



## December 2023

The SCSN Media Monitor provides a snapshot of Community Safety related media/press stories from across Scotland, the UK and sometimes internationally.

Some of the stories are not from Scotland, but are included as developments in the rest of the UK and internationally may be relevant to community safety here in Scotland and we hope will be of interest and contribute to sector conversations.

We will only source articles from media/press sources that correspond with our values as an organisation and that refrain from using stigmatising language or images.

## Crime & Justice

### Scottish Stories

#### **Calls for increased use of tagging to support people on bail**

Calls have been made for greater use of electronic monitoring for people on bail. There were 2,200 people in prison on remand awaiting trial on 1 November in Scotland – almost a third of the total number in jail. And there has been a significant increase in the time people are having to spend on remand. Bail with the option of electronic monitoring (EM) was brought in to Scotland last year through an Electronic Monitoring Order (EMO). - Read more [here](#).

#### **There's no way to understand an impossible choice for these parents - Karyn McCluskey**

Parenting seems to be a term that we consider around children and young people. It takes over our lives, our bank accounts, our social lives and everything else. We would of course do anything for them; donate an organ, go without essentials in life, lay down our lives to protect them. The sacrifices are endless.

What if your child was 25, in substance use and in debt to organised crime groups over drugs? What if these people were threatening to harm your child, break their legs, torture them to get the money? - Read more [here](#).

### UK Wide Stories

#### **Co-op boss says criminal gangs are operating 'exempt from consequences'**

The boss of Co-op is calling on the government to take more action to tackle retail crime amid a warning it has reached record levels as criminal gangs are operating "exempt from consequences". Co-op said its latest data showed that of the nearly 3,000 occasions this year where security teams detained serious offenders in its stores, the police failed to show up almost four-fifths of the time, leading to a "dangerous pressure cooker" environment that puts store workers and communities at risk. - Read more [here](#).

## **Christmas warning over crime gang links to online puppy sales**

Families are being urged not buy puppies online as Christmas presents amid fears money exchanged may be used by criminal gangs.

The warning comes as illegally-bred puppies sold on social media were identified by prosecutors as a source of revenue for organised crime gangs. The market in Scotland last year was estimated to be worth £13m. And price tags for some designer breeds of dog can reach as high as £3,000. - Read more [here](#).

## **Government blasted for refusing to resentence inmates trapped in jail with no hope of release**

The government has been blasted for refusing to resentence almost 3,000 inmates [trapped in prison under indefinite jail terms](#) despite a promise to overhaul draconian licence conditions imposed on such prisoners. The justice secretary has rejected calls from MPs and campaigners to help prisoners serving [imprisonment for public protections \(IPP\) sentences](#) who have no clear hope of release, including 700 who have served more than 10 years longer than their minimum tariff. - Read more [here](#)..

## **With bursting jails and Europe's longest sentences, the last thing the UK needs is more rightwing 'reforms' (Comment)**

Here we go again, tightening the screw and [lengthening prison sentences](#) to please that insatiable appetite among some voters for locking up more criminals ever longer. It is a British disease – born of public ignorance of the fact that for many decades, the UK has had the [harshest sentencing](#) in western Europe, with more people imprisoned per head of the population than China. That's an ignorance that both Tory and Labour governments have pandered to, cynically, for political gain. - Read more [here](#).

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

### **Riot police attacked by 'hostile' crowd in Auchinleck**

Riot police officers came under attack from a "hostile" crowd during large-scale disorder in an East Ayrshire village.

One officer had to be taken to hospital for treatment after being hit by a firework as trouble flared in Auchinleck on Saturday evening. Footage on social media showed officers in helmets and carrying riot shields as they tried to break up the crowd. Two homes were also badly damaged in apparent fire-raising attacks. - Read more [here](#).

### **Scottish McDonald's bans under-18s after 6pm over 'abuse'**

A SCOTTISH McDonald's outlet has banned under-18s after 6pm. The store, at Fort William in the Highlands, said it had taken the decision after verbal abuse was targeted at its staff. Police were contacted and advised that introducing the ban was the best thing to do to protect staff safety.

In a post on Facebook, the McDonald's store wrote: "Due to recent events we have had to make the decision to not allow under 18s into the store after 6pm. This has not been an easy choice; however, we must put the wellbeing of our staff and customers first." Read more [here](#).

## **Flares in Scottish football discussed at Hampden Park meeting**

The Scottish FA and SPFL say they are encouraged by steps taken by clubs to combat the use of pyrotechnics.

The issue was discussed at a Hampden Park meeting, with representatives from the governing bodies, Police Scotland and the Scottish government. Club safety officers were also in attendance for "an important opportunity to share information". **Legislation introduced this year** made it illegal to carry fireworks or flares into an event such as a football match. - Read more [here](#).

