



Chief Constable's Annual Report

2020 - 2021

GD 2021/0026



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Hon Graham Cregeen MHK
Minister for Home Affairs and Justice
Department of Home Affairs

Dear Minister

I am required by the Police Act 1993 to report to you on the performance of the Isle of Man Constabulary. My report for the year 2020-21 is therefore enclosed.

The year was like no other as the Constabulary learned to deal with the effects of a global pandemic. Officers, support staff, Special Constables and other volunteers rose to the challenge in an exemplary fashion. Our approach attracted considerable public interest and, while some people may have disagreed with some of the things that we did, I believe that we enhanced our reputation and consolidated the public support that we have long enjoyed.

At times the Constabulary dealt with very sad events. A first contact officer (and retired sergeant) Richie Lloyd died from covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic and our fleet manager, another retired sergeant, John Kinrade died after a short illness. They were both remarkable characters, who were liked, respected and trusted by everyone who knew them. It is unusual for the Constabulary to lose two colleagues in such a short time and to lose two such good people was especially difficult.

The pandemic brought into sharp focus some of the issues that I have raised in previous reports, notably the pernicious effects that the supply of class A drugs can have, especially in terms of violent crime. It also again highlighted the devastating impact that mental problems can have on individuals and families.

The format of the report is broadly similar to that used last year, although I have added a section dealing with the Constabulary's approach to the pandemic, in which I describe what we did to help protect the health service. I have also added a section that gives a snapshot of some of the work that we have been doing to combat the effects of serious and organised crime. This means that the report is a little longer than in recent years.

Policing is complex, especially in a pandemic, and the report describes some of the threats we face in trying to keep the Isle of Man safe. There should be no doubt, though, that this remains a hugely safe place, where we largely enjoy an enviable quality of life.

Yours Sincerely

Gary Roberts QPM
Chief Constable





An overview of the year's events and key issues

Overview

In writing this report I have endeavoured to achieve two things: to present the public with accessible, but comprehensive data to show the activity undertaken by the Constabulary in the year to 31st March 2021 and also to offer a short commentary on that activity.

The report contains links to detailed data charts, which are accompanied by analytical and interpretive commentary.

Covid-19

This year's report contains a section that deals with the Constabulary's approach to the covid-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic will undoubtedly last for years and the Constabulary itself will take some time to recover, especially in terms of catching up with specialist, UK-based training.

Our approach to the first lockdown was based on sensible guidance issued by the United Kingdom's National Police Chiefs Council, which had been preparing for a pandemic for some time. The guidance placed the *enforcement* of emergency legislation as a final option after three other options: *engaging* the public, *explaining* the law and *encouraging* those breaking the law to desist. By taking this approach the Constabulary ensured that its actions remained proportionate and that only the most serious breaches resulted in enforcement action. This meant that formal enforcement action – prosecution or the issuing of fixed penalty notices after they became available in May 2020 – was only taken against 0.13% of the population. Data shows that only 0.91% of the population were given warnings (a precursor to enforcement action). This gives a lie to perceptions that exist in some quarters that the Constabulary was somehow gung ho in its approach.

The public appeared to show considerable support for most of what the Constabulary did during the first lockdown. A more detailed narrative can be found in section 2 of the report, but the first lockdown was marked by a real sense that the community wished to pull together to eliminate local transmission of the virus. The activities undertaken by the Constabulary and the sentences imposed by courts on the worst offenders were largely seen as helping contribute to this.

The second lockdown, which only lasted 25 days, seemed to be more difficult for many people, occurring as it did in mid-winter. The third lockdown, which began on 3rd March 2021 and which was continuing at the time of writing, was altogether a different affair, with signs that many people were enduring poor mental health. In the third lockdown the Constabulary undertook comparatively little enforcement



activity, but in some quarters there was still the mistaken view that we were over rigorous in our enforcement of the law.

The 2020 lockdown brought into focus several important issues: domestic abuse reports increased and there can be little doubt that victims of domestic abuse found lockdown extremely difficult. Similarly, the mental wellbeing of many people suffered and the Constabulary frequently found itself dealing with mental health issues in the community. For the second successive year the level of suspected suicides was abnormally high. Precise data cannot be given as not all matters that the police dealt with have yet been through the coronial process, but there were likely to have been more than twenty suicides in a year for the first time on modern record. Later in the report there will be a description of efforts that are being taken to prevent suicides.

Summer 2020 and high levels of demand

The ending of lockdown restrictions in June 2020 (after a short period in which some had been relaxed) led to a steep increase in demand. By most measures June was our busiest month for some time, July was our busiest for about ten years and August was considerably busier than normal. Taken together, the three months made the summer exceptionally demanding. With a population that could not go abroad on holiday, with some people having saved money during



lockdown and with a general feeling of relief, the ending of lockdown resulted in a considerable increase in anti-social behaviour, especially involving young people, a steep rise in violent crime and a considerable amount of offending related to the importation of controlled drugs. Police officers worked extremely hard during the summer months and, as the figures show, more of them were assaulted than at any time this century. Many of the assaults were committed by young people.

On top of the high levels of demand, the Constabulary's detectives found themselves under pressure at times. The force conducted its first murder investigation since 2012, when the body of a woman was found at a house in Andreas. A man was subsequently charged with murder and attempted murder. The case is sub judice. Additionally, detectives were required to investigate the events that led to the death of elderly residents of the Abbotswood care home from covid-19 and to conduct two separate manslaughter investigations, one after an incident on a building site, the other after the death of a patient during surgery at Noble's Hospital. All of the investigations were ongoing at the time of writing.

Drugs supply and violent crime

The first lockdown period had a significant effect on the supply of controlled drugs. Previous supply routes, which had involved the carrying of drugs to the Isle of Man by couriers or the use by Merseyside-based dealers of specially equipped vehicles, largely ceased because of border restrictions. As a result, those involved in the supply of drugs had to find new methods of bringing them to the Island. At first this largely consisted of sending them through the postal system, but as time went on other courier services were used, as were fishing boats. Similarly, exporting the cash needed to facilitate the supply of drugs became problematical.



The Constabulary made more individual seizures of controlled drugs than ever before, much from within the postal system. Substantial sums of money were also seized. Analysis of the size of the local drugs market supports assertions that I have previously made about the local drugs trade being worth several millions of pounds a year. The total amount of drugs seized during the year was broadly consistent with seizures in the last two years, but the manner in which drugs were recovered, largely via the postal system, was different than before. The seizure of packages at the Post Office, as a response to changing methods of drugs importation, has had a direct impact on recorded crime. We made more frequent seizures of smaller amounts, which in turn led to more recorded crimes.

The continuing success of the Constabulary in terms of making so many drugs seizures no doubt exacerbated problems of violence that I described in my last annual report. Violent crime rose again and several serious assaults were committed that were without doubt linked to debt in the illegal drugs trade. In 45% of serious assaults the victim(s) refused to cooperate with the police.

There is also a strong link between the recreational use of cocaine and violence in the night-time economy. This will be given considerable attention in the year ahead as part of our work to reduce violence.

During the year a full analysis was made of violent crime, using data from the Constabulary and from the hospital. This was used to create a violent crime reduction plan, which will be implemented in the 2021-22 year.

I will reiterate what I said in last year's report: the success of the police in seizing drugs or cash and then trying to dismantle a local network of suppliers, usually leads to debt, which in turn leads to violence. Another network then establishes itself and the whole sorry affair begins again. What has saddened me during the year is the number of young people, who have been involved in the drugs trade.

We have dealt with young people, who have become involved in supplying drugs, simply because they see it as a rapid way of making money; but we have also increasingly encountered young people, who are being exploited by criminals from here and from Merseyside. They are encouraged, cajoled or threatened to help distribute drugs and, when they do, they become involved in sleazy criminality. A lot of work is underway with various partner agencies to try to stop young people from becoming involved in these activities.

One of my specialist neighbourhood officers makes an often overlooked point when he talks to children about drugs: there are no gateway drugs. Using cannabis does not inevitably mean that someone will go on to use cocaine or heroin, but the gateway into that world is via organised crime and the criminals who deal cannabis are often also those whose networks traffic class A drugs.

In October 2020 my 2019-20 annual report was debated by Tynwald. I would not normally refer to the contributions that individual members of Tynwald make in such debates, but I would ask you to read a statement made by Ms Tanya August-Hanson MLC, which can be found via this link: www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard/20002020/t201020.pdf(P151-152) [Click](#)

The letter she read from a middle-class mother, whose life had been turned upside down by her son's involvement in drugs, his subsequently becoming mired in drugs debt and the things that she did to try to rectify things is moving, but highly instructive. The drug trade isn't just enabled by criminals, some significant responsibility lies with ostensibly decent, hardworking people, who are casual users of cocaine and other drugs.



Young People

During the year the Constabulary made strides towards its ambition of using diversionary schemes for all offenders, not just young people. Despite the effects of the pandemic, a lot of activity was undertaken to try to stop young people from offending and to prevent them from reoffending. However, at times our work wasn't at all easy.



