



June 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 from outwith 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.

Equalities & Hate Crime on Pride & Gypsy Roma Traveller Month 2023

Equality watchdog head Baroness Falkner investigated over complaints

The head of Britain's equality watchdog is being investigated after bullying and discrimination allegations were made by staff. The claims against Baroness Falkner, and other members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) board, were seen by Channel 4 News. Baroness Falkner said she will present a "detailed rebuttal" to the investigators working on the case. Some campaigners say the EHRC is not protecting transgender rights. - Read more [here](#).

LGBT Youth Scotland leaves Twitter amid safe space concerns

A PROMINENT [LGBT+](#) charity has deleted its Twitter account over concerns with the platform's ability to [enable a safe environment to share information](#). LGBT Youth Scotland has taken the decision to leave the platform, citing ethical reasons for shutting down its account. It was the charity's biggest social media platform with more than 33,000 followers. - Read more [here](#).

UK: Keep calm and respect diversity, says UN expert

Abusive rhetoric by politicians, the media and social commentators has trickled down to produce increasingly abusive and hateful speech against LGBT persons in the United Kingdom (UK), the UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity warned.

"I am deeply concerned about increased bias-motivated incidents of harassment, threats, and violence against LGBT people, including a rampant surge in hate crimes in the UK," said Victor Madrigal-Borloz, the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, who visited the UK from 24 April to 5 May 2023. - Read more [here](#).

Why are trans rights in prison so rarely defended? (Opinion)

On Tuesday, Prof Kathleen Stock did a media round, following a fresh row about her [appearance at the Oxford Union](#) that day and a Channel 4 documentary, [Gender Wars](#).

It would be repetitive and a bit Pavlovian to react again and again to everything she says – I caught her on LBC – and I question how helpful it would be. But there was one line that went unchallenged, because it always does: that “[there are very vulnerable females](#) in prison in close quarters with male rapists due to these ridiculous policies”. This isn’t exactly right: latest figures for England and Wales show there are [49 transgender prisoners](#) across the female prison estate. [Six of them](#) are trans women, who will all have gone through a local case board, and they’ll all have been on the hormone regime that is a prerequisite for switching estates. - Read more [here](#).

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers suffer ‘persistent’ discrimination in UK

There is “troublingly persistent” levels of discrimination against [Gypsy, Roma and Travellers](#) (GRT) in the UK, an expert group from Europe’s leading human rights body has found.

The [Council of Europe](#) committee said the GRT community suffer “shocking” amounts of bullying in the education system, [prejudiced reporting in the media](#) and threats to their legal status and rights, including as a result of recent legislative changes. In an opinion, published on Thursday, it says: “The definition of ‘Gypsy’ for planning purposes excludes those who have permanently ceased travelling. This means that ethnic Gypsy and Travellers may be denied their status as a ‘Gypsy’ [sic]. - Read more [here](#).

Crime and Justice

Norway has ditched the word 'prison'. Scotland should think about doing the same – Karyn McCluskey (Opinion)

What is in a term? Offender or person with convictions, victim or survivor? Language is about the communication of ideas – and it’s important to get it right, particularly when it comes to justice. There are words I hate hearing, like “n*d”, which I’d prefer not to spell out, and toxic language around those who have an addiction to drugs – words I won’t use. Shifting the language, can shift understanding and reduce stigma. It seems like a small but important thing. - Read more [here](#).

Scotland’s pioneering custody units for women left half-empty

Scotland’s pioneering community custody units – hailed as a UK first in supporting female inmates – have been left half-empty more than six months after they were opened, the Guardian can reveal. Campaigners have been left frustrated by the costly, state-of-the-art units not being filled to capacity after opening last year as part of the Scottish Prison Service’s trauma-informed strategy for women. - Read more [here](#).

Bomb threat among 1,000 police callouts to children’s secure units

Police were called out to children’s secure units in Scotland nearly 1,000 times over the last two years, a Freedom of Information request has found. Police Scotland responded to 965 incidents during 2021-22 and 2022-23, including one report of a bomb threat and 14 reports of sexual offences. During the same period, there were 312 callouts for young people going missing from Scotland’s four secure units for children, as well as 84 reports of assault. - Read more [here](#).

