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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

Firearms licensing to be examined in Scotland after Skye shooting

An inquiry into the licensing of firearms has been launched by the Scottish Affairs Committee, one month after a man was killed in a shooting on the Isle of Skye. Last month, 47-year-old John Mackinnon was killed after a firearm was discharged. The responsibility for gun control rests with the UK Government Home Office, while policing is a devolved matter. - Read more [here](#).

Gun crime rising in two-thirds of police force areas in England and Wales

Two in three police force areas in England and Wales are experiencing rising gun crime, with one force facing levels six times higher than a decade ago, Guardian analysis of Home Office data has found. While firearms offences have fallen 14% on the whole in the past 10 years – helped by a big fall in gun crime in London – 29 out of 43 police forces have seen an increase in gun crime during that time. In eight of these it has more than doubled. - Read more [here](#).

Trial scheme launched to increase victim confidence in justice system

Prosecutors are “determined” to increase the confidence that victims have in the criminal justice system, Scotland's Lord Advocate said after the launch of a pilot scheme to improve the experience for survivors of domestic abuse. The initiative sets out to transform the service offered to those who have experienced domestic abuse by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). - Read more [here](#).

Dame Vera Baird: Victims' champion resigns, claiming her role was sidelined

The Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, Dame Vera Baird, has resigned, accusing the government of downgrading victims' needs, and sidelining the role. In a powerfully worded letter to the new justice secretary, Brandon Lewis, Dame Vera describes the criminal justice system as being “in chaos”. - Read more [here](#).

Children's mental health matters to Scotland's justice system – Karyn McCluskey

The school year has kicked off again. I rather love seeing all the primary ones – dressed in uniforms, all slightly too big – knowing that they will grow, sometimes overnight, 'til trousers are half-mast and jacket cuffs crawl up their arms. Their excitement is palpable in those heady first weeks of school as they face the exhaustion of learning new things. But for so many of our children, a bag, heavy with books, and gym kit is not the only load they carry. Some arrive at school carrying the burden of living in homes where parents might be fighting their own demons around alcohol or drugs. - Read more [here](#).

I'm a police chief – Liz Truss's soundbite policies won't help us fight crime

As a police chief, I found it encouraging that crime featured so prominently in the Tory leadership debate – after all, policing is too important to be left to the police alone. A well-informed public makes for a stronger democracy and tighter accountability for senior officers like me. However, the public are not well-served by calls for the force to investigate "[real crimes, not Twitter rows and hurt feelings](#)" or generalised phrases such as "back to basics", as used by Liz Truss's campaign. - Read more [here](#).

Anti-Social Behaviour

Dispersing homeless people fails to stop antisocial behaviour, finds study

Dispersing rough sleepers from town centres fails to stop so-called antisocial behaviour and wrongly criminalises homeless people, a study of 10 towns by criminologists has found. Councils in England and Wales using public space protection orders (PSPOs) to levy £100 fines to control or ban behaviours such as drinking, pitching tents and sleeping in public simply see homeless people come back later, according to research by [Sheffield Hallam University](#) with recommendations for fairer treatment endorsed by Crisis, the homelessness charity. - Read more [here](#).

Human Trafficking/Immigration

Modern slavery shoots up by 10 million in five years

Modern slavery is a growing challenge thanks to a mix of armed conflict, climate change and the global pandemic, a new UN report says. International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates suggest that 50 million people - or one out of every 150 people alive - are trapped in forced labour or forced marriages. That is up nearly 10 million on its numbers from five years ago. - Read more [here](#).

People smuggler: I get clients to sign a waiver

A people smuggler says the UK government's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is no deterrent for his customers. Jane Corbin meets him at his base in Turkey. Night is falling as I make my way up the creaking stairs of a safe house in an anonymous alleyway in Istanbul, Turkey. I'm here to meet a kingpin in the people-smuggling trade - it has taken months to arrange, working through a trusted intermediary. - Read more [here](#).

Police taking photos and fingerprints of lone children arriving in UK

Thousands of unaccompanied children, including one aged two years old, have been subjected to a little-known immigration enforcement operation, which includes police fingerprinting and photographing, soon after arriving in the UK. Operation Innerste is a multi-agency initiative that was rolled out in 2018 and is designed to protect children newly arrived in the UK from falling into the hands of traffickers. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol & Other Drugs

University students are hidden targets of county lines drug dealing – new report

For young adults, university is a period of firsts: their first time living away from home, having to budget their money and going to pubs and nightclubs. For many, it will also be the first time they will try drugs, and as our [new report shows](#), be exploited by county lines drug dealers. - Read more [here](#).

Even Thailand has decriminalised cannabis – it's high time Britain caught up

A group of police commissioners at the Conservative party conference will argue that the UK [government should reclassify cannabis](#) from a class B to a class A drug, which would place it on the same legal level as heroin or cocaine, and greatly increase the penalties for anyone caught using or selling marijuana. It's an outrageous suggestion, and totally out of step with the rest of the world, where the war on weed seems to be coming to an end. - Read more [here](#).

Liverpool gang violence worsening as young pretenders step up to replace OCG taken down by cops

Liverpool's gang violence is being fed by the fallout of a major police takedown of organised crime in the city, it is claimed. Younger criminals - many considered to be more brazen and violent - are "backfilling" the vacancies left by hundreds of older gangsters who have been arrested or are on the run. - Read more [here](#).

Hate Crime & Equalities

Hate crimes recorded by police up by more than a quarter

The number of hate crimes recorded by police in England and Wales has risen by 26% - to 155,841 in the year to March 2022, Home Office figures show. More than two-thirds - 109,843 - were racist hate crimes. But crimes against transgender people saw the biggest rise, with 4,355 reports, up 56% from the previous year. - Read more [here](#).

'Gamechanger' report on Scottish conversion practice ban welcomed by LGBT groups

SCOTTISH LGBT campaigners have welcomed a "game-changer" report which backs a ban on conversion practices and ruled out any religious loopholes. The Scottish Government's expert advisory group published their findings on conversion practices, sometimes referred to as "therapy", on Tuesday October 4.

Campaigners say that the practices cause a severe impact on mental health and that 7% of LGB people, 13% of trans people and 10% of asexual people had been subjected to or offered such practices in the UK. - Read more [here](#).

Bisexuality more visible but 'work to do' on safety

More people identify as bisexual than gay or lesbian, a new study suggests. The poll says bisