



POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee Report

**Aberdeen City Division
2015 Quarters 1 & 2 (April - September)**



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Introduction

It is with pleasure that I present the latest Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee Report on behalf of Police Scotland, Aberdeen City Division. This report provides a detailed account of our performance in support of both local and national priorities, for Quarters 1 and 2, 2015-16 (April 2015 - September 2015).

You will see from the figures that we continue to move in the right direction. This has not been achieved by Police Scotland in isolation but by the continued support of our partners and communities across Aberdeen.

We are committed to dealing with those issues which really matter to people and will deliver the policing service our communities tell us they want for Aberdeen.

As previously requested by the Committee, in the agreed format, this report provides an update and context regarding:

- Staffing
- Theft by Shoplifting
- Complaints About the Police.

together with the priorities set out in the Local Policing Plan, namely:

- Antisocial Behaviour;
- Housebreaking;
- National Security;
- Protecting People;
- Safer Roads;
- Serious and Organised Crime; and
- Violent Crime

On 1 January 2016, Aberdeen City Division together with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division will become North East Division, led by Chief Superintendent Campbell Thomson.

The main drivers for Police Scotland will remain the delivery of better targeted local policing; improved access to local policing; improvements to the quality of policing service; and a policing service which is more sustainable and cost-effective.

As an organisation, our focus is on keeping people safe and the local policing service we provide to communities is the foundation stone on which Police Scotland is based. The strength of Police Scotland is, and will always remain; the people who work for the organisation and who, 24/7 are helping to keep our communities safe.



In continuing to work closely and positively together with partners to serve our communities, I feel we can be justly proud of the progress we have made in making North East Division one of the safest of its kind in the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Watson', is positioned below the main text. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Adrian Watson
Chief Superintendent
Divisional Commander
31 December 2015



Staffing

As of 31 December 2015, Aberdeen City Division had the following staff numbers:

	Establishment	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent	Vacancies
Police Officers	559	547	537.08	21.92
Police Staff	61.57	61	52.34	9.23

This represents the highest number of officers in the Division both pre and post Police Scotland. As such, recruitment levels have been positive throughout the current financial year and we have been successful in attracting locally based applicants. This work will continue in the remainder of 2015-16 and into the next financial year.

Complaints About the Police

Encouragingly, April to September 2015 saw a drop in complaints (**115**) from the same period in 2014 (**125**) in 2013 (**144**). It is assessed this is partly due to learning points being shared with individual Officers and also more widely across the Division. This figure of 115 complaints equates to **35.1** Complaints per **10,000** Police Incidents.

The Early Intervention Management Plan (previously carried out by Aberdeen City Division) seeks to identify Officers with multiple complaints and is now led by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and commenced formally on 1 May 2015 nationwide. It involves a threshold of 4 complaints being received against an officer over a 12 month period and once this threshold is triggered an assessment of these complaints is made. It must be noted that this does not always mean the officer is doing anything wrong, but does facilitate the process of intervention that allows Police Scotland to support the officer, as it is recognised that receiving complaints can have a negative impact on the officer both personally and professionally. This is having a positive impact, with fewer officers being subject to new complaints post intervention.

A total of **174** allegations were made during the review period, with the vast majority being found to relate to matters which had occurred On Duty (**130**) and were for the most part at the lower end of the scale of alleged behaviour (Incivility/Irregularity in Procedure etc.). It is also noteworthy that many of the incivility allegations related to an individual's perception of how something was said by an Officer, as opposed to the actual wording used.

From 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015, PSD closed **214** allegations pertaining to Aberdeen City Division, with **21** being Upheld (**10%**). It should be noted that there can be multiple allegations in one complaint case, some of which can be upheld and others not, thus any direct comparison between specific timescales is discouraged. Also it is highlighted that the allegations closed during the review period will not directly equate to the number of allegations received as each one is carefully reviewed and investigated on an individual basis prior to resolution over variable timescales.



It is also appreciated that any feedback gained through the complaints process is an essential form of information that allows Police Scotland as an organisation to learn and grow and is an excellent measure of public satisfaction.