## **Policing**

### **Scottish Stories**

#### **Police Scotland warns of funding threat to 3,000 jobs**

Police Scotland is warning that 3,000 officer and staff jobs are at risk without further investment from the Scottish government.

In a report due to go before the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) on Thursday, the force has asked for £128m in additional funding. If this is not met, Police Scotland said it would look at cutting numbers. It comes after finance Secretary Shona Robison said Scotland's public sector workforce would have to shrink. - Read more [here](#).

#### **Thousands of homes 'too dangerous for ambulances without police back-up'**

Thousands of homes across Scotland have been declared "too dangerous" for ambulance crews to attend without police back-up.

Nearly 4,500 properties across the country have been subjected to the Scottish Ambulance Service's "red flag" policy. Paramedics are not permitted to enter those addresses unless officers are also present or a further risk assessment is carried out, even in the event of a medical emergency, because of previous violent incidents at the home or business. - Read more [here](#).

#### **Plans to reduce witness numbers in court 'will improve policing'**

A pilot scheme positively affected domestic abuse victims by reducing witnesses attending court unnecessarily by one third in a year, a report showed.

The Summary Case Management (SCM) Pilot, introduced at sheriff courts in Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley in September last year, will be expanded to Glasgow in 2024 after reducing the number of witnesses in domestic abuse cases by a third in a year. - Read more [here](#).

### **UK Wide Stories**

#### **Firearms officers: new report reveals the 'toxic culture' keeping women and ethnic minorities out of specialist squads**

Hundreds of London's Metropolitan police officers temporarily turned in their firearms in September after the Crown Prosecution Service charged an officer with the murder of unarmed 24-year-old Chris Kaba. Up to 300 of the force's 2,500 armed officers stepped back from their duties, leading the Met to request backup support from the army. Met commissioner Mark Rowley suggested that officers were concerned about having "sufficient legal protection to enable them to do their job." - Read more [here](#).

## **Police county lines strategy 'cruelly targets' black youth in UK**

The Home Office's approach to tackling county lines drug operations is based on unproven assumptions and "racialised tropes" that criminalise Black boys and young men, according to new research.

The [study](#) also found that the policing strategy towards county lines stigmatised Black youngsters in a similar way to how the [Metropolitan police's discredited gang violence matrix](#) database was found to be discriminatory.

The findings, published by thinktank the Institute of [Race](#) Relations (IRR), says the government's claim that county lines is the "most violent and exploitative" drugs distribution model, requiring a multi-agency approach, is unproven. - Read more [here](#).

## **Alcohol & Other Drugs**

### **Anger over Tory minister Penny Mordaunt's 'disgraceful' Scotland heroin jibe**

Tory minister [Penny Mordaunt](#) has sparked anger after [mocking a scheme](#) aimed at slowing [Scotland](#)'s drug deaths crisis in order to "score cheap points" in a row with the [SNP](#).

Warning that undermining proven health interventions "costs lives", experts spoken to by *The Independent* accused Ms Mordaunt of "punching down on a group of people who are some of the most marginalised and vilified in society" – and urged ministers to prioritise dealing with England's own overdose crisis. - Read more [here](#).

### **Sussex Police crackdown on drugs gangs not working, ex user says**

An ex-drug user says police crackdowns on county lines gangs in his community were "not working" as the criminal networks were too deeply rooted. Jeff Ashman, from Hastings, East Sussex used heroin and cocaine for 24 years. He says Sussex Police's attempts to dismantle drugs gangs only "slow it down for a day or two" and any gaps in the drugs market were quickly filled. - Read more [here](#).

### **Synthetic opioids: Largest ever UK seizure made by police**

The largest ever UK seizure of synthetic opioids has been made by police and border officials.

A series of raids in Waltham Forest and Enfield, north London, culminated in 11 people being charged with conspiracy to supply class A and B drugs. About 150,000 tablets of a drug called Nitazene were found in a factory set up to make the pills, Metropolitan Police said. Detectives believe the drug was being sold on the dark web. - Read more [here](#).

## **Hate Crime**

### **UK's human-rights watchdog at risk of UN downgrade**

Britain's human-rights watchdog could be downgraded and blocked from United Nations rights bodies over its recommended definition of sex. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is set to undergo a "special review" by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (Ganhri).

This process could mean the removal of the EHRC's accreditation as an "A status" National Human Rights Institution, meaning it would not be able to sit on the UN Human Rights Council. - Read more [here](#).

