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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.

Dangerous Dogs

American XL bully ban dates confirmed for Scotland

New restrictions on XL bully dogs are being introduced in Scotland from 23 February. It will be legal to own one of the dogs but they must be muzzled and on a lead in public from that date. Selling or exchanging them will be banned.

And from 31 July it will be an offence to own an XL bully without an exemption certificate. The regulations mirror those in England and Wales but certificates will be required there from Thursday. - Read more [here](#).

How the ban on XL bully dogs from midnight tonight could trigger more – not fewer – attacks (Comment)

When the government's controversial [ban on American XL bully dogs](#) in England and Wales comes into force at midnight tonight, owners without a certificate of exemption – which requires a payment of almost £100 per animal, proof of third-party liability insurance, and registration to have been completed before [midday today](#) – will have little option but to have their dogs put down. Alternatively, they may simply choose to keep their pets out of sight – with potentially [devastating consequences](#). - Read more [here](#).

Crime and Justice

Four people die every week in Scotland in state custody or care

FOUR people die every week in Scotland while in prison, police cells or other forms of state detention or care, according to figures exclusively shared with The Ferret. The research by the University of Glasgow is part of an annual survey of deaths in prison, which analyses fatal accident inquiry (FAI) reports to identify problems. However, this year researchers included deaths in police custody, deaths in immigration detention or asylum accommodation as well as those of children and young people in the care system. - Read more [here](#).

Scottish prison boss says 'we can't take any more'

The head of the Scottish Prison Service has said the jails are too full and she may soon have to say "enough is enough, we cannot take any more". Teresa Medhurst told BBC Disclosure prisons were reaching a "tipping point" and emergency powers could be needed to release inmates early. She said if numbers continued to rise, drastic measures could be needed as soon as next month. The prison boss said "all options would need to be on the table". - Read more [here](#).

Plan launched to reduce violence across county

A five-year plan has been launched to reduce violent crime in Gloucestershire. It comes as the [Serious Violence Duty](#) comes into force across the UK, legislation that requires councils and other local services to work together to combat violent crime. The plan by Gloucestershire's police and crime commissioner (PCC) includes the implementation of a Youth Violence Prevention Panel.

Neil Smith, PCC violence prevention coordinator, said: "This is about bringing all partnerships together to make sure that we actually have something within our delivery plans, around the prevention and reduction of serious violence." - Read more [here](#).

Ban won't end knife crime, says founder of Bristol academy whose pupils died

Banning "zombie" knives and machetes will not end the trauma of knife crime, the founder of an academy trust has warned, after two pupils at one of his schools were [fatally stabbed over the weekend](#).

The Rev Steve Chalke, of Oasis academies, said the killing of Mason Rist, 15, and his 16-year-old friend Max Dixon in south Bristol was "absolutely devastating" for family and friends, their school and the wider community in Knowle West. - Read more [here](#).

What does the appetite for stories about child killers say about us? (Comment)

WHEN Girl X and Boy Y were convicted of [the murder of Brianna Ghey](#) in December 2023, there was always going to be intense media interest in convincing the judge to set aside reporting restrictions.

North and south of the Border, the default position is that children accused of crimes can't be identified by the media. Last week, the Scottish Parliament was scrutinising new proposals to update these rules for the social media age – and not before time. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Scotland expected to raise minimum alcohol price by 30%

The minimum price of alcoholic drinks in [Scotland](#) is poised to rise by 30% under measures to control alcohol-related deaths and hospitalisations.

Ministers in Edinburgh are expected to confirm that the minimum unit price for alcohol will increase from 50p to 65p from early May, six years after Scotland became the first part of the UK to [introduce the policy](#). Public [Health](#) Scotland said last year that minimum pricing had been "associated" with a 13.5% fall in deaths wholly attributable to alcohol, compared with the expected death rate had minimum pricing not been in force. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol levy could raise £57m for support services, report claims

A levy on retail outlets selling alcohol could raise £57m to be spent on local treatment, recovery support and prevention, a think tank has claimed.

Research from the Fraser of Allander Institute at the University of Strathclyde has shown money raised on off sales alcohol could provide much-needed funding for supporting people with alcohol problems. - Read more [here](#).

Single-use vapes to be banned in Scotland, Lorna Slater announces

SINGLE-USE vapes will be banned in Scotland in a bid to cut down on litter, the Government has announced. Recommendations made [following a UK-wide consultation have been accepted by the Scottish Government](#), with minister Lorna Slater saying there was a “clear majority” for an outright ban. - Read more [here](#).

Seized MDMA tablets linked to youth deaths

Detectives are warning about a rising trend of potentially lethal ecstasy tablets after a number were recovered in the west of Scotland.

Police Scotland's Statement of Opinion (STOP) Unit said that a number of MDMA tablets were seized by staff at an event in August last year. MDMA is a class A substance controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. One expert said it had been identified as a factor in a number of deaths across Scotland last year. - Read more [here](#).

