. It is difficult to describe just how much they care about what they do and about how they can keep the Isle of Man safe. [This year \(as in just about every year\) some people owe their lives to the courage and quick thinking of individual officers](#); there are victims who only obtained justice after years of abuse because of the skill and compassion of investigators; and there have been countless pieces of good work, often performed by very young officers. The contribution that volunteers make is especially worthy of note. For example, last year for the first time the Department of Infrastructure set a speed limit for the Douglas to Ramsey coast road during the TT period as part of its efforts to make the roads safer. This presented real challenges in terms of enforcement, which we met because of the Special Constabulary, whose officers took responsibility for the road and patrolled it and enforced the new limit with determination and common sense. As a result, only one collision occurred on what had become a dangerous road and people living in places like Laxey felt safer as they went about their lives.

Mention of the TT brings me to a tragic incident, which occurred during the 2018 event. Police officers were being driven to the scene of a fatal crash by a race official in a course car, which collided with a racing machine, which had been allowed to travel back against the flow of the course. Although the officers were not hurt, the rider of the machine suffered life changing injuries. Systemic failures outside the control of the Constabulary led to the crash occurring and I look forward to improvements being made in time for the 2019 event.

The Constabulary overspent its [budget](#) for the first time for a considerable time. The overspend was largely, but not exclusively, because pay increases of 2% were made, when the budget had been planned to cater for a 1% increase. Considerable expenditure on financial crime cases in terms of obtaining specialist legal and forensic accountancy support were also costly and had not been budgeted for. All of this said, financial discipline continued to improve, despite our structurally flawed budget. It is encouraging that Treasury is now alive to this issue.

The planned implementation of the Constabulary's new core IT system ran into difficulties and it faced more delays. Originally planned to go live in the autumn of 2017, it will now become operational in June 2019. The delays were all outside the Constabulary's control, with the latest delay coming because of technical difficulties in migrating data from the Constabulary's plethora of legacy systems onto the new, single platform. However, the system is clearly an excellent one and the Constabulary successfully completed a rigorous and challenging training programme on time. This work meant that, from the end of the summer of 2018 until the end of the winter in 2019, the organisation had to run at about two-thirds capacity, with officers and support staff undergoing rigorous training.



## **ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS CONTINUED**

Running below capacity is always challenging and there is a danger that the absence of officers can exacerbate stresses felt by their colleagues. [Sickness](#) rose slightly, but it is still reasonably low and casual sickness is low. The longer term sickness arose mainly, but not exclusively, from psychiatric conditions often linked to exposure to trauma. The Constabulary is not alone in seeing this: poor mental health is increasingly a factor in police sickness and in worsening retention rates in England and Wales. Work continued during the year both to try to improve the identification of those at risk of falling ill and to help equip officers to stay well. This work is important at a time when the Constabulary is a young organisation: its front line officers are very young in service and, whilst they are keen and enthusiastic, keeping them well is a challenge.

A lot of work was undertaken during the year to deal with police pensions. A terrifically mature approach was adopted by the Police Federation board, whose members joined a working party on police pensions. As a result, changes were made to how ill-health retirements are obtained and managed. Work was also undertaken to improve the management of absence, so as to help officers, who are off on a long-term basis, return to work.

Recruitment continued to be more difficult than used to be the case. Comparatively low starting pay, full employment and negative UK media stories about policing combined to make our efforts difficult. That said, we managed to recruit some excellent young local people and we supplemented their numbers with experienced officers from the UK, who joined on transfer. I intend to try to ensure that, in the medium term, we recruit on two-thirds local to one-third transferee basis and some of the local recruitment will come from a new and really fruitful route, which is seeing young graduates of our wonderful volunteer youth scheme joining as Constables, either when they are old enough, or after a spell in the Special Constabulary.

In my last report I mentioned our relationship with the College of Policing. Genuine problems arose because of our lack of access to intellectual property owned by the College for which fee well beyond our resources was being sought. The Crown Dependency police forces and the Royal Gibraltar Police collaborated and were able to negotiate a way forward that will allow us to keep in step with developments in the UK, so that our officers continue to be trained to UK standards. This collaboration with the other small jurisdictions is important and it offers a glimpse of a more cohesive future. [Here](#) you will find a link to a formal collaboration agreement between these police forces.





## **THE FUTURE**

In February 2019 Tynwald approved a new budget, which contained the first significant growth in the Constabulary's resources for over a decade. A series of business cases had been submitted to seek extra funding for roads policing officers, more officers to combat drug trafficking, extra detectives to deal with sexual abuse cases, more officers for specialist neighbourhood policing, extra funding for training and development, and more money for the fight against financial crime, notably for the purchase of a new IT system. The level of support shown by the Council of Ministers and by Tynwald is greatly appreciated by everyone in the Constabulary.

Coincidentally the Constabulary's strategic plan expired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The new plan, which can be found [here](#), sets the Constabulary on a slightly different path. Greater focus will be given to prevention and reduction activities, to problem solving and to collaboration, both at a local level to tackle vulnerability and offending, but at a national level work with partners on critical issues such as adverse childhood experiences. There is much work to do to keep the Island safe, but the plan spells out the ambition that the Constabulary has.

The new plan and the extra funding will necessitate some structural alterations, so that policing is delivered in a way that makes a real difference. Those changes will be announced in the first half of the 2019-20 year and will likely be effective from the second half, so as to allow time to recruit and train extra officers.

One aspect of our future development will see greater use of technology. It is intended that the Constabulary should enter into a collaborative agreement with a technology provider, offering itself as a test bed for cutting edge police products in a way that benefits the public and officers alike. The Constabulary still has a lot of work to do in terms of cybercrime and 2019-20 will see the creation of a proper strategy to deal with this complex and fast changing issue.

The introduction of our new core IT system, Connect, will change how we capture and record data, how we present it and indeed what we collect. This will have implications for next year's report, so it is important even at this stage to highlight that some of the comparisons that we have been using in recent years may be very different in future.

Whatever happens in the future, there is no doubt at all that individual police officers, Special Constables, support staff and volunteers will continue to do all that they can to maintain our precious way of life.





## **ALL CHARTS**

[All Charts](#)

[All Arrests](#)

[All Island Recorded Crime](#)

[Antisocial Behaviour](#)

[Assaults Excluding Domestic Assaults](#)

[Bail Arrests](#)

[Breakdown of Individual Offences Recorded \(3 years\)](#)

[Burglary Dwelling and Burglary Other](#)

[Complaints against Police](#)

[Crime Comparison with other Jurisdictions](#)

[Crime Severity](#)

[Criminal Damage](#)

[Customer Satisfaction Survey](#)

[Demand infographic](#)

[Deployment of Police Officers](#)

[Domestic Assaults](#)

[Drink Driving Arrests](#)

[Drug Offences](#)

[Economic Crime](#)

[Emergency Services Joint Control Room](#)

[Finance](#)

[Firearms](#)

[Freedom of Information](#)

[Geographical Crime](#)

[Independent Custody Visits \(IMB\)](#)

[Mental Health Matters](#)

[Miscellaneous Crimes and Offences](#)

[Missing Persons](#)

[Other Crimes](#)

[Payment of Fines \(EFPNS\)](#)

[Policing Plan](#)

[Public Order](#)

[Public Protection Investigations](#)

[Recognition \(Annual Awards Ceremony\)](#)

[Registered Sex Offenders](#)

[Road Traffic Collisions](#)

[Sickness](#)

[Stop Searches](#)

[Taking Conveyances without Consent \(TWOC\)](#)

[Theft](#)

[Type of Offences](#)

[Youth Justice Team \(PEAT\)](#)