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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

Scotland's murder rate falls to lowest level since modern records began

Scotland's murder rate has fallen to the lowest level since modern records began almost fifty years ago. Figures presented by Police Scotland to the Scottish Police Authority show there were 48 homicides in 2022-23. That compares to a high of 137 back in 2004-05.

At that time a UN report referred to Scotland as the "most violent country in the developed world". Reacting to the latest figures, detective chief superintendent Paul Livingstone, head of the Major Crime Unit at Police Scotland, told STV News: "It's quite clear Scotland is a safer place to live and work." - Read more [here](#).

More than a third of sexual assault victims under 18, report finds

The number of rapes, attempted rapes and domestic abuse cases reported to police are at their highest levels on record – with more than a third (37%) of sexual assault victims under the age of 18.

New figures reveal Police Scotland recorded 2,529 rapes and attempted rapes in the 2022-23 period, accounting for 17% of all sexual crimes. Domestic abuse is also at the highest level since new legislation came into force in 2019. - Read more [here](#).

Suella Braverman tells police to ramp up use of stop and search

Suella Braverman has called on police to increase the use of stop and search powers "to prevent violence and save more lives". In a statement aimed at all 43 forces in England and Wales, the home secretary said officers who used the powers had her "full support".

Her comments are likely to alarm critics of stop and search who point out that the technique disproportionately targets black and minority ethnic communities. - Read more [here](#).

Behind bars: how rap lyrics are being used to convict Black British men

Crown Prosecution Service claims no one is convicted solely via lyrics, but shocking new research finds juries being shown music and dance as evidence of guilt

On 6 February 2020, around 11.15am, a 16-year-old boy stepped out of Brighton's Regent Hotel and walked towards the terraced green of Regency Square. He had with him a handful of small, pebble-sized packages, some bound in blue plastic, the others in white. The different colours let him know which contained heroin, and which cocaine. Plain clothes police officers watching the boy soon discovered another 115 similar wraps in the hotel room he had been staying in. - Read more [here](#).

Covid court case backlog means prisoners are serving entire sentence on remand then being released with no money and nowhere to go (Comment)

Some events never really disappear from our newspapers, so great an impact they have on our society and country. Wars, Covid, terrorist attacks and terrible crimes are all remembered and leave a legacy that often changes us for the better.

The **Covid inquiries are ongoing** just now and families of those who died are being called to relive the terrible deaths of loved ones. Everyone recognises the after-effects on the health service but, in the justice system, the impacts are also felt acutely and the phrase 'a burning platform' comes to mind. - Read more [here](#).

MPs back crackdown on slow-walk protests amid warnings over 'fascism'

MPs have approved new powers for police to crack down on slow-walking protests amid warnings the government is veering toward "fascism". The House of Commons voted in favour of measures to lower the threshold for what is considered "serious disruption" by 277 to 217, a majority of 60.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman said the changes "provide the police with the powers to impose conditions on harmful protests" and "provide further clarity" on when they can act to shut down demonstrations. - Read more [here](#).

Cyber Crime/Security & Online Safety

Scottish Apple users urged to update iPhones amid major flaw

Police Scotland has urged Apple users to update their iPhones and iPads after a "critical security flaw" was recently discovered. Since the finding of this issue, urgent updates have been released by Apple for millions of users.

If you receive this update, you should download it urgently and ensure any Apple device is using the iOS 16.5.1 version. This [iPhone warning](#) was issued by the police with the National Cyber Security Centre providing some advice to users. - Read more [here](#).

BBC, BA and Boots issued with ultimatum by cyber gang Clop

A prolific cyber crime gang thought to be based in Russia has issued an ultimatum to victims of a hack that has hit organisations around the world. The Clop group posted a notice on the dark web warning firms affected by the MOVEit hack to email them before 14 June or stolen data will be published. More than 100,000 staff at the BBC, British Airways and Boots have been told payroll data may have been taken. Employers are being urged not to pay up if the hackers demand a ransom. - Read more [here](#).

Tech firms to be forced to hand over data to inquests into child deaths

Ofcom will be able to force tech platforms to hand over the personal data of children whose deaths are suspected to be related to online harm, the government has confirmed.