Some young people were largely without education for lengthy periods because of the pandemic and fine weather in the spring and for parts of the summer meant that a lot of

young people spent long periods together outside. As demands faced by the police grew, so did problems caused by young people. There were outbreaks of really poor behaviour in Onchan, Port Erin and parts of Douglas. The worst and most tragic outcome occurred in August, when Mrs Lesley Cubbon collapsed and died at her home near to Onchan Park after she had been disturbed by some badly behaved teenagers. She had encountered similar bad behaviour during the last few weeks of her life. At almost precisely the same time, two police officers in Port Erin were assaulted by a group of as many as thirty young people and officers who might have been patrolling near to Mrs Cubbon's home had to be sent south to assist their colleagues.

Proper neighbourhood policing focuses on young people, but such policing requires the right officers in the right numbers at the right times, and it also needs partners, including local authorities to play a part.

In November I spoke to members of Tynwald about the issues that the Constabulary were encountering. I hope that something comes of the useful discussions that I had then and subsequently in private with the Constitutional Affairs and Justice standing committee of Tynwald. Among the issues that I discussed were changing patterns of offending, so that young people are becoming involved in drugs at a very young age. During the year we arrested children of 13 for drug trafficking offences. I spoke at length about the involvement of young people in drugs, reiterating points that I have previously made about young people being exploited to deal drugs, but also about some of them seeing drug dealing as a fast way to get money to buy attractive things. In the summer officers arrested one young offender, who had been in possession of the proceeds of drug trafficking, just two or three hours after he had bought a watch for over £20,000 from a local jeweller. There is something about inequality and misplaced aspiration that drives some of the drugs trade.

The changing patterns of offending include the use of violence against other young people because of drugs debts; and the increasing sexualisation of young people, which is sometimes linked to drugs supply, where girls are used for sexual purposes again because of drugs debts, but also where very young people are sharing indecent images of themselves via social media. On top of all of this, the Constabulary has increasingly dealt with young people, who were especially vulnerable because of their mental health.

I shared with Tynwald members some important facts about the involvement of young people in drugs supply and drugs debt enforcement. I spoke about a growing propensity for some young people to carry weapons. I explained that half of all thefts committed by young people are of alcohol and I highlighted



the fact that, in July 2020, 14 police officers were assaulted by juveniles. There are grounds to believe that the aggression, lack of respect and violence routinely being shown to police officers in the United Kingdom during its very lengthy periods of lockdown, which were shown on social and mainstream media channels, have impacted on how some people behaved here. The year saw an increase of 10% in offending by looked after children, the first such notable increase for a while. Analysis of it suggests that the increase is real, rather than simply being about better recording, and work will be undertaken with partner agencies to try to address it.

In previous reports I have spoken at length about the need for government and the whole community to understand the impact caused by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Just prior to the pandemic the Constabulary and the Public Health Directorate undertook a workshop together to try to design public health approaches to policing. At the top of the list of actions that we produced was the need to understand the impact of ACEs on the island's young people. Sadly, the pandemic struck before this work could properly take shape. If anything the pandemic has increased its relevance.

Cybercrime

In April 2020 the Constabulary assumed responsibility from the Cabinet Office for the Office of Cyber Security and Information Assurance (OCSIA). This allowed our own cybercrime strategy to be aligned with OCSIA's efforts to protect people from cybercrime, to make our critical national infrastructure safe and to identify and address new and emerging risks around data and information security.



The timing of the change could not have been better. The pandemic meant that online activity assumed even greater importance than before. Most people expanded their use of the internet and criminals became ever more sophisticated in their attempts to commit online crime.

Lockdowns were accompanied by increases in online fraud, where local people fell victim to offenders from other parts of the world. Bringing these offenders to justice is hugely difficult, which means that most focus needs to be on preventing cybercrime. Police officers involved in cyber issues and from the Economic Crime Unit worked closely with their new OCSIA colleagues to develop a suspicious email reporting service, which allows the public to pass suspicious emails to us, so that we can analyse them and if needed share them with other law enforcement bodies and telecoms providers, and in a new online fraud reporting service. This latter initiative is important in that, hitherto, local victims of online fraud would report what had happened to Action Fraud, a UK-based service. Now such reports are assessed here and, as was the case on several occasions, successful steps were immediately taken to try to retrieve lost funds. Data is then shared with law enforcement bodies elsewhere, including Action Fraud.

In a separate, but associated development, another reporting portal was created for the public to allow people to share any suspicious activities that had happened online, through the internet, emails or through contact on a mobile phone. This allows the reporting of a range of activities, including calls from people purporting to work for companies such as Amazon, through to online bullying. This is known as the WARP.



Taken together the suspicious email reporting system and the WARP offer considerable protection to the public.

A key component in all of this activity is work undertaken by high street banks. The further development during the year of the “banking protocol”, which sees bank staff raise concerns about the possible online and telephone exploitation of vulnerable customers with the Constabulary. Working with the banks, local neighbourhood officers then intervene to try to protect people, who are at risk of being defrauded. Not every intervention is successful, either because it has come too late, or because the people involved genuinely believe that the person who has tried to befriend them online has no malign motives. Nevertheless, the “banking protocol” has helped protect many local people.

OCSIA has responsibilities concerning information security and data governance that stretch across the public service and also a role in helping to determine the security of our critical national infrastructure. Neither OCSIA as an entity, nor the duties that it carries out, are properly established in statute. This may need to be rectified in due course.



Economic crime

The improved way that we identify cases where local residents have been defrauded online has had a very clear impact on our crime figures. For the first time, we have recorded these matters within our crime data. In the past, we either did not know about what had happened, or they were not recorded in our data, as in technical terms the offence had happened in another jurisdiction. As will be seen, recorded offences of fraud have increased by 50%.

Analysis of the cases where people have been defrauded shows that, irrespective of the level of sophistication shown by the offenders, the critical issue can be the behaviour of the victims. Many people fell victim because they made errors of judgement. This is not a case of “victim blaming” but instead merely reflects the fact that this type of offence could be reduced if people followed a few simple rules: banks do not telephone you and ask for information, neither does Amazon, or HM Revenue and Customs; if something sounds too good to be true, then it is. However, some offenders are very sophisticated in their approach and others are really persuasive, but if we were as good at protecting our online life as we are at locking our cars or securing our homes, there would be far less cyber fraud.

The Constabulary’s economic crime unit had a busy year. It continued to work on several long-term, complex and difficult investigations. Much of the activity focused on cross-jurisdictional matters, some of which involved serious criminality. One case has been in train for a decade and it will likely enter the criminal justice arena in the coming year. This illustrates just how complex and challenging some of



these matters can be.

It has always been my policy not to comment on matters that are the responsibility of courts or the judiciary. However, one matter that is concerning me is the approach that is being taken to money laundering offences. Attempts to tackle organised criminality will only succeed if they are multi-faceted. So, for example, if we focused only on drugs and not on the money needed to facilitate drug dealing, we would have less chance of reducing drugs supply. There is now, though, an apparent disparity between the sentencing for money laundering offences and sentences for drugs supply, with the former seemingly attracting lower sentences. At times police officers who are involved in drugs and money laundering investigations have expressed their frustrations to me about this.





Vulnerability

A recurring theme in the report is that of vulnerability. Reference has already been made to domestic abuse and to suicide. Officers continued to spend a large part of their time dealing with vulnerable people, often at the time when they were deep in crisis.

In 2019 the Constabulary made a bid for extra funding to extend on a permanent basis the trial in which mental health professionals worked from Police Headquarters alongside patrol and neighbourhood officers. The bid was approved, except that the funding was given to the Department of Health and Social Care. As a result the system was changed, with the mental health professionals becoming part of a broader crisis team operating from Mannanan Court. There were valid reasons for making the change, not least of which was the need to ensure that proper clinical supervision exists for those involved. Operational police officers expressed reservations about the new approach, but the strength of working relationships at operational and senior levels ensured that the service, whilst different than before, remained effective.

Mental health calls increased during the first lockdown and remained at a high level throughout the year. Officers frequently found themselves conducting searches for people, who were in such a state of crisis that they had gone missing as a prelude to suicide. Often such searches were complex and required assistance to be obtained from other agencies, such as the coastguard, civil defence and search and rescue dogs.

Sadly, as many as at least twenty people took their own lives during the year. Whilst the coroner of inquests is yet to record a formal verdict in some of the cases, it is clear that 2019-20 and 2020-21 saw high levels of suicide. It is not easy to determine why this should be the case. The people who succeeded in taking their own lives were from a variety of ages and backgrounds and were mainly men. It is too early to determine the long term effects of the pandemic, but some of those who ended their own lives did so in the aftermath of the first lockdown period.

During the year the Constabulary contributed to work led by the Public Health Directorate aimed at preventing future suicides. The work will continue and it is far too early to assess the impact that it is having, but doing nothing is not an option. The work in part involves identifying close contacts and family members of those who have taken their own lives. Steps are being taken to try to offer them support, not just because of the bereavement they have suffered, but perhaps more importantly because suicides in recent years have sometimes grouped in clusters, where people linked by blood or association take their own life some time after a friend or relation has also done so.