Theft by Shoplifting

Our objective continues to be the reduction and detection of Retail Crime. However, Aberdeen City Division experienced a **+22%** increase in such crime over the review period compared to the same period in 2014. Encouragingly the detection rate remains high at **76.6%** which is similar to 2014 (**75.4%**) and the 5 Year Average (**74.9%**) but clearly such crimes have been identified as a particular issue.

The specific causes of this rise could not be attributed to any specific factor although a significant number of crimes were found to be sporadic and opportunistic in nature and many relate to thefts of very low value items such as foodstuffs which were attributed to a hard-core of prolific thieves.

In order to tackle this issue, specific crime prevention measures, staff education, targeted patrols and robust enforcement were implemented in "hotspot" areas and specific vulnerable premises. Operation Oak within the City Centre continues to target Theft by Shoplifting and an additional four officers have been seconded to this unit. Additionally named officers are now acting as Single Points of Contact with all City Centre shopping centres and main retailers to further improve the combating of Retail Crime and increase the quantity and quality of intelligence regarding those involved to further improve the targeting of serial offenders. As a result, more regular partnership meetings are now held with the management of the City's main retailers to identify and discuss issues of concern and further improve crime prevention.

Antisocial Behaviour

We continue to focus on preventing Antisocial Behaviour (ASB). Our objectives include a commitment to:

- *Reduce the number of incidents of ASB reported by members of the public;*
- *Decrease the number of complaints regarding youth disorder;*
- *Prevent hate crime;*
- *Achieve a detection rate of 80% for hate crime;*
- *Decrease instances of vandalism;*
- *Work with partners to reduce the harm associated with the use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS).*

Aberdeen currently retains its 'Purple Flag' status thereby recognising the commitment from over 70 partner agencies who work together to create and continue to ensure a safe and secure environment for all who, live, work and socialise in the City.



Encouragingly, the number of complaints received regarding disorder fell by 304 (-**5.3%**) during the review period

Street Drinking has been the subject of a concerted initiative over the course of the reporting period which has focused on those habitually involved in consuming alcohol in public places. In addition to enforcement action additional work was undertaken with partner agencies to afford access to support services for those with alcohol related issues. As part of the City 'Hotel Watch' initiative officers have engaged with visitors to the City to highlight relevant bye-laws to prevent those who may be unaware of the street drinking restriction contravening them. As a result we have seen a **-71.6%** drop in the number of such incidents when compared to 2014.

Currently, ASB Orders (ASBOs) are in place for **7** violent recidivists. This year to date, **5** of these offenders have been caught for variously breaching their ASBOs a total of **15** times. On **7** of these occasions, the offender was arrested prior to any other offence being committed.

There were **1107** incidents of youth annoyance during the review period. This is a decrease of almost **-15%** compared with the same period in 2014/15, representing almost **200** fewer incidents over this period. Over half of neighbourhoods reported significant decreases in numbers of youth-tagged incidents compared to 2014/15. Of the five neighbourhoods which have experienced an increase in youth disorder, only two have experienced significant increases. Both of these neighbourhoods have responded to rising youth disorder through targeted police operations, including Operation Acer in Union Square (City Centre) and Operation Smallwood in Balnagask (Torry). Month-to-month, April was the only period in which an overall increase in youth disorder was observed. Northfield, which has historically experienced high levels of youth disorder, recorded a reduction of over **50%** in the number of incidents when compared with the same period in 2014/15.

Across the Division the management of hate crime and the detection of such offences continue to be given a high priority and they are reviewed daily at a number of levels from the operational levels through to the strategically driven Senior Management Team meeting. During the review period the detection rate for hate crime remained at a high level (**79.3%**) and is comparable to 2014 (**79.7%**). With the deployment of specialist officers and consultation with key partners, including those within the Community Safety Hub, every effort is made to react quickly to reports of hate crime, to support the victims and to take steps to find appropriate solutions within the communities and with the individuals concerned.

In April to September 2015, the number of reported vandalism and malicious mischief dropped by 53, representing a reduction of just over **-4.3%**. This is a direct result of targeting resources in affected communities and has resulted in the detection rates for such crimes rising by **+1.1%** to **27%** during the review period.