On the last day of the online safety bill's passage through parliament, the government accepted an amendment backed by a group of bereaved parents that will give coroners the power through Ofcom to force cooperation when investigating the deaths of children. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Home Office U-turn on festival drug tests 'puts people at risk'

The [Home Office](#) has been accused by leading festival organisers of endangering the lives of revellers after in effect blocking on-site drug testing last weekend.

The Parklife festival in Manchester last weekend was for the first time since 2014 unable to test confiscated pills because the government department said they needed to apply for a special licence. The development has deeply concerned those running the UK's largest festivals, who use onsite testing facilities to check on drugs and can then warn attenders and the emergency services about possible casualties. - Read more [here](#).

Drink and drive crackdown launched by Police Scotland

A crackdown on drink and drug driving will be launched by police on Monday amid concern offences have increased by a third over the past five years. The annual Recorded [Crime](#) in Scotland report published last week showed 7,815 'drinking under the influence' crimes in 2022/23 – compared with 5,863 in 2017/2018.

Separate figures from Transport [Scotland](#) reveal there are 20 deaths a year caused by drink driving. - Read more [here](#).

Minimum unit pricing reduced alcohol-related deaths by 13 per cent, according to report

A report published by [Public Health Scotland](#) has found that [minimum unit pricing](#) (MUP) in Scotland has directly reduced deaths caused by alcohol consumption by an estimated 13.4 per cent.

The final report on the independent evaluation of MUP also found that hospital admissions have fallen by 4.1 per cent, while the largest reductions were seen in men and those living in the 40 per cent most deprived areas. - Read more [here](#).

Policing

'Scots agree with assessment Police Scotland is institutionally racist'

A majority of Scots agree with Sir Iain Livingstone's assessment the force he leads is institutionally racist, a poll has found.

Last month Sir Iain, Police Scotland's chief constable, caused shockwaves with his admission the country's force was "institutionally racist and discriminatory". When asked between June 3 and 5, 52% told the pollster they agreed with his view compared to just 14% who disagreed. Some 21% said they neither agreed or disagreed, and 13% said they do not know. - Read more [here](#).

Scottish Police Federation accused of failing women

The federation that represents rank and file police officers in Scotland is failing women, according to whistleblowers and their lawyers, after an [extensive survey](#) of officers and staff described it as "the same old boys' network".

After a series of internal reports revealing the extent of racist and sexist behaviour within Police Scotland, as well as the admission by the chief constable, Sir Iain Livingstone, that the force is [institutionally racist and discriminatory](#), the focus has shifted to the Scottish Police Federation (SPF), which represents more than 16,000 officers. - Read more [here](#).

Police Scotland officers 'fear being labelled a grass if they call out misogyny and sexism'

Officers who raise concerns about misogyny and sexism at Police Scotland fear being labelled a grass and feel they have a "target" on their back, a new report has found.

It also said a "boys' club culture" exists in parts of the service where "the real team meetings happen on the golf course". The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) paper said colleagues often disguise or label sexist behaviour as "banter" and if someone challenges or calls it out, they are seen as not being able to take a joke and isolated from the team. - Read more [here](#).

Public safety fears over 800 Police Scotland staff cuts

THE SNP has been condemned for making communities less safe by abandoning a pledge over policing numbers as force cuts are expected to see over 800 officers and staff cut by the end of this year. - Read more [here](#).

Police in England and Wales could be given 'near total discretion' over protests

Police will have "near total discretion" over which protests to ban in England and Wales if lawmakers approve the government's latest changes to Great Britain's public order regime, a leading human rights lawyer has said.

Secondary legislation in parliament this week will empower police to impose conditions – including changing timings, locations and routes, and imposing noise restrictions – on protests they believe "may" cause "more than minor" disruption. - Read more [here](#).

Violence Against Women & Girls

Violence against women commissioner should be appointed, review concludes

A violence against women and girls commissioner should be appointed by the Scottish Government to ensure it is meeting international human rights obligations, an independent review has concluded.

It has also called for a legal right to VAWG services to be created, with a duty placed on service providers for minimum core services. - Read more [here](#).

Abortion clinic 'buffer zone' bill lodged in Scottish Parliament

A bill designed to end protests outside abortion clinics has been lodged at the Scottish Parliament. Green MSP Gillian Mackay has submitted the proposal, with the first vote expected in October. The members' bill aims to create 150-metre (164 yard) "safe access" zones around facilities which carry out abortions and other health services. - Read more [here](#).