During the year the Constabulary continued to work with a range of partners to try to tackle domestic abuse. This work included the making of extensive preparations for the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Other initiatives included working with supermarkets and pharmacies to create safe spaces, where victims of abuse can seek urgent help; working with the Department of Education, Children and Sport, individual schools and King William's College introducing some of the principles of the United Kingdom's "Operation Encompass", which focuses on sharing information to protect children and young people in school settings, who may have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse; assisting the Department of Home Affairs to create emergency accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and with partners looking to create a scheme to help care for the pets of victims of domestic abuse. The key issue, however, remains ensuring that victims have the confidence to come to the police and that when they do, the response that they receive is a positive and meaningful one.



Later in the report there is a short explanation of work that the Constabulary helped lead during the first covid-19 lockdown to assist homeless people. That work opened our eyes to the scale of the problem, which is often hidden from view because the public rarely sees people who have been forced to sleep on the streets.

Reference will be made in section 4 to police sickness. However, it is important at this stage to highlight the impact that the pandemic, the high levels of demand and the pressures of being a police officer continue to have on the mental health and wellbeing of police officers. During the year several were diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and a number of others were absent because of mental health problems. The Constabulary is striving to do its best to prevent its officers falling ill in this way, but there is a lot of work to do. Even in the safest of places police officers see and do things that can have damaging effects.

Neighbourhood policing

In January 2019 the Constabulary relaunched its approach to neighbourhood policing. Teams of specialist officers were established around the Island, with a broad remit to work with local communities to identify and address community problems, to protect vulnerable people and to reduce offending and anti-social behaviour. Just as they were beginning to get to grips with all of this, the first lockdown occurred and it was necessary to reconfigure the force to get through lockdown. Neighbourhood policing was therefore paused. The busiest summer for many years then followed and it was not until the early autumn that the teams were able to re-form properly and begin again to carry out their important and specialist work. The second lockdown in January 2021 again led to a temporary reconfiguration and, at the time of writing, it is anticipated that these specialist officers will not get back to their proper roles until later in the spring of 2021.

Nevertheless, the specialist neighbourhood officers did enough in the few months that they were properly dedicated to their roles to



show that they will help make the Isle of Man even safer. Adjustments were made during the winter of 2020-21 to patrol teams, with extra officers being allocated to patrolling outside Douglas in conjunction with specialist neighbourhood officers. This will improve the visibility and accessibility of police officers in the towns and villages outside Douglas.

There should be no misunderstanding: neighbourhood policing is the base upon which all policing activity in the Isle of Man is built. Officers will continue to work to our neighbourhood policing principles, which are attached as [Appendix 1](#).



Organisational Matters

As usual a section of the report deals with organisational matters, such as information technology, our budget and the Constabulary's people.

Some of the highlights of the last year include the creation of a formal partnership with Northgate Public Services, which will help the Constabulary to become properly digitally enabled in a way that improves our effectiveness and which helps bring about greater digitalisation of the criminal justice process.

Bids for funding that the Constabulary submitted in 2019 for the 2020-21 financial year all failed. This threatened our ability to deliver some of the digital transformation work, but imaginative and rigorous budget management allowed us to meet all of our financial targets and negotiate really cost-effective technology solutions. However, the pandemic did cause some of our technological development to slip in unavoidable ways.

The retention of young officers remains an issue. During the year several officers left the service, most of whom were in their first two years of service. Anyone who leaves is interviewed about the reasons for their departure. A common theme among those student officers who had left was simply that the job was much more difficult than they had expected. Work is already underway to alter recruitment, initial training, the tutoring of officers when they begin to patrol and first line supervision all in an attempt to prevent the loss of young officers becoming a long-term trend.

The level of formal complaints remains very low and it is clear that the Constabulary's approach to the management of complaints, which broadly sees complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve, rather than to blame and punish, has a positive impact on officers and on members of the public who feel aggrieved.

Our professional standards are high, but there were some difficult events during the year. One officer was convicted of drink driving and attempting to do an act against justice, after crashing her car when drunk. Another officer was convicted of an offence of dishonesty unconnected with their duties. In both cases dedicated, professional police officers carried out excellent work to identify and deal with the wrongdoers.

For those who only look at crime data

Many people view the performance of the police only through a lens that looks at crime data. This is an erroneous way of trying to assess police effectiveness and I have tried in recent years to downplay the importance of crime figures. This is especially important this year. 2020-21 was so different from any other year that drawing direct comparisons is really difficult. The pandemic has also made it more difficult to draw direct comparisons with other jurisdictions, as each had its own lockdown rules and the time and length of restrictions on normal life varied considerably. For example, for large periods of time the night-time economy, a leading driver of police demand, was closed in the United Kingdom and Jersey, but open here.

Recorded crime rose by 18%. A third of the increase was due to yet another rise in drugs offences detected by the police, with the rest of the increase largely being composed of the recording of fraud offences, where the victim is here but where jurisdiction actually lies elsewhere and offences of violence, many of which were linked to drugs activity.

Police activity affects crime figures. Yet again we recorded high levels of drugs offences, which affected the overall level of crime. The recording of online fraud in the way that has been described had a big effect on the overall level of crime and even more so in the detection rate, which fell as a result. If it is



within our collective gift to prevent very many fraud offences, especially those with a cyber-element, it is hugely difficult to detect them, especially when the offenders are almost always in other jurisdictions across the world.

Assaults rose again, driven by the misuse of drugs, the enforcement of drugs debt and an increase in domestic assaults. The biggest rise was in assaults on police officers. The 14 offences in the month of July represented an exceptionally high level. The fact that most were committed by teenagers is a cause for concern. A rise in offences where police officers have found people to be in possession of offensive weapons rose by 75% to 56 offences. This increase was due largely – but not wholly – to some young people choosing to carry knives. A comprehensive violence reduction plan will take effect in the 2021-22 year and it ought to make a real difference.

Burglaries in people’s homes remained at a low level and other burglaries were also still at levels that would have been unthinkable in the 1990s.

However they are assessed crime levels are low. A challenge is always to ensure that victims feel confident to report matters such as domestic abuse, sexual offences and online fraud. In the case of sexual offences, there was an increase of 15%, which suggests that more people had the confidence to report what had happened to them. The creation of the island’s sexual assault referral centre (SARC) is overdue and, when it opens in the 2021-22 year, it is anticipated that the number of people reporting sexual violence will rise yet further.



Some positive things

In attempting to describe the events of the last year and the performance of the Constabulary it would be understandable if a focus was only applied to the pandemic, to the increases in recorded crime driven to a big degree by police activity and to the issues involving young people. All of this might make for challenging and slightly gloomy reading. However, in the midst of the challenges of a global pandemic, some truly excellent work has gone on. Some has been described in parts of the report, but here are some other highlights:

Our **Youth Scheme** went from strength to strength. Our third cohort of young people left us in the summer of 2020, with many of them completing their Duke of Edinburgh gold award! Their successors in the fourth cohort did some great work during the pandemic in providing support to lonely, vulnerable people in the community.



Similarly, the volunteers of the **Special Constabulary** continued to provide more truly excellent support. It is difficult to do justice to the importance of the Special Constabulary, whether it is the contribution made to the leadership of the Constabulary by its senior officers; the provision of visible local policing on a frequent and regular basis; the excellent work by officers attached to the roads policing unit or in the skill and dedication shown in the successful recruitment and training of ten new officers. The Special Constabulary is better trained, more highly skilled and of more importance than ever before.

Neighbourhood policing cannot easily be measured in its importance and impact. There isn't space here to list some of the small, unseen things that specialist neighbourhood officers do. However, one officer often spends a half hour with a man, who is autistic and who presented some challenging problems for a long time. In that half hour he plays cards with the man. Someone who once caused problems and placed demands on us no longer does so. Another officer has won the complete trust of a once dangerous and violent offender, who has spent long periods in prison. He helped the man find employment and he is constantly available to him when he feels low or angry. The man no longer offends. There are many other examples of this type of work, which the public does not see, but which make a real difference.



For many years we have worked closely with the **licensing trade**, which has faced a threatening and challenging time during the pandemic. It would have been easy for the trade to have dropped its standards when it reopened in the hunt for business, but the quiet, unseen and hugely effective work done by our alcohol unit to help the trade deal with such uncertain times is really praiseworthy.

Elsewhere in the report mention is made of **suicide** prevention. Work with the public health directorate has also led to the instigation of a "suicide rapid response" function, which allows the police and health care specialists to provide urgent support to those affected by the suicide of a relative or close friend.



The report contains a lot about young people and about our efforts to prevent offending and reoffending. During the year we extended our efforts in this regard from solely focusing on young people, to seeking to take a preventative and restorative approach to all new offenders, irrespective of their age. This will make a difference to reoffending rates in the next year or so.





Section 2 -Covid-19: the Isle of Man Constabulary’s response to the pandemic

Overview

This section will provide an account of the approach taken by the Constabulary to the challenges created by the covid-19 pandemic. Details will be given of our strategy, the way that we used resources, the pressures created by sickness and isolation requirements, the operational challenges that we faced and links will be provided to some data charts (within Section 5)

The Constabulary has amassed a considerable amount of data and other information during the course of the pandemic, which will help form a comprehensive record of how policing coped with unique challenges. All of the material will be brought together into a comprehensive archive of material which in time will help social historians.