Sturgeon calls for both sides to 'take a breath' in rape trial reform row

Nicola Sturgeon says the furious backlash to Scottish government plans to pilot jury-less trials for rape cases is the latest example of the polarisation of politics that contributed to her resignation as first minister. The proposal, part of a wide-ranging justice reform bill introduced by her successor, Humza Yousaf, aims to tackle endemic low conviction rates for rape prosecution, and would make [Scotland](#) the first part of the UK to use specialist courts and judge-only trials for serious sexual assaults. - Read more [here](#).

Violent porn acts occurring in sexual abuse between under-18s, report finds

England's children's commissioner has called for the "most robust" online protections for under-18s after publishing research examining links between sexual abuse cases and pornography. In the second of a series of reports exploring the impact on children, Rachel de Souza said she wanted to "turn the tide on pornography's harms to children". The [first report](#) found that the average age at which children first viewed pornography was 13 years of age, with one in 10 of the 16- to 21-year-olds it surveyed saying they had watched pornography by the time they were nine years old. - Read more [here](#).

Plan to scrap specialist sex offender teams 'a danger to public safety', says probation union

Plans to disband specialist teams that deliver treatment courses for sex offenders have prompted fears public safety will be jeopardised. Under the Ministry of Justice proposals, which are being fiercely resisted internally, behaviour programmes for a wide variety of offenders would be delivered by staff who are not fully qualified probation officers. - Read more [here](#).

The law is gone but they are still in jail: who will free Britain's most wronged prisoners? (Opinion)

There are those of us who exist in a more or less free society. And there are those who, while also living within the borders of the United Kingdom, exist in a police state. If the rest of us knew these people existed and what was being done to them in our name, we would scarcely believe it. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol & Other Drugs

Mum of girl who overdosed campaigns for drug legalisation

A woman whose daughter died from an accidental drug overdose has joined calls for legalisation. Anne-Marie Cockburn's daughter, Martha died in 2013 aged just 15, after taking a lethal dose of ecstasy. She believes her daughter would still be alive if drugs were legal and will join campaigners in Edinburgh to discuss regulation of the drug market. The Scottish government has previously committed to a public health approach towards drug use. - Read more [here](#).

Needle bin installed in Glasgow to reduce drug-related litter

A NEW secure disposal bin to reduce drug-related litter has been installed in Glasgow city centre. The needle drop box, which is the first of its kind in Glasgow, is located in the Trongate area and will allow people who are injecting drugs away from home to safely dispose of needles and syringes. John Campbell, Injecting Equipment Provision (IEP) manager at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, says the bin is one of a range of measures that have been implemented in recent years, such as single-use injecting packs, water for injecting and foil as an alternative to needles for people using heroin, to reduce drug-related litter in the city. - Read more [here](#).

Why curbing alcohol advertising matters to affected families

A mother of two has said she is "scared" of the day her children start drinking amid omnipresent alcohol advertising in [Scotland](#). Rebekah, 31, opened up about how her family's life has been seriously impacted by her ex-husband's binge drinking. She is one of many examples of families affected by the alcohol use of their loved ones.

"It feels like it comes out of nowhere and throws up everything in the air," Rebekah told the Herald. "It creates this big, huge chaos in our lives. The kids are a bit older now and they are seeing a lot more of it. - Read more [here](#).

Calls to ease restrictions on magic mushroom drug

An MP has called on the government to ease restrictions on a drug found in magic mushrooms to allow it to be used to treat mental health conditions. Charlotte Nichols spoke about her own experience of PTSD as she urged ministers to make it easier to research potential medicinal uses of psilocybin. - Read more [here](#).

Policing

Police Scotland chief says force is institutionally racist

The chief constable of Police Scotland has admitted that the force is institutionally racist and discriminatory. Sir Iain Livingstone said prejudice and bad behaviour within the force was "rightly of great concern". He also said that acknowledging the issues exist was vital for real change to happen.

A review recently [uncovered first-hand accounts of racism, sexism and homophobia](#) by serving officers. - Read more [here](#).

Police federation slams chief constable's claim Scottish force is institutionally racist

Scotland's police union has accused the outgoing chief constable of making cops' jobs harder by branding the force -institutionally racist. David Threadgold, chair of the Scottish Police Federation, rejected Sir Iain Livingstone's brutal verdict. And former federation official Callum Steele condemned the statement as "extreme sabotage". - Read more [here](#).

Police initiative to tackle racism accused of being racist

An initiative to tackle racism in policing in England and Wales is itself facing allegations of racism from some of the ethnic minority staff involved. The Police Race Action Plan was launched after African-American George Floyd was murdered in the US in 2020. It aims to help police build better relationships with black communities. However, BBC Newsnight has spoken to former members of staff who said their perspectives were ignored. - Read more [here](#).

Police Scotland needs to be locally accountable (Opinion)

Since the creation of Police [Scotland](#) and the Scottish Police Authority, there has been limited local democratic scrutiny and no local accountability of the police service. Policing was created by councils and relies on the trust of its communities. This deficiency has been partially acknowledged by the Strategic Partnership Agreement for Policing signed with COSLA. It commits the partners to strengthen their collaboration on strategic priorities – including local democratic scrutiny and accountability. - Read more [here](#).

Road Safety

Ministers missing road deaths cut targets as car user fatalities soar

Ministers are missing targets to slash the number of road deaths by half at the end of the decade - as it emerged the number of car user fatalities nearly doubled in a year.

Some 174 people died on Scotland's roads in accidents in 2022 - nearly 25% (33) more than in 2021 and the highest since 2016. But that is around 30% higher than what was expected to be registered to meet a target to slash deaths on the road to just 87 by 2030, it can be revealed.

The death toll is now back at the 2014-2018 average that was the starting point for the Scottish Government's bid to cut the number of road fatalities. - Read more [here](#).

Wellbeing Economy

The wellbeing economy is our chance to tackle Scotland's challenges at their source

Scotland and its communities are living through very difficult and uncertain times, and the creation of a Cabinet position in the Scottish Government to promote and deliver the wellbeing economy is to be welcomed.

Today our citizens face multiple and debilitating challenges, most of which have their roots in various decisions about the economy taken over many decades. The cost-of-living crisis is sending more and more people into poverty, often facing a choice between heating their home and feeding their children. - Read more [here](#).

Scottish Government is still too wedded to GDP

Scotland's recent leadership election shone a spotlight on the need for a Wellbeing [Economy](#). The Scottish Parliament recently debated the topic for the first time, and there is a new cabinet position for the Wellbeing Economy in the new Scottish Government. - Read more [here](#).

General Community Safety

Scottish Borders Council seeks to fill home workers' empty desks

A council is hoping to fill the desks left empty by home working by turning its headquarters into a "civic hub". The local authority in the Borders recently revealed that only about 60 of the 400 staff who were previously based at the site now use the building. It said the cost, time and environmental benefits of a hybrid working model were significant. - Read more [here](#).

Young lives will be 'put at risk' if swimming pools close

One of West Lothian's oldest swimming clubs has branded the threat to close three local pools as "devastating news", warning that young lives will be put at risk.

Trojan ASC, which has more than 100 members, has lobbied local councillors as well as a Scottish Government minister in a bid to release funding to save the pools from closure. - Read more [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



World likely to breach 1.5C climate threshold by 2027, scientists warn

The world is almost certain to experience new record temperatures in the next five years, and temperatures are likely to rise by more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, scientists have warned.

The breaching of the crucial 1.5C threshold, which scientists have warned could have dire consequences, should be only temporary, according to research from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). - Read more [here](#).

Two trillion tonnes of greenhouse gases, 25 billion nukes of heat: are we pushing Earth out of the Goldilocks zone?

Since the 18th century, humans have been taking fossil fuels out of their safe storage deep underground and burning them to generate electricity or power machinery.

We've now converted coal, oil and gas into more than two trillion tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and added them to the atmosphere. - Read more [here](#).

Devastating floods in Italy claim lives and leave thousands homeless

Nine people have died and thousands have been evacuated from their homes after heavy storms wreaked havoc in the northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna, causing severe flooding and landslides.

People sought refuge on the rooftops of their homes after 21 rivers broke their banks, submerging entire towns. - Read more [here](#).

Extinction Rebellion protest in Netherlands ends with 1,500 arrested

More than 1,500 climate protesters have been arrested by police in the Netherlands after blocking a major motorway in The Hague.

During the protest, organised by Extinction Rebellion, activists walked onto the A12 highway demanding an end to fossil fuel subsidies. Police fired water cannon to try to disperse the crowds - but many came prepared in raincoats and swimsuits. - Read more [here](#).

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The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) is supported by funding from the Scottish Government Building Safer Communities Project.



Scottish Government
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