There is so much more for us to worry about than men masquerading as women to access single-sex spaces (Comment)

Judging by column inches alone, you might be forgiven for thinking that the thing keeping women awake at night is not femicide, sexual assault, [plummeting rape convictions](#), stalking, unequal pay, the erosion of reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, rampant online misogyny, an [institutionally sexist](#) police force, [healthcare inequality](#), insufficient childcare provisions, or never being [allowed to age](#).

While all these issues do get reported, a disproportionate amount of attention is given to another topic: men masquerading as trans women in order to gain access to single-sex spaces. - Read more [here](#).

General Community Safety/Local Government

Why suicides among young women are rising at the fastest rate ever

Suicides among young women in the UK are surging at the fastest rate ever. Data released by the [Office of National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) shows the suicide rate in women and girls under the age of 24 between 2020 and 2021 saw the steepest rise since records started in 1981 - rising from 2.5 to 3.6 deaths per 100,000 women. This comes in the context of suicide among young women rising for several years. - Read more [here](#).

999 calls: UK emergency services hit by BT 'system failure'

Emergency 999 calls across the UK were not connecting this morning amid technical issues with the phone lines.

People had been urged to call 101 in an emergency for police or dial the control rooms directly for fire services, after problems were reported on Sunday morning. Several police forces and fire and ambulance services said they were facing issues and said BT had reported a "system failure". - Read more [here](#).

The time to introduce human rights budgeting for Scottish councils is now (Comment)

Local councils need 'radical change' to keep delivering for the people of Scotland, according to a recent report from the Accounts Commission. So, what about adopting a rights-based approach to resources?

When you listen to those with lived experience of human rights issues in Scotland, you'll often hear the same theme: that warm words of policy intent are a long way from the cold harsh reality of life in houses, communities, hospitals, and in the pockets of too many people. - Read more [here](#).

A tale of extraordinary barbecues – and the council that shut them down

Burgess Park is not the most beautiful park in the UK. To be honest, it's not even the most beautiful park in its own corner of south-east [London](#). One friend accurately described its charms as like an "unfinished late-Soviet-era public space in suburban Łódź".

Given its main feature is neither a garden nor a lido, or a playground, but a bridge that goes nowhere, there are few people who would debate this. It is not the biggest park, nor is it the coolest park or the park with the best vista. It is, however, the most extraordinary. - Read more [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



World has lost battle to stop glaciers melting and sea level rising, UN meteorological chief says

The British Antarctic Survey has released its new maps and they are a stark visual depiction of the retreat of ice at our poles. Just as stark is the warning from the secretary general of the United Nations' World Meteorological Organisation, Professor Petteri Taalas. In an interview with Sky News, he emphasised that the **melted ice** will never return, remarking that the planet has "lost this glacier melting game and sea level rise game". - Read more [here](#).

Global greenhouse gas emissions at all-time high, study finds

Greenhouse gas emissions have reached an all-time high, threatening to push the world into "unprecedented" levels of global heating, scientists have warned.

The world is rapidly running out of "carbon budget", the amount of carbon dioxide that can be poured into the atmosphere if we are to stay within the vital threshold of 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures, according to a [study published in the journal Earth System Science Data](#) on Thursday. - Read more [here](#).

An 'extreme' heatwave has hit the seas around the UK and Ireland – here's what's going on

One of the most severe marine heatwaves on the planet is taking place in the shallow seas around the UK and Ireland. That's according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which has labelled this a "Category 4" heatwave. Rarely used outside of the tropics, a cat 4 heatwave means "extreme" heat.

Marine heatwaves are [classified as](#) "prolonged periods of anomalously high sea surface temperature", when compared to the long-term average for that time of year. - Read more [here](#).

Climate change is harming my mental health

Until two years ago Jennifer Newall was working at the forefront of climate change research. Her PhD on melting ice sheets and changing sea levels had taken her to Antarctica, Scandinavia and the USA but it was while leading a workshop for primary school children in Glasgow that she began to question what she was doing. "It dawned on me," she says. "The physics behind this haven't changed in my lifetime. They're not going to change going forward." - Read more [here](#).

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