Basic chronology

To give a flavour of how the Constabulary approached the pandemic, the following simple chronology shows what happened before and during the first lockdown period. Once a simple and effective operating model had been established, the Constabulary enjoyed a new “business as usual”. We constantly reviewed what we were doing and this allowed the transition from unrestricted life to lockdowns in January and March 2021 to be simple and rapid.

2nd March 2020 – The Constabulary’s command team met to discuss the worsening infection rates in the United Kingdom, with a view to determining the likely local impact.

4th March 2020 – Work begins to allow some staff to work from home using mobile technology. Work beings to allow for “live link” courts to be established.

10th March 2020 – Meeting attended by the Chief Constable and the superintendents, where it was agreed to establish a formal gold, silver, bronze command structure and to create a covid-19 plan.

16th March 2020 – Beginning of cooperation and liaison with British policing.

18th March 2020 – Personal protective equipment placed in police vehicles.

19th March 2020 – Potentially Infectious Person Regulations issued.

20th March 2020 – Constabulary’s covid-19 plan, which contained “gold priorities” was formally ratified.

23rd March 2020 – (a) Isle of Man enters first lockdown period. Staffing levels reduce and force moves from green to amber on its staffing threat level.

(b) Further roll out of personal protective equipment, enhanced cleaning regime and temporary alterations to use of police buildings. All necessary risk assessment completed.

25th March 2020 – Events and Gatherings regulations issued.

30th March 2020 - 4Es approach rolled out across the Constabulary. Constabulary structure and shift patterns realigned.

31st March 2020 – Prohibition of Movement Regulations created by government, but not shared with the Constabulary until 6th April 2020.

6th April 2020 – Prohibition of Movement and Events and Gatherings Regulations amended.

11th April 2020- Death of member of support staff and retired sergeant Richie Lloyd



15th April 2020 – Stocks of personal protective equipment reached optimum levels. At this stage the Constabulary was using around 420 FFP1 surgical masks and 560 pairs of nitrile gloves each week. Ten weeks' supplies were held.

17th April 2020 – Fixed penalty notices become available for covid-19 breaches.

23rd April 2020 – Further amendments to the Events and Gatherings regulations. First formal use of “live link” allowing online courts.

24th April 2020 – Fixed Penalty Regulations amended.

1st May 2020 – Prohibition of Movement Regulations amended.

5th May 2020 – Potentially Infected Persons Regulations amended.

7th May 2020 – Changes announced to Events and Gatherings Regulations to allow people to meet, but the regulations were not actually altered to reflect the change in government policy.

19th May 2020 – Events and Gatherings Regulations amended to allow for limited gatherings in people's homes. Policing plan amended to reduce instances where enforcement action would be necessary.

30th May 2020 – Regulations revoked and new consolidating legislation introduced.

15th June 2020 – All restrictions lifted.

Strategy

The Constabulary's overall strategy did not change throughout the pandemic. Our primary objective was to work with others to mitigate the threats posed by covid-19 in a way that protected the health service, safeguarded the public and ensured that our own people remained well.

We sought to achieve these aims by working in partnership with the Cabinet Office and other government agencies; by closely aligning ourselves to Operation Talla, the National Police Chiefs Council covid-19 operation; by putting in place an effective and flexible command structure; by implementing business continuity plans; by making effective use of social media to communicate with the public; by ensuring that all possible steps were taken to keep police officers safe and by using existing tasking processes to ensure that emergency legislation was enforced in a legitimate and proportionate manner.

Command Structure

Prior to the first lockdown the Constabulary realigned its command responsibilities and operated to a gold, silver, bronze structure. This approach was subsequently replicated by the government, with a gold group supported by silver groups dealing with issues such as critical national infrastructure.

One superintendent was given command responsibility for all planning, maintaining this role throughout the pandemic, using the gold, silver bronze approach, with operational staffing responsibility at bronze level lying with a sergeant.

A second superintendent took responsibility for operational command, effectively ensuring that planning was turned into activity, including but not limited to enforcement.

A third superintendent was effectively held in reserve in case either senior colleague fell ill. He maintained responsibility for organisational infrastructure: finance and so on.

The discipline set out in the command structure ensured that planning was comprehensive and effective. It also allowed government policy, the frequent changes of emergency legislation and emerging scientific



evidence to be swiftly converted into guidance to officers. This enabled the Constabulary to be fleet of foot as it encountered problems, many of which were truly unique in nature and scope.

The command structure also allowed for periodic reviews to be conducted, which informed planning for the second and third lockdown periods. Subtle changes were therefore introduced as operational lessons were learned.

Links with the UK

From 16th March 2020 the Constabulary linked in to the National Police Chiefs Council Operation Talla, the national approach to the policing of the pandemic. These links were set at gold and silver levels, with the latter being particularly important. Dialogue took place on at least a weekly basis and this helped inform the approach taken by the Constabulary on matters such as the use of personal protective equipment, the approach to enforcement and in terms of the very latest UK scientific advice.

At times these links had a tangible benefit. In the early days of the pandemic supplies of PPE were difficult to obtain and the Constabulary was fortunate to be amply supplied by its colleagues in Police Scotland. This meant that we were able to support other public services, which were also encountering supply difficulties. At one point we even supplied swabs for testing purposes to the DHSC from our forensic stocks.

Together with the other public bodies involved in dealing with the pandemic, senior officers met with senior military officers in order to review progress. It was readily determined that we did not need military assistance and that our planning and logistical activities would prove effective.

As the Island emerged from lockdown our experiences were, in turn, used by our colleagues in the UK to prepare for the lifting of some restrictions in the later summer of 2020.

Local partnerships

The Isle of Man's response to the pandemic was based on every part of the public service working together to achieve common objectives. Old structures and ways of working were quickly discarded and the result was a swift, flexible and often innovative approach to new and emerging problems. Pandemic planning had gone on for many years, but no one had any experience of actually operating in a pandemic and, consequently, there was no rule book to follow. Instead, public servants simply did their best to help inform and then implement political decisions.

For the vast majority of the time and for the overwhelming majority of issues this worked well. The Constabulary played its part and actively contributed to government gold meetings, where the Chief Constable was our representative, and to a variety of silver meetings, which amongst other things addressed critical national infrastructure issues, such as food and power supplies, through to public wellbeing and mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse and homelessness.

In the respect of the latter, the initial lockdown brought into focus the scale of the Isle of Man's homelessness problem, which was made worse as some people lost their jobs and their homes as the pandemic took hold. A brilliant piece of collaborative work led by one of the Constabulary's senior officers, Chief Inspector Cathryn Bradley, and by the head of



the probation service, Geraldine Martin, led to homeless people being found accommodation in a local hotel. At the beginning the problem had seemed intractable and despite it not being their responsibility, they simply picked it up and dealt with it in a vigorous and impressive way.

Other important collaborative work was undertaken in regards to mental health and domestic abuse. The pandemic, especially during the three lockdown periods, impacted on the mental health and wellbeing of many people. The effects may be with us for some considerable time, but police officers and their colleagues in the mental health service did all that they could within the law to get help to those who needed it. Similarly, many people will have suffered in silence during the lockdown periods because of domestic abuse. Efforts were made to create safe spaces to which people who were suffering from domestic abuse could go in order to seek support. However, by the very nature of the problem, many will have found the pandemic and its lockdown periods to have been hugely difficult.

At the Constabulary's suggestion the government converted its Welcome Centre into an emergency covid-19 call centre. This was an important and very successful initiative, which relieved pressure on the emergency services joint control room and allowed the public a means of obtaining information and reporting concerns about possible breaches of the emergency legislation. The staff from the call centre played an important, if little known, role in protecting the health service.

Similarly, the health and safety inspectorate took responsibility for potential breaches involving workplaces, such as shops, offices and building sites. This, too, was a success and enabled the Constabulary to concentrate on other matters.

Legislation, Operational Guidance, Operational Focus

The government's approach to legislation during pandemic was broadly consistent. Statutory instruments from either the Emergency Powers Act 1936 or the Public Health Act 1990 were used to create emergency regulations or binding directions. The Constabulary then had to interpret the regulations and directions and convert them into operational directions or guidance for officers. At times this was challenging.

Sometimes changes to regulations happened frequently, sometimes changes in regulations were announced well before regulations were ready, occasionally changes became effective before the Constabulary was in possession of the new regulations and on one occasion a policy change was announced but the supporting regulations never actually caught up. However....and this is a big however....everyone was operating in an emergency, doing things that had not been done before and the hard work and flexibility of many public servants meant that the conversion of policy decisions into legislation and then into operational activity actually generally worked very well.

At times the Constabulary and its officers had to walk a fine line. The police can enforce legislation, such as regulations, but they cannot enforce government guidance. In the early part of the first lockdown there were occasions when the Constabulary found itself having to reiterate the difference between law and guidance.

