



Community Safety



Media Monitor

January 2022

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.

Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling

Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce bosses resign in fury after being told to 'hurry up' by SNP minister

The chair and vice chair of the [Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce](#) have resigned after being told to get a move on. The Record can reveal that [Professor Catriona Matheson](#) and deputy Neil Richardson mutinied after being ordered by Scotland's drugs minister [Angela Constance](#) to produce a blueprint for urgent reform by the summer - months earlier than first laid down. - Read more [here](#).

'Stop saying junkie' plea to end addiction stigma

A national campaign calling for drug and alcohol problems to be treated as a health condition has been launched. People are being urged to stop using words such as alcoholic and junkie in the Scottish government drive. Ministers aim to highlight the damage caused by the stigma of problem drug and alcohol use and how this can stop those affected from being able to get help. - Read more [here](#).

Risk of death from drugs up 55% since 2010 due to government cuts, say experts

UCL study finds lack of access to treatment contributed to fatalities amid criticism that latest strategy will stigmatise users. The likelihood of users dying from drugs such as heroin has increased 55% since the Conservative party came to power in 2010, according to research that suggests the government's new drug strategy will merely begin to restore some of the support it dismantled in the first place. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol deaths highest for 20 years in England and Wales

Alcohol killed more people in 2020 in England and Wales than in any of the previous 20 years, [official data](#) shows. - Read more [here](#).

Abstinence-based recovery nearly killed me – the Tories' 'war on drugs' won't work (Comment Piece)

I write this from a Birmingham city centre hotel, a few minutes' walk from a doorway I slept rough in during the 1990s, near the alleyways where I injected drugs. Sadly, more than 20 years later, people are still sleeping in that same doorway and are still injecting drugs in those alleyways.

The government's [10-year drug strategy](#), announced on Monday, will do little to help these people. It is a criminal sanction-led approach – and I know from my own experience that a system designed to punish rather than support will only force drug users into hiding, back to those filthy dark alleyways with the rats running about. - Read more [here](#).

Psychiatrists warn of problem gambling rise among over-65s

About 620,000 more in age group are gambling online at least once a month than two years ago in Great Britain

Psychiatrists are warning of a surprise rise in problem gambling among the over-65s after the largest increase in online betting since before the pandemic was recorded among the age group. About 620,000 more over-65s are gambling online at least once a month than in 2019 – a bigger increase than any other age group, according to analysis of [Gambling Commission](#) data by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP). - Read more [here](#).

Families bereaved through gambling-linked suicide launch education programme

Families bereaved through gambling-linked suicides have launched a new education programme to alert schoolchildren to the dangers of addiction. The awareness-raising initiative is being piloted in schools in Northern Ireland and England ahead of a planned rollout across the rest of the UK. - Read more [here](#).

Hate Crime & Homophobia

Homophobic and transphobic hate crimes surged after COVID lockdown lifted, figures show

According to new figures, after lockdown restrictions were eased this summer, anti-LGBT+ hate crime numbers soared to the highest level since the beginning of the pandemic. Between January and August this year, at least 14,670 homophobic hate crimes were recorded in the UK. During the same period in 2020, there were 11,841, and the first six months of 2019 saw 10,817.

The third national lockdown began in January, 2021, and from January to April there were an average of 1,456 homophobic hate crimes reported per month, and 208 transphobic hate crimes. As lockdown restrictions eased, this figure soared to 2,211 homophobic incidents per month from May to August, and 324 transphobic ones. - Read more [here](#).

Stephen Port: Met Police failings led to more deaths

Failings by the Met Police contributed to the deaths of serial killer Stephen Port's final three victims, an inquest jury has ruled. Port, 46, is serving a whole-life term for murdering Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor in Barking over 16 months.

The deaths were not regarded suspicious until weeks after the fourth murder. The case was branded "one of the most widespread institutional failings in modern history" by the men's families. Neil Hudgell, a solicitor representing the victims, added: "Our firmly held belief is that the Metropolitan Police's actions were, in part, driven by homophobia." - Read

Violence Against Women & Girls

'Public sexual harassment' could be made new criminal offence

Public sexual harassment could become a criminal offence under new plans drawn up in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard, according to reports.

The proposals are set to be announced next week, according to *The Daily Telegraph*, after a review commissioned by the government in an effort to tackle misogyny and prevent men's behaviour escalating towards sexual offences and murder. But Whitehall source told the newspaper that the Law Commission would reject calls to make misogyny a hate crime. - Read more [here](#).

Sex-based hostility should be hate speech, recommends report

People who stir up hostility on the basis of sex or gender should be prosecuted for hate speech, a review carried out for the government says. The Law Commission argued this was needed in England and Wales to combat a "growing threat" of "extreme misogyny". But it did not suggest treating other offences motivated by anti-women prejudice as hate crimes, which has angered campaign groups. - Read more [here](#).

General Community Safety Stories

UK police chiefs consider public admission of institutional racism

Britain's most senior police leaders are considering making a public admission that their forces are institutionally racist, the Guardian has learned.

High-level discussions began on Thursday and come as their special adviser on race [says the declaration is needed](#) if promises of radical reform are to be believed by black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. More discussions will be held in January, and a decision from police chiefs is expected in February. - Read more [here](#).

First year of pandemic saw 16% increase in reported incidents of fly-tipping in England

For the 2020/21 year, local authorities in England dealt with 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents, an increase of 16% from the 980,000 reported in 2019/20, according to updated figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The figures cover trends in the number of fly-tipping incidents, with a breakdown by land type, waste type and size during the first year of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (2020/21). - Read more [here](#)

Tell children about porn before buying their first phone, parents told.

Parents should talk to children about pornography and sexual harassment if they are buying them their first phone this Christmas, the children's commissioner for England said. - Read more [here](#).

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