## **We need better role models to help teach children not to hate or bully (Comment)**

THERE is a sad sort of irony about seeing the hashtag "Anti-bullying Week" pop up on the website that shall not be named during a week (month, year, decade?), when everywhere around us we can see that those with the most power are celebrating bullying unashamedly. A horrific story broke this week of a man being set on fire and left with life-altering injuries while sleeping rough under a bridge in Birmingham last Tuesday – a shocking act of cruelty and violence which took place just days after then home secretary Suella Braverman vowed to clear the streets of homeless people's tents and branded rough sleeping a "lifestyle choice". - Read more [here](#).

## **General Community Safety**

### **Glasgow City council declares 'housing emergency' due to homelessness pressures**

Glasgow has declared a "housing emergency" amid mounting pressures on homelessness services. The council's city administration committee agreed the move on Thursday, with the local authority saying "unprecedented pressures" had "forced its hand". Earlier this month [Edinburgh](#) City Council was the first Scottish city to declare a housing emergency. - Read more [here](#).

### **Warm spaces funding approved for Inverclyde residents**

AN initiative providing Inverclyde residents with access to warm spaces and social connection will return this winter. Warm Hands of Friendship is back for a second year – supported by £100,000 of funding – after councillors gave the allocation the green light. The project will provide one-off grants to community groups developing activities for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis. - Read more [here](#).

### **Scotland's health: Mental wellbeing at record low**

Mental wellbeing in Scotland is at its lowest level on record, the survey suggests. The annual survey, published by the Scottish Centre for Social Research and the Scottish government, involved 4,394 adults and 1,764 children. It said the average score for adults on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) was 47 in 2022, compared with 50 in 2008, when the survey began. The worst mental wellbeing was reported in those from the most deprived 20% of Scotland, with 44.7, while those in the most affluent areas reported an average of 48.3. - Read more [here](#).

### **Warm hubs also offer social life - council**

A man who visited a warm hub which was set up to help people struggling with the cost of heating has said it has also enriched his social life. Leslie Eastham, 63, who attended Kingsfold library in Penwortham to escape the cold said he had also met "firm friends". Lancashire County Council has launched its **Warm and Welcome Spaces programme** for a second year. Mr Eastham said he had become "bored" after retirement lifestyle and the hub had become "the highlight of my week". - Read more [here](#).

### **Thousands of UK young people caught watching online child abuse images**

Several thousand young people are being caught each year sharing or watching indecent images of children – including child abuse material – a Guardian investigation has revealed.

Figures obtained through freedom of information (FoI) requests to police forces across [England](#), Wales and Northern Ireland show that in some regions the majority of people identified by police as watching or sharing indecent images of children are under 18. - Read more [here](#).



# Climate Crisis Corner



## Earth on verge of five catastrophic climate tipping points, scientists warn

Many of the gravest threats to humanity are drawing closer, as carbon pollution heats the planet to ever more dangerous levels, scientists have warned. Five important natural thresholds already risk being crossed, according to the [Global Tipping Points report](#), and three more may be reached in the 2030s if the world heats 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial temperatures. Triggering these planetary shifts will not cause temperatures to spiral out of control in the coming centuries but will unleash dangerous and sweeping damage to people and nature that cannot be undone. - Read more [here](#).

## 'Climate collapse in real time': UN head António Guterres urges Cop28 to act

"We are living through climate collapse in real time," the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, has told [Cop28](#) delegates in Dubai. He spoke at the launch of the [World Meteorological Organization's](#) stark State of the Climate report, which said 2023 will be the hottest year ever recorded. The WMO report, timed to inform the negotiations at Cop28, said [climate records had been shattered](#) in 2023, leaving "a trail of devastation and despair". - Read more [here](#).

## Richest 1% account for more carbon emissions than poorest 66%, report says

The richest 1% of humanity is responsible for more carbon emissions than the poorest 66%, with dire consequences for vulnerable communities and global efforts to tackle the climate emergency, a report says. The most comprehensive study of global climate inequality ever undertaken shows that this elite group, made up of 77 million people including billionaires, millionaires and those paid more than US\$140,000 (£112,500) a year, accounted for 16% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2019 – enough to cause more than a million excess deaths due to heat, according to the report. - Read more [here](#).

## Plans for leisure park at former Scottish mine progress

PLANS for a new eco-wellness leisure park at the site of a former Scottish mine have progressed. The proposal, at the site of the former St Ninians open cast mine, next to Kelty and Kingseat in Fife, are being progressed by the Developers, National Pride (St Ninians) Ltd. The aim of the eco-wellness and leisure park is to promote health and wellness within a sustainable ecology park, providing places for relaxation and rejuvenation, whilst at the same time providing local economic benefits through leisure, entertainment and tourism. - Read more [here](#).

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