Throughout all three lockdown periods changes were made on a frequent basis to regulations, often as a result of new or unexpected issues arising. In the third lockdown, for example, several changes were made to take account of the management of caring responsibilities and the need to provide assistance to vulnerable people. Sometimes in all three lockdown periods very little time existed from receipt of the legislation to it becoming effective. One senior officer was given responsibility for converting legislation into operational guidance, so that officers knew what was expected of them and what the law required. This was a demanding role, but the Constabulary kept pace with the fast changing legislative demands.



So, regulations and directions led to operational guidance, but the most important aspect of the Constabulary's approach to emergency legislation came in its adoption of the "4Es", a framework set by the National Police Chiefs Council.

It was rightly determined that police legitimacy and public consent were especially critically linked during a pandemic. Simply relying on enforcement as a way of dealing with a health emergency was not sensible. As a result the "4Es" approach was developed. This meant that when they encountered possible breaches of the law, officers would be required to take a structured and tiered approach, only using enforcement (the fourth E) after they had firstly engaged with the public, explained the law and then encouraged compliance. The Constabulary decided to adopt this approach before the first lockdown and it was subsequently used throughout the pandemic.

Officers were given very clear directions about the "4Es" and their use of enforcement. In order to ensure that there was a consistent approach to enforcement two important safeguards were created: enforcement action, such as an arrest, required the consent of an inspector, except in emergencies, and all prosecutions were subject to approval by the on call prosecutor from HM Attorney General's Chambers. Officers were consistently reminded that ordinary, decent people would make mistakes and that the approach to enforcement wasn't about dealing with such people in anything other than a respectful, low key way. As a result, while 0.91% of the population were warned that they had breached the law, formal enforcement action was taken against only 0.13% of the population. In other words, few people were prosecuted and then only when they had been warned before. (Some received as many as five warnings before they were prosecuted.) Occasionally serious breaches led to immediate enforcement action, but such cases were comparatively rare.

At the start of the second and third lockdowns the Constabulary wrote to those who had been formally warned about breaching emergency laws, or had previously been prosecuted, in order to remind them of the law and their obligations under it. It was very rare that those who had been reminded then went on to break the law again.

A danger existed that the criminal justice system would go into stasis as the pandemic hit. Legislation allowing for remote, virtual courts was insufficient and there were no facilities in place. At the beginning of March the Constabulary began a piece of work with partners in the General Registry and the Department of Home Affairs to try to enable virtual courts to take place. The system became operational on 17th April 2020 and the first remote court was held on 23rd April. This and the provision to the Constabulary of powers to release defendants and suspects on conditional bail made a big difference to the administration of justice. The current challenge is to ensure that this progress acts as the basis for further progressive change within the justice system and the Justice Reform Act 2021 will be the key to this.

Our detailed data shows that some fairly significant delays have occurred in the criminal justice system as a result of the pandemic and this can be seen in the high level of outstanding cases at the year end.

The Constabulary did not relish having stringent emergency powers. Its officers did not take any pleasure from enforcing them, but as far as possible a consistent approach was taken.



Structure

As the first lockdown began the Constabulary changed its operational structure and the shift patterns followed by its officers. Neighbourhood policing and patrol policing teams were collapsed in to 24/7 response teams; specialist covid teams were created; the number of officers in specialist departments was reduced and the Constabulary's authorised firearms officers were removed from front line duties in order to reduce the possibility of them becoming infected, so that a proper firearms response could be available in an emergency.



The normal 12-hour shift patterns were changed to allow for the creation of five response teams and the Police Federation board played a key role in ensuring that this was done swiftly and without fuss.

The specialist covid teams were based at the TT Grandstand and their officers attended every significant breach, every case involving a potentially infected person and every sudden death that occurred during the first lockdown. The officers were specially equipped and possessed enhanced personal protective equipment. Their efforts were hugely admirable and they carried out their work with care, compassion and great skill.

Working practices in the Constabulary's custody suite were changed in March 2020 to fall in line with best practice guidance issued by the National Police Chiefs Council. There and across the whole police estate an enhanced hygiene and cleaning regime was put in place in order to safeguard officers, those in our custody and visitors, such as advocates, forensic medical examiners and mental health professionals.

Police station counters were closed during all three lockdown periods.

Generally, the approach taken during the first lockdown, which had been thoroughly reviewed, was reinstated when the second and third lockdown periods began.

People

As part of its planning the Constabulary worked on the basis set out in Operation Talla that as much as half of the workforce might become absent at any one time. To help mitigate such an eventuality a tiered approach was taken, with three models being put in place: green, amber and red. Green status meant that the Constabulary was broadly operating in a normal way and that services to the public were largely unchanged; amber meant that staffing difficulties were being encountered and mitigation had had to be put in place to ensure that services to the public were maintained; red meant that the Constabulary was operating on an emergencies only level, providing only a basic service.

At no time during the pandemic did the Constabulary reach red status. Staffing fell to amber levels right at the start of the first lockdown period and remained at that level until late April. During the early stages of the first and third lockdown periods the Constabulary encountered significant staff absences, which again caused it to go to amber status for much of the first fortnight of the lockdown period.

Absence levels peaked at 25% during the first lockdown and over 20% in the third lockdown. The third lockdown presented greater challenges because of the virility of the Kent variant of the virus and the



introduction of whole household isolation, which had not been in place in 2020. Key worker testing pathways offered the promise of easier return to work for officers and staff during the first lockdown, but the promised system did not really function effectively.

Measures to protect the workforce included dispersal of staff to other locations, an enhanced cleaning regime, social distancing, personal issue protective equipment, the frequent reissuing of guidance, the closure of police station counters, the triaging of calls from the public, the creation of operational bubbles for vulnerable staff and those with specialist roles, home working for some officers and staff, and frequent communication with the entire workforce.

Homeworking for some officers and staff and for people required to shield became possible because of the support of Government Technology Services and the rapid purchasing and roll out of devices enabled for remote access to police systems.

During the lengthy first lockdown, as staffing levels became difficult, a core group of Special Constables worked full time with the Constabulary, filling gaps in response teams and in the Roads Policing Unit. Their contribution was terrific. The efforts of some of our Road Safety Team should also be mentioned: one managed our facilities and the procurement and issuing of protective equipment, while another undertook deep cleaning of our buildings.

In the first and third lockdowns some police officers and staff tested positive for covid-19. On 11th April 2020 Richard Lloyd, a much loved and admired retired sergeant, who worked as a first contact officer, died in Noble's Hospital from covid-19. He was 57 years old and was then the youngest Manx resident to die from the virus. The Constabulary was left heartbroken by his death.



Resources

The policing of the pandemic has led to the Constabulary incurring surprisingly limited costs.

£10,887 was spent on personal protective equipment. £53,492 was spent on extra duty, notably incurred by making unavoidable late shift changes.

Operational activity

This [link](#) takes the reader to data tables, which show operational activity during each lockdown period. The tables cover the following issues: arrests, enforcement action, mental health matters, domestic abuse, road traffic collisions and drugs enforcement action and drugs seizures. The tables show data for each of the three lockdown periods and they also refer to enforcement action taken on covid-19 matters that took place outside lockdown periods, for example when breaches of travel-related isolation were reported.

The data is largely self-explanatory, but some narrative is given where clarity is needed.

The first lockdown period saw an increase in three types of offending activity: the importation of controlled drugs, online fraud and domestic abuse.

Three officers from Isle of Man Customs were temporarily attached to the Constabulary's drugs team for the duration of the lockdown. That team, our drug trafficking and organised crime unit, our pro-active



team and our patrol teams were busy dealing with the interception of drugs packages that had been routed through the postal and courier systems. Intelligence showed that normal methods of importing drugs could not be used and suppliers had to change tactics. The police had to do the same. For a considerable time in 2020 street drugs prices rose as supplies reduced. At the end of the year, during the third lockdown period, there was strong intelligence to show that cocaine was especially hard to acquire.

Online fraud rose during each of the three lockdown periods. Indeed, analysis of fraud reports shows distinct spikes in the spring of 2020, at the turn of 2021 and again, albeit to a lesser degree, in March 2021.

During all three lockdowns the Constabulary undertook special patrols to prevent commercial burglaries from occurring. Many commercial premises lay empty for weeks on end and they presented vulnerable and attractive targets. This work was successful, with no such offences occurring during a nine week period in the first lockdown.

In the summer of 2020 the Constabulary commenced a criminal investigation into the deaths from covid-19 of elderly residents of the Abbotswood care home. The investigation was still continuing at the end of the 202-21 year.

Final reflections

The work undertaken before the 2020 lockdown was announced and the initial action undertaken to implement a structured approach to command and planning made a significantly positive difference to how the Constabulary dealt with the pandemic. The reconfiguration of the Constabulary and the frequent reviewing of activity allowed a flexible and responsive approach to be taken to events as they unfolded. Within a week or so of the beginning of the 2020 lockdown all this work came together to create a new kind of routine. This meant that the second and third lockdowns required little planning, with officers and staff being aware of what they had to do as soon as virus levels began to rise.

The Constabulary showed itself as being flexible and adaptive, with the rapid roll out of home and remote working, the quick reconfiguration of its structure and its links to other parts of the public service being string points.

The adoption of the 4Es approach was right and sensible and it largely worked as was intended. One or two of the early prosecutions would have likely been eligible for fixed penalty notices had they been available.