The use of NPS in Aberdeen City and the harm they cause remains a concern for Police Scotland and our partners. This period has seen staff working with Alcohol and



Drug Partnerships, Direct Access and Aberdeen City Council to provide interactive NPS awareness which has included the 'Not for Human Consumption' Roadshow within a number of secondary schools in the City. Recent Trading Standards enforcement action has supported efforts to address the issues raised by NPS. Additionally, in June 2015, an ASB Order was served on an NPS Shop in George Street, Aberdeen, which was the first such closure in Scotland.

Housebreaking

We continue to focus our policing activity on detection opportunities, using our resources intelligently, collaborating with partners to reduce the opportunity for housebreaking and effectively targeting those involved in this intrusive crime. Our objectives include a commitment to:

- *Reduce the level of all forms of housebreaking;*
- *Increase the detection rate for all forms of Housebreaking.*

The period April to September 2015 saw a significant reduction in reported housebreakings of **-18.1%** compared to 2014 and a fall of **-40%** over a 5 year period. Whilst a reduction in overall detection rates (**-5.9%**) has been recorded from the same period in 2014, this should be viewed in conjunction with the significant fall in this crime as a whole.

To add some context, approximately **65%** of reported housebreakings within Aberdeen City Division were 'non domestic dwellings' such as sheds, garages and commercial premises. From a follow up perspective, all victims of a shed or garage break-in are contacted by Crime Reduction Officers who supply security related packs. These packs include alarms and advice to home owners regarding additional security measures which can be adopted to help prevent them becoming victims of such crimes in the future.

Throughout the summer months further campaigns directly targeting homeowners including "peace of mind while you are away" and "helping you travel safely" imparted home security advice to those leaving their properties vacant during holiday periods.

Members of the community can be assured that every instance of domestic housebreaking is reviewed by specialist officers within CID Proactive Teams in order that all investigative opportunities are fully pursued. This scrutiny ensures that, in addition to evidence obtained from eye witnesses, all CCTV, media and forensic opportunities are considered and actioned where appropriate.

Recognising the serious nature of these crimes, Scenes of Crime Officers prioritise the forensic examination of homes which have been the subject of a break-in thus ensuring all forensic opportunities are followed up as soon as possible.



National Security

- *Increase community engagement and intelligence in support of the CONTEST Strategy;*
- *Deliver training and briefings to organisations, community groups and partner agencies in support of the 4 'P's';*
- *Co-ordinate the work within the Divisional Action Plan through the Divisional CONTEST Multi-Agency Group.*

The UK Government CONTEST Strategy sets out how the Government, Police Scotland and partners are working to protect the UK from international terrorism and national extremism.

The CONTEST Strategy is based on 4 strands of activity - Prepare, Protect, Prevent Pursue, with specific responsibilities now placed on Statutory bodies around the Prevent strand.

The threat to the UK and our interests from International Related Terrorism remains at Severe, meaning an attack is highly likely. Despite the overall threat to the UK, Aberdeen and the North East remains a safe place to live.

There are a number of CONTEST related groups in Aberdeen City Division which include the following:

- Superintendent (Operations) chairs a Partners Group involving a number of relevant agencies.
- Chief Inspector (Partnerships) leads a monthly Divisional CONTEST Governance Group, attended by the Divisional Strand Leads.

Both inform the Divisional CONTEST Implementation Plan, which drives the work of both the Division and Partners, including the rollout of training and briefings across the partners themselves and the wider community. This is now seeing the evolution of a Prevent specific subgroup to support the partners in meeting their Prevent duties.

Each Community Policing Team (CPT) has a dedicated Divisional CONTEST Liaison Officer (DCLO) who receives regular updates on the National Picture, attends training sessions and undertakes specific CONTEST Tasks within their CPT. The DCLOs are also charged with increasing the understanding of CONTEST within their respective CPTs.

The Emergency and Resilience Planning Unit have responsibility for conducting preventative work through the role of the Counter Terrorism Security Advisors. They provide advice, support and training to external partners to increase the safety and resilience of buildings and public places to terrorist attacks.