'It beats getting stoned on the street': how Portugal decriminalised drugs – as seen from the 'shoot-up centre'

Paulo picks up a lighter from the table in front of him, holds it beneath the foil-encased bowl of his thin metal pipe for a few seconds, and then inhales. For a brief moment, he falls silent, head slumped forward. Then the 47-year-old is back to his usual chatty self, conversing with the seven other drug addicts who, like him, are making the most of their 30-minute slot at Porto's new “shoot-up” centre. “It beats getting stoned on the street, where, you know, anyone can come along, kids or whatever,” he says. “Here, we can just do our thing and no one hassles us.” - Read more [here](#).

Wellbeing Economy/Poverty

Midlothian Council and Rock Trust to tackle youth homelessness

Midlothian Council has partnered with the charity Rock Trust to better support young people with housing issues. The Trust provides a youth-specific specialist service to advise, educate and support young people to develop the personal skills and resources required to make a positive and healthy transition into running a home and adulthood. - Read more [here](#).

Rough sleeping in London up 23% to highest level in a decade

Rough sleeping in [London](#) is at its highest level in a decade, prompting warnings of a “humanitarian crisis” that is expected to get worse.

In a 23% year-on-year increase for the fourth quarter of 2023, 4,389 people were counted sleeping on London's streets – the most since city hall started recording figures in 2014. More than half were sleeping rough for the first time. [Homelessness](#) charities called the numbers “devastating”. - Read more [here](#).

'Appalling decline' in child health in the UK, study finds

CHILDREN are being "betrayed" as the UK fails to give them a healthy start to life, academics have said. Experts warned of the "appalling decline" of the health of children under the age of five in the UK – with soaring rates of obesity and tooth decay.

A new report, by the Academy for Medical Sciences, claims that, in recent years, progress on child health has "stalled". Key concerns outlined in the report include: – More than a fifth of children aged five are overweight or obese. - Read more [here](#).

What we need to do next if we want four-day work week (Comment)

FIRST Minister Humza Yousaf announced to widespread fanfare and much acclaim in September last year that the Scottish Government's Programme for Government [would include financial support to trial a four-day week](#) in a number of government departments and public bodies.

The move is part of the [Holyrood](#) Government's Fair Work programme in which the achievement of fulfilling and satisfying work is a key goal. - Read more [here](#).

Road Safety

Scottish city named 'pothole capital' of UK with another in second place

Two Scottish cities have been revealed as the top two worst for potholes in the UK outside of London. Anybody who has ever driven in an urban area will know that potholes are a common occurrence, resulting from the surface of a road being worn away by traffic. However, some areas are worse for bumpy roads than others. - Read more [here](#).

Driving the A75 and A77 'can be like Russian roulette'

A call has been made to spell out "where and when" two key south of Scotland routes will be upgraded. A summit in Stranraer heard from a range of groups and individuals about concerns over the A75 and A77. One lorry driver said they needed to be made safer and that driving them could feel like "Russian roulette". - Read more [here](#).

General Community Safety

Police Scotland probing potential deaths linked to 'suicide kits' bought online

Police are investigating whether anyone in Scotland has died after buying a "suicide kit" on the internet. The National Crime Agency says almost 300 people in the UK have bought the products from Canadian websites and 93 of them have lost their lives. STV News understands police in the UK are carrying out regular welfare checks on a number of individuals, including in Scotland, who are believed to have bought the kits. - Read more [here](#).

Misogynistic media reports that victim-blame women who have been raped or murdered must be challenged – Karyn McCluskey

First impressions matter. They shouldn't, but they do. There's a school of thought based on scientific surveys that says it takes around seven seconds for our brains to form an impression after we first meet a stranger. And most of us take about half a minute to decide a person's nature. It all feels remarkably shallow. For those of us who take a while to warm up or hide our talents until we know others, that's a problem if we are interviewing, dating or taking part in other social interactions. - Read more [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



UK must act urgently to meet climate commitments, says watchdog

The UK must act urgently to meet its international climate commitments, the independent climate watchdog has warned, after sending “mixed messages” to other countries at the [Cop28 UN climate summit](#) in December.

While carbon reduction from electricity generation has shown progress, the rate at which all other sources of emissions are being cut must quadruple to meet the UK’s target under the Paris agreement of 68% reductions in emissions by 2030, according to the Climate Change Committee. - Read more [here](#).

Scottish Government home heating plans at ‘significant risk’

The Scottish Government will miss its target to phase out gas boilers in homes unless it significantly increases the scale and pace of activity, Audit Scotland has warned.

The target of reaching net zero by 2045 includes a goal to reduce emissions from heating as much as possible, meaning most households will need to change their heating systems. - Read more [here](#).

Isle of Mull: Scottish island residents hit by earthquake

AN earthquake has struck a Scottish island, according to the British Geological Survey (BGS). A 3.3 magnitude quake hit the Isle of Mull in the Inner Hebrides at 7.30pm on Monday evening. The BGS said movement was felt in Mull itself, in surrounding islands and on the mainland, mainly from within around 50 kilometres of the epicentre. - Read more [here](#).

83% of English rivers have evidence of high pollution from sewage and agriculture

Eighty-three per cent of English rivers contain evidence of high pollution caused by sewage and agricultural waste, according to the largest citizen science water testing project ever to take place in the UK.

Hundreds of anglers took part in the study, organised by the Angling Trust, after being angered by the brown blooms of sewage in the waters they painstakingly tend for the benefit of fish. - Read more [here](#).

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