The Constabulary largely enjoyed broad and deep public support for what it strived to do. Some of this support was generated through frequent and extensive use of social media. During the pandemic hundreds of social media messages were released. In all but a handful of messages the tone was right, the message informed and advised the public, and where necessary explanations were give about police activity. Given the evolving nature of the pandemic this represents positive work.

If a handful of social media messages could have been better worded, there were a handful of other things that hindsight suggests could have been done differently. Two relate to the quarantining of returning residents fairly early in the first lockdown period. Against a backdrop of genuine fear, officers escorted returning residents to the hotel, where they were to stay. This was a well-intentioned mistake, as was the placing of a police control vehicle in the hotel grounds. Hindsight provides 20/20 vision and the officers involved felt that they were making the right decisions for the right reasons.

The Constabulary did its best. It is for others to decide whether the dedication and commitment that its officers showed were enough. I believe that they were.





Section 3 – How the Constabulary is tackling serious and organised crime

One of the recurrent themes in recent versions of this report has been the creeping influence of organised criminals, usually based in Merseyside, who seek to establish networks in the Isle of Man, so that they can profit from the trade in illegal drugs. These networks are resourceful and resilient and they pose a threat to the safety of decent, law-abiding communities.

If previous versions of the report have spoken about the threats posed by such organised groups, comparatively little has been said about the efforts that are being made to combat them. In this section, I seek to put the record straight and show some of the hard work that has been undertaken in the last year or so in order to tackle such criminals.

Operation Jetstream

This operation targeted Merseyside-based criminals, who were using young and vulnerable people to receive consignments of drugs. The criminals initially befriended these people before coercing them through threats and violence. With the assistance of Merseyside Police and the North West Regional and Organised Crime Unit arrests were made here and in the United Kingdom. Over 40 kilos of cocaine was seized as a result of the operation, several arrests were made and future activity will bring about further arrests and prosecutions.



Operation Squash

This was another operation involving the Constabulary and its partners in the Merseyside region. It targeted the supply of controlled drugs and the accompanying money laundering. Seven people were convicted by Manx courts, over £1m worth of controlled drugs were seized and over £120,000 in cash was recovered and confiscated. The criminals at the head of the organised network then successfully corrupted a prison officer employed in the Isle of Man prison, who smuggled a mobile phone into the prison for them to use to continue to run their network.

Major cash seizure

In July 2020 the French authorities seized £40,000 in Manx money at the border with Spain. The cash was being moved by a Midlands-based criminal organisation, which had links to the supply of drugs to the Isle of Man.

Bitcoin theft

An Isle of Man based company was defrauded of over \$22m worth of bitcoin via a cloned website. Criminals accessed bitcoin wallets and moved and split the contents. There were thousands of victims. The Constabulary worked with partners from the United Kingdom and Europe to retrieve the stolen bitcoins and locate the offenders. Six individuals are facing charges.



Young people and drug supply

In 2011 one young person was recorded as having been dealt with for the supply of cannabis. In the 2020-21 year 28 young people were dealt with for supply offences. The Constabulary specifically targeted the dealing of drugs by young people in an attempt to begin to break the networks that off island criminals were seeking to establish.

Violent crime

Two offenders armed with hammers broke into the home of man with whom they were in dispute. Overcoming evidential difficulties, convictions were obtained against two men, who received six years and 4 years 9 months' imprisonment.

Officers also uncovered an associated conspiracy involving violent offenders, who were arranging to assault a number of other people. The alleged offenders were charged with conspiracy.

Two violent offenders, who had lengthy offending histories, attacked a man at his own home, causing serious injuries. The offenders were given lengthy prison sentences.

In a domestic assault, a man kicked and stamped on his female victim causing serious injuries. He received a lengthy prison sentence.

Burglary

A home was burgled late one afternoon by a man. Intelligence suggested that the crime was part of drugs debt enforcement, albeit the offender went to the wrong house! Officers quickly arrested the offender as he made away from the scene and he was found to be in possession of a loaded sawn-off shotgun. It could not be proved that he had, had it a few minutes earlier when he committed the burglary. This is a highly significant matter and it is the first time that the Constabulary has seized such a weapon in such circumstances.

These offences are not all that we did in respect of serious crime, but they give a flavour of the work that we routinely do to keep the Isle of Man safe. It is a safe place, but there are some who seek to exploit the way that we live our lives. Many criminal cases ago unreported, especially so during a global pandemic. This short section, therefore, sought to show some of the cases that might have escaped the public's attention.





Section 4 - Organisational Issues

People - wellbeing

It is difficult to make direct comparisons between sickness levels in 2020-21 and those in previous years. The covid-19 pandemic periodically played havoc with staffing levels, as officers either fell ill, tested positive, had a close family member test positive, or were required to isolate because of contact with someone who had been infected. The management of this was complex and challenging. It is rare that I use this report to single out for praise an individual officer; however, the work done by our logistics officer, Sergeant Andy Reed, was brilliant. He managed duty boards throughout the pandemic with skill, compassion and creativity, ensuring that the service given to the public never once declined.

The main cause of non-covid related absence was stress, depression and anxiety. The mental wellbeing of officers is of critical importance and, at times, officers can feel overwhelmed. The Constabulary's approach to building personal resilience among officers, to identifying those at risk of suffering and to ensuring that proper care and treatment is available is based on best practice from the United Kingdom. Our people strategy is in part predicated on keeping officers well.

Policing is complex and it can be difficult. Even in this safe place police officers often encounter traumatic events that can leave a lasting effect. Constant low-level exposure to difficult and unpleasant events can have an equally damaging cumulative effect. Making sure that peers, supervisors, senior officers and the families of officers understand the signs that someone may be struggling is critically important. Creating an environment in which people can talk about mental health is also an important factor in keeping police officers well.

The year saw extensive use of the TRiM process, which is a peer-delivered risk assessment and ongoing support process. The effectiveness of the system lies to a considerable degree in the involvement of peers and the use of TRiM has been welcomed by those officers who have been involved in it.

Big strides were made during the year in obtaining support for officers who had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. At one level some officers benefited from inter-action with a wonderful charity, known as Rock2Recovery; whilst others were given excellent clinical treatment by experts from within the Department of Health and Social Care. This latter development was particularly important and was warmly welcomed by those involved.

People – professional standards

The number of formal complaints remains very low. As I have said in previous reports, police officers have hundreds of thousands of interactions with the public every year. In the vast majority of cases people who work in the Constabulary are decent, hardworking and professional. When things go wrong – and human nature means that occasionally they will – the Constabulary's approach is about responding quickly to a complaint, identifying when something has gone wrong, putting it right and offering an explanation. This approach therefore encourages officers to explain at the earliest possible stage what they have done. In



this way, every complaint is an opportunity for individual or corporate learning.

The Police Federation board plays an important part in the setting and maintenance of standards. Board members work in the best interests of the members and of the Constabulary, having a unique statutory duty to do so. In the past year the board has done some excellent work to support its members during a difficult time, to promote high standards and to improve wellbeing.

The year was not an easy one. Perhaps the pandemic has caused people to think differently, but the Constabulary frequently had dealings with people who sought to make angry and irrational complaints and were difficult to satisfy. Some of them claimed to be so-called “freemen of the land” who believe that statute law does not apply to them. They take a deluded approach to the law and waste our time.

Professional standards are high, but during the year a tiny number of officers behaved appallingly. One was convicted of drink driving and attempting to do an act against justice. Another was convicted of an offence of dishonesty involving a family matter. Both brought shame on themselves. However, in both cases hardworking police officers, assisted by support staff colleagues, showed skill and determination to bring their errant colleagues to justice.

People – Recruitment and Retention

In 2019-20 the Constabulary was given extra funding to help improve neighbourhood policing, to deal with serious sexual offending, to bolster roads policing and to try to tackle drug trafficking. This boost to the budget went some way to undoing the cuts to police officer numbers made by a previous administration.

Recruiting the extra officers was not easy. In 2019-20 there was full employment and the starting salary for police officers was not competitive in the local market. It therefore took time to recruit the extra twenty or so officers, as well as recruiting to fill scheduled and unexpected vacancies. This was why the changes to neighbourhood policing did not properly take shape until the beginning of 2020.



If the jobs market was difficult, then there were other obstacles to rapid recruitment: logistically the Constabulary cannot really train more than a dozen new officers at a time. Facilities, the availability of training staff, the need to maintain other essential training and the limited availability of experienced tutor constables (who work in a one-to-one way with officers when they first begin to patrol) all restrict our approach.

Over the past four or five years the retention of young officers has started to become a problem. Attrition rates – the rate at which officers leave before the end of their two-year probationary period – was once around 10% an intake. There have been exceptions, but this rate largely applied for a considerable period. However, the current attrition rate is now about 33%. Our experience now mirrors that seen in England and Wales. Steps are being taken to develop our approach to recruitment, initial training, tutoring and first line supervision.

For about twenty years the Constabulary has tended to see about half a dozen unexpected departures a year. Every officer who leaves, whether a student officer or someone who is more experienced, is invited to participate in an exit interview. The product of those interviews is used to help improve performance.