Additionally, the Unit works to deliver an excellent integrated emergency response to enable us to work in conjunction with key responders and other partners to provide an effective response to all forms of 'emergencies', which could include terrorist attacks.



Protecting People

The focus of Police activity seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities are protected and feel safe. This will be achieved by identifying victims of crime and ensuring support mechanisms are in place for them. Our objectives include a commitment to:

- *Deliver and embed GIRFEC into the practices of Officers and Staff across Aberdeen City Division;*
- *Enhance child protection by ensuring police attend partner agency Child Protection Hearings;*
- *Work together with partners to protect adults at risk as effectively as possible;*
- *Increase detection rates for crimes of domestic abuse and sexual offences.*

Aberdeen City Division remains committed to effective information sharing with the Named Person for each child. Following extensive online and face-to-face training, front line officers are now knowledgeable of practices involving GIRFEC and the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 2014 and on every occasion a concern is raised for a child or young person, information is shared with the appropriate Named Person.

Additionally, as a Division we have remained committed to attending 100% of initial Child Protection Case Conferences and members of staff undertake to attend case reviews ensuring a continued robust and informed multi-agency approach to protecting the most vulnerable children and young people.

Tackling domestic abuse remains a national and local priority and covers a broad range of incidents, from serious crimes of violence, sexual offences, stalking and harassment to Breach of the Peace. Our focus is on keeping people safe and integral to this is the reduction of violence in the home.

Almost 20% of operational Police time is spent dealing with domestic abuse issues. Officers continue to focus on building excellence in investigative practices, enhancing support for victims, increasing our focus on perpetrators and building effective partnerships. As such we have seen the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police drop by **-19%** and the number of resulting crimes and offences drop by **-10.9%**. In order to further reduce domestic abuse a bench mark of **95%** of initial bail checks for such offences conducted within a prescribed timeframe (24 hours) has been set and a compliance rate of **99%** was achieved for the review period.

Significantly, a large increase in the number of sexual crimes being reported has been experienced (**+53.4%**) in the review period. The widespread nature of sexual offences suggests that there is no single factor responsible for the increase experienced. The use of the internet and social media, the recording of historic offences and increased public confidence may have contributed to the increase in the number of rape and indecent communication offences recorded. It is however worthy of note that although this crime type saw a significant increase between 2014 and 2015 this was from a relatively low base in the previous period (2013 - 2014).



The detection rate for rape remains high (**92%**, an increase of **+27.9%**) with investigations supported by a robust review process for all undetected crimes of this nature.

Aberdeen City Division has contributed locally to the national 'We Can Stop It' campaign with educational media releases outlining what constitutes rape as well as releasing preventative messages targeting 16 to 27 year old males, who statistically are most likely to offend. The 'We Can Stop It' toolkit has been widely distributed to partners which has increased awareness of the issues and has also possibly contributed towards the increase in reporting.

Safer Roads

Our objectives include a commitment to:

- *Decrease the number of persons killed or seriously injured on our roads;*
- *Increase the enforcement activities and visibility on our streets and roads.*

The review period has seen a **-50%** drop in the number of traffic related deaths coupled with a **-19%** reduction in people seriously injured and a **-38%** fall in minor injuries on the roads. Thankfully there were no traffic related child deaths together with **-16%** less of those under 16 year of age being injured.

The reductions in the majority of traffic related offences during the review period when compared to the previous year should be regarded as a major success for the Divisional Road Policing Unit (DRPU) and Divisional Officers. This is clearly illustrated by the following reduction in offences during the review period, e.g. Dangerous driving: **-44.1%**, Speeding: **-29.3%**, Mobile phone offences: **-26.1%**. The efforts in relation to the stopping and checking of vehicles and their occupants, through high profile patrolling in priority locations with a significant collision history has remained at consistently high levels. As a result, the DRPU alone stopped in excess of **5000** vehicles in Aberdeen during the period covered by this report.

Approximately **60%** of the motorists found to have been committing offences in this period were disposed of by way of a warning, rather than by the issuing of a Conditional Offer or Report to the Procurator Fiscal. The intention is wherever it is considered suitable and where officers believe it will have the desired effect, minor matters can appropriately be dealt with in this manner.

Serious and Organised Crime

We retain the drive to actively decrease the impact of Serious and Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs) on our communities through targeted enforcement and disruption of their criminal activities. Our objectives include a commitment to:



- *Increase the use of the Proceeds of Crime legislation to deprive serious organised crime groups of assets;*
- *Increase the detection for the supply of drugs.*

Our Divisional Interventions Unit continues to work closely with a number of public and private sector organisations to raise awareness and prevent SOCGs, and companies operating under their control, from accessing contracts and services.

During the review period SOCGs were denied **£1,187,000** in legitimate enterprise against an annual target of **£1,300,000**. Work is ongoing with Aberdeen City Council in an effort to extend this work to local authority contracts.

Through the use of Proceeds of Crime legislation, criminals were deprived of **£3,036,895** during the first half of the financial year. This figure includes restraints of assets, cash seizures and expedited referrals where criminal, conduct or a criminal, purpose was suspected. This has significantly exceeded the annual target of **£2,100,000**.

We continue to target SOCGs operating in Aberdeen and have been successful in our efforts to dismantle those who target vulnerable individuals or locations. A dedicated team of Detective Officers focuses on disrupting, detecting, deterring and further enhancing our capability to target individuals involved in Serious Organised Crime and Drugs which persist in causing serious harm within our communities.

With the use of illicit drugs in Scotland reportedly decreasing, Aberdeen City Division has remained focused on this issue and as a result detections for drugs related offences rose locally by **+4.3%** compared to the same period last year.

Violent Crime

We have continued to use intelligence-led methods and systems to proactively target and manage perpetrators of violence across the City thus making it one of the safest cities in the country. Our efforts, and those of our partners, will together continue to make Aberdeen a safe, welcoming and more prosperous environment for all who wish to live, work and socialise in Aberdeen.

Our objectives include a commitment to:

- *Decrease the number of assaults;*
- *Increase the detection rate for crimes of violence;*
- *Decrease the number of robberies.*

Violent crime in Aberdeen City Division is analysed in detail on a weekly basis and this identifies "hotspots" in which directed patrols are subsequently carried out at relevant times. Additionally, reducing violent crime forms an action plan within the multi-agency weekend planning partnership for the City Centre.



It is worthy of note that the definition of a serious assault changed significantly at the start of this fiscal year (April 2015) to ensure consistency, nationally, in regards to the interpretation of the specific level of injury that constituted this offence. Previously, Police had to obtain professional medical evidence to confirm the full extent of injuries and the likelihood of permanent scarring or disfigurement before the categorisation of "serious" was applied. The latest definition stipulates a presumption of serious assault where injury requires a skin closure technique unless there is professional medical evidence obtained indicating no likelihood of permanent scarring or disfigurement. Previously a nasal cartilage injury was not categorised as a serious injury but is now considered as such if corrective surgery is considered necessary to treat the injury.

These substantial changes, as anticipated, lead locally to a significant rise in the number of serious assaults recorded this year (**+5.6%**). However, overall there has been an actual decline in violent crime, particularly in conjunction with the reduction in common assaults (**-4.1%**) also experienced for this period.

The detection rates for assaults have remained high: common assaults (**79.2%** up by **+3.5%**) and serious assaults (**84%** down by **-1.9%**). Importantly, processes have been amended ensuring that all undetected serious assaults, or those which are likely to prove serious, are passed to the Divisional Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit for progression and investigation. This change in process has enabled the detection rate to be addressed in recent months since September 2015 and it is now at **90%**.

All crimes of robbery are investigated by Detective Officers, with enquiries being scrutinised on a daily and weekly basis by Supervisors, to ensure all investigative opportunities are fully pursued. On a daily basis, reported robberies are reviewed by Aberdeen Crime Management Unit staff to ensure accurate crime recording and they are also discussed at the daily Senior Management Team meeting, thereby assuring appropriate levels of resources are made available to progress the investigation and suitably resource any preventative measure. As such there has been a **-4.9%** reduction in robberies reported in the review period when compared to 2014 with a detection rate of **94.9%** which represents a significant improvement on the 5 Year Average of **69.6%**.