During the year a long-planned change to police pensions took effect, one consequence of which will be that the Constabulary will become a potentially less attractive place for transferees from United Kingdom police forces.

ICT Development

During the year we cemented our professional relationship with Northgate Public Services and, in effect, the Constabulary will become a test-bed for the company's future development of police ICT solutions. Its Connect system, which is now used by the majority of police officers in England and Wales, is the Constabulary's core system. The opportunities offered by this relationship are exciting, as they will help bring transformative change. In section 7 details are given of the programs that we will begin to use. However, the pandemic affected progress and there is little doubt that our development would have been far more advanced had it not happened.

Some progress was made during the year in terms of modernising the criminal justice system. Some of the progress, such as virtual courts run from our custody suite, came about because of the pandemic. Other developments, such as more extensive use of bodyworn video, and the electronic sharing of files with HM Attorney General's Chambers have been running for some time. Truly transformative change is a little way off, but there are many positive signs including the imminent impact of the Justice Reform Act.

Finances

The Constabulary again met its budget targets. Our management of finances would withstand any scrutiny. Our use of the budget is innovative and imaginative, despite the difficulties that we face, not least of which is the constraining effect of an annual budget cycle. We still spend well over 80% of our budget on salary costs, which acts as another formidable restraint.

An especially difficult part of the pandemic was our inability to undergo specialist off-island training and other specialist on-island activities that are led by United Kingdom-bases trainers. This does not yet pose a threat to our effectiveness, but if border restrictions continue to drag on, then 2021 and beyond will be difficult. The Treasury showed great understanding of the difficulties that we face and allowed us to wire a six figure sum into the 2021-22 year to help us to recover.

For the 2020-21 year four of the Constabulary's five bids for extra funding failed. We had sought the following:

£38,496 to fund extra firearms training

£180,000 for our strategic partnership with Northgate

£417,102 to fund our work to tackle cybercrime

£50,000 to increase our forensic science budget.

A bid of £418,000 for mental health professionals to work with the Constabulary was approved, but the funds were allocated to the DHSC.

For the 2020-21 year we made three bids for extra funds, all of which were related to information technology:

£182,000 to fund an ICT change team; £106,500 to meet our obligations regarding the introduction of the Police National database and £55,000 to fund the obligatory introduction of the Police National Secure Network. The bids were partially successful in that 50% of the requested funding was provided, with the shortfall being met by the transfer of money from operational policing budgets.



Estate

During the year there was discussion in the media of the possible construction of a “blue light hub” which would house operational staff from all of the emergency services and provide specialist training facilities. Whether or not one is constructed is a political matter, but there cannot be any doubt that Police Headquarters is scarcely fit for purpose and that Peel police station is almost at the end of its serviceable life.





Section 5 – Data: Analysis and Interpretation

What the data says

This [link](#) takes you to over 90 pages of data. Contained within those pages is a whole range of data, information and basic analysis of the entire range of police activity.

Since 2001 the Constabulary has sought to adhere as closely as possible to the Home Office counting rules on crime. This is so that we can have a consistent approach and make broadly meaningful comparisons with other jurisdictions. As time has passed this adherence has become increasingly difficult. Our laws are not the same and our disposal options – how we finalise a crime investigation – are much more limited than they are elsewhere.

This year we have moved a little away from full adherence in respect of the recording of fraud offences. In the past, victims of online and telephone fraud would report such matters to UK Action Fraud. Jurisdiction largely lies where the offender first had control of stolen funds, rather than where the victim lives. This year we recorded such offences here and this accounts for a rise in fraud offences of 50%.

For a long time we have reported detection rates. This is no longer done elsewhere in quite the same way that we do and this report will be the last one to record detection rates. From 2021 we will record disposal outcomes, which will paint a more complete picture. It will show, for example, cases where the victims do not cooperate or do not want any enforcement action to be taken; it will show cases that have been discontinued because we do not have jurisdiction and it will show cases where we have not had any investigative options.

Our new Connect computer system has also changed the way that we record reports that are made to us. The system is sophisticated and allows for better analysis of crime and incidents. The overall level of crime rose by 18%, which is almost wholly composed of increases in the seizure of controlled drugs, low level assaults and the fraud offences mentioned earlier.

The use of crime severity tools shows that the two most harmful offence types during the year were sexual offences and drugs offences. Crime levels here remain well below half of those recorded in England and Wales.

Road traffic collisions fell by 16%, due in part to the lengthy lockdown periods and to the absence of motorsport events. Both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 years will offer little value in comparative terms.

Domestic incidents rose by 9% to almost two a day.

Offences committed by young people rose significantly. Our Police Early Action Team, which works to stop young people offending or reoffending, was busier than ever, dealing with 224 individuals, who between them committed 675 offences. Just 16 young people committed 275 of these offences. Referrals about young people whose



behaviour had been anti-social, but not criminal, also rose from 125 to 315. This gives some weight to comments made elsewhere in the report about the behaviour of some young people.

Arrests rose by 19%, peaking during the busy summer period. No one was detained in our cells for more than 48 hours and we did not use powers for intimate searches.

The number of finalised prosecutions fell by over 45%, but this is simply evidence of a considerable backlog in cases that built up because of covid-19 restrictions.

Calls for service rose by 3%, with the biggest increase being in cases of disorderly behaviour.

Mental health demands increased by 11% to the highest level the Constabulary has ever encountered.

Around £1m worth of drugs was seized for the third successive year. Cannabis was the most widely seized drug, but there were notable increases in the seizure of ecstasy and ketamine.

Armed officers were deployed 20 times when genuine or genuinely suspected threats to safety were identified and police officers used force 89 times. PAVA spray was used 28 times and Taser was discharged three times, albeit two of the discharges were made simultaneously by two officers at the same incident.

Assaults on officers were the highest yet recorded – 58, up from 40 the year before. Half of the assaults were committed by juveniles.

Burglary in people’s homes was low: 47 compared to 46 the year before.

Officers conducted almost a thousand examinations of electronic devices, up 69%

Sickness levels were low, despite the covid-19 pandemic. 3.8% of working time was lost to absence, much of which was accounted for by some long term absences.

The data shows that the Constabulary faced considerable pressure at times.



Section 6 – Report from the Constabulary’s independent inclusion scrutiny group

Since last reporting in July 2020, the IOM Constabulary Scrutiny Group has grown in membership and contributed in a number of ways to continuously improving the Constabulary’s understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of our community and, in turn, embedding an inclusive mind-set across the Constabulary.

Meetings of the Group are well attended and afford the opportunity to provide direct feedback to the Constabulary. Feedback is sometimes pertinent to other parts of the public service and is shared accordingly. Examples over the last nine months include highlighting:

- the importance of providing information in an accessible and understandable way – including for those with sensory disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language, and feeding into work to develop a cross-Government shared interpreter service;
- challenges experienced by those with sensory disabilities when using shared spaces (such as car drivers and cyclists being insufficiently aware of others’ needs) – a matter being taken up with the Road Safety team; and
- the experiences of people of colour living on the Island.

Members of the Group have continued to take part in recruitment assessment days. They have also delivered feedback sessions and awareness raising sessions to groups of officers. POC IOM, a new member of the Group since July 2020, has taken a particularly active part in this as have many of our other longer standing members representing a cross-section of our community. The feedback from the Constabulary regarding all of this input is consistently positive.

Members have also engaged in supporting the Constabulary’s suicide prevention work, something that is so important in light of the increase in the number of people who have died by suicide.

There are a number of areas the Group wishes to develop going forward, in addition to maintaining its current work. These include:

- developing an ethics panel to input as needed to the Constabulary;
- developing the Group’s role in being a voice on behalf of the community to feed into prioritisation of initiatives and policing priorities;
- seeking more youth representation; and
- addressing the absence of hate crime legislation on the Island.

It is a privilege to Chair this Group comprising dedicated individuals (too many to name) from across our community who willingly give of their time and experience with tangible benefits not only for the Constabulary, but in some cases for the wider public service.

I would like to give special mention to recently retired Chief Inspector, Cathryn Bradley, who has been a long time passionate and committed member of the Group and thank her for all her hard work over the years.



I would also like to thank the members of the Group for their time and commitment. Finally, thank you to officers across our Constabulary for recognising the value of this Group, and of listening, learning and striving to continuously improve.

Jane Poole-Wilson MLC

Chair IOM Constabulary Inclusion Scrutiny Group

April 2021





Section 7 – What next? Future issues

By its very nature an annual report is generally focused on the past. In this short section future activities are discussed. Policing is constantly changing and the nature of the threats to public safety are manifold and complex. It is important, therefore, that some mention is made of the work that the Constabulary will do in the months and years ahead to try to keep the Isle of Man safe.

Strategic Plan

The Constabulary's current strategic plan is due to expire in 2023. In February 2021 the plan was reviewed and updated to take account of new and emerging issues. The latest version adds extra focus to improvements to recruitment, initial training and first line supervision. It also focuses on the threats from travelling criminals, changes to the security of our border and the likely continuing impacts of the covid-19 pandemic.

STRA Development

Each year the Constabulary seeks to identify and analyse the most significant threats to public safety. Using various established processes and analytical tools, data and other information is used to produce a threat and risk assessment. This year's version is the most comprehensive yet. For the first time it uses data from Noble's Hospital and the Public Health Directorate and future iterations will seek to use data from across the public service in order to identify key threats.

The production of the strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA) allows the Constabulary to put in place appropriate policing responses. One particularly important issue is the exploitation of young people in connection with drug trafficking, violence and for sexual purposes. Data and intelligence used to identify this particular threat has allowed the Isle of Man Safeguarding Board to make tackling exploitation of young and vulnerable people one of its key priorities for the year ahead.

Borders

In recent years several events have highlighted the vulnerability of our borders. The sense of threat seemed to come into sharp focus during the covid-19 pandemic and there is now broad public and political consensus about the need for our borders to be made more secure. During the last year a considerable amount of work was done to identify the precise nature of the threats. At one level organised criminal groups seek to exploit the border to traffic drugs, launder money and exploit the vulnerable. At another level, when the borders are open travelling offenders often see the Isle of Man as being a lucrative target. A strong intelligence picture is also developing to show that organised groups are also involved in trafficking people and in committing immigration offences.



In the year ahead the Constabulary will undertake more collaborative work as it attempts to understand all of the threats concerning the border. This collaboration will build upon existing links with British



policing bodies, such as the National Crime Agency and the North West Regional and Organised Crime Unit, in order to tackle cross-border offending.

At the time of writing, the Council of Ministers is due to consider a set of proposals for the future protection of our borders. The Constabulary will inevitably play an active and key part in whatever solutions the government wishes to adopt.

Succession Planning

The pandemic has affected the Constabulary's succession planning. I will retire in 2022 and it had been hoped to identify a deputy chief constable, who in time would have become the preferred candidate to replace me. It had been intended that a wide range of candidates would be sought from on and off the island. The two 2021 lockdowns got in the way of this happening and a deputy is now unlikely to be in post until at least the autumn of 2021.

The year ahead will see extra focus being applied to talent and succession planning throughout the Constabulary. Again, the pandemic interfered with ambitious plans to develop talented people by way of off-island attachments and specialist training. Those plans will be restarted once border restrictions reduce. The Constabulary's group of inspectors is almost certainly the best I have worked with. They are talented, dedicated, bright and hard working. They offer the prospect of a successful future for the Constabulary, but the pandemic has slowed down some aspects of their development.

The year ahead will, therefore, require a real focus to be placed on succession planning.

ICT

Several years ago I wrote in disparaging terms about the Constabulary's use of technology. I wrote that, whilst many young officers live their lives via technology, they have to leave technology at home when they go to work. Things have changed for the better. A considerable investment of funds, clever purchasing, and the partnership with Northgate have helped change the landscape. We have got a long way to go and introducing new technology into the workplace isn't always easy, but the future will bring exciting developments.

Over the course of the next year or two (and in no particular order) the Constabulary will introduce the following systems:

Mobile: allowing officers full systems access from tablet and other devices.

Public engagement: a system to allow the public to upload data to the police, creating an effective two-way portal.

Decision support: a system that will help better manage information that comes from the public to the police.

Inform: a system that compares police custody images with other legally-held facial images to help automatically identify offenders.

Connect forensics: a system to manage forensics activity, including work flow and exhibits management.

Duties: a system to allow for more efficient and effective duties management.

Management planning: a system to allow for better management of problems and large scale events.

Partnership portal: a system to aid better, lawful data sharing between the Constabulary and partners.

Blade: a system that further enhances our ability to bring data together. For example, it will bring



command and control data from the Emergency Services Joint Control Room into police systems.

Property: a system that will help us manage all the property that we seize during investigations.

Digital assets: a system that will allow us to create better management of all of our digital assets.

RTC: a new system to create better road traffic collision recording. Removing the need for paper reports.

Drone technology: after overcoming a variety of obstacles in recent years, the Constabulary will begin to use drone technology.

The key activity to allow all of this to become effective is the imminent change from the Constabulary using Isle of Man government servers to store its data, to using a cloud-based hosted solution. This will happen in the first quarter of 2021-22 and it will lay the basis for transformative change.

HMICFRS

In the late autumn or early winter of 2021 the Constabulary will be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. (HMICFRS). It will have been around seventeen years since the last inspection, which is far too long a gap.

The inspection is a greatly welcomed initiative, which will aid the Constabulary in its future development. Final detailed terms of reference are yet to be agreed with HMICFRS, but it is almost certain that the inspection will focus on three broad themes: governance and political oversight, how the public is protected and how the Constabulary understands and deals with the threats posed by serious and organised crime.

The inspection will help the Constabulary to continue to improve and it will aid the Department of Home Affairs and my successor with future planning.

Protest

Political protest has not generally featured large in modern Manx life. That has changed in recent years as political awareness and issue-centred activism have grown, particularly among young people. In the United Kingdom the debate about Brexit and the pandemic have fundamentally altered public discourse, with one result being a growth in protests, often of a violent or aggressive nature. Almost inevitably a lot of focus has fallen on how British police forces have dealt with protests. Many signs exist that the spring and summer of 2021 will bring terrific challenges to British policing in terms of protest and disorder.

Until fairly recently the Constabulary had had little experience of dealing with political protests. However, in the last year or two it has managed public protests about abortion, environmental issues, gas prices, protests by so-called "freemen of the land" and by people supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. The last event took place towards the end of the 2020 lockdown and occurred during some restrictions on movement and gatherings. It was the largest political protest in modern times with around 1500 participants and the Constabulary worked closely and well with the event organisers, who took a hugely responsible approach, which ensured that people attending wore masks, remained in groups of ten people and maintained adequate social distancing. I was proud of our policing of the protest, despite it not impressing some armchair critics.

It is safe to assume that protests will increasingly form part of the local political landscape. Whilst the right to free speech is enshrined in the Human Rights Act 2001, the only restrictions on protests appear in abortion legislation. Protecting the right to free speech is such a fundamental concept, but in the future policy-makers may need to consider how best to do this and balance broader public safety considerations, not least the ability of the police to deal with protests. This is not a call for legislation of



the kind being moved in the United Kingdom, far from it, but instead there needs to be a mechanism that puts some onus on event organisers to work with the police to ensure that protests can be undertaken in a safe way.

Return of Motorsport

The cancellation of all motorsport events in both 2020 and 2021 has disappointed competitors and fans alike. It has also produced a genuine problem: by the time of the 2022 TT a really significant amount of experience will have disappeared, both in terms of the competitors, but also event officials and police officers. It is likely, for example, that almost half the Constabulary's patrol officers will have no experience of policing a TT by the time the 2022 event takes place.

In the year ahead a lot of work will take place to help prepare the Constabulary for the return of motorsport. This work will inevitably involve event organisers, the government and other partners. It will be challenging and important.



Emergency planning

The covid-19 pandemic revealed some challenges around the island's approach to emergency planning. The early stages of the pandemic were remarkable for the way that very many public servants operated in a flexible, creative way to find rapid solutions to emerging problems. It showed the public service at its best. Indeed, when senior military officers visited the island in April 2020 they remarked in hugely positive terms about the approach that had been taken. Nevertheless, there is still a great degree of clunkiness around some aspects of our approach to emergency planning.

In the year ahead we will work with partners from the other emergency and critical services and with the Cabinet Office to modernise our collective approach.

New legislation

Over the course of the last couple of years officers from the Department of Home Affairs and HM Attorney General's Chambers have worked hard to produce important new legislation. The Sexual Offences Bill (which will soon receive Royal Assent) radically overhauls and modernises all sexual offences legislation. It creates new offences, properly addresses new types of offending and enhances police powers. The Domestic Abuse Act is a hugely important piece of legislation, which will create new offences, but more importantly, provide robust new powers, which will allow the police to offer greater protection for those suffering from domestic abuse. The Justice Reform Act will radically alter parts of the criminal justice process, enabling quicker and more efficient procedures and bringing swifter justice.

Individually each of these new laws will have a significant impact. Collectively they amount to the most important modernisation of criminal justice and police powers in a generation. However, their implementation will challenge the Constabulary, requiring extensive training, the development of new processes and the creation of new documentation. There is an expectation amongst many people that the new laws will bring transformative change and they will, but not overnight. The Constabulary has spent



a lot of time preparing for the changes that the new laws will bring, but there is much work to do in 2021.

Sexual violence

There is a fast emerging view that too many people, particularly women, have endured sexual violence for too long. Events in the United Kingdom in the early spring of 2021 brought this into focus and a positive consequence of this may well be that more women come forward to report their own experiences. If this happens, then the island's services need to be ready and able to offer support to those who have been victims. The creation of the SARC was delayed by the pandemic, but its opening cannot come soon enough.

General election and new government

The Constabulary will offer all necessary support to the public servants and returning officers charged with running this year's House of Keys general election. The Constabulary is using a working assumption that interest will be high given the clear increase in political activism, including the more frequent occurrence of political protests.

The Isle of Man's political system means that the government that forms after the general election will not set out its priorities until early October. The new priorities that emerge may well need to be reflected in the Constabulary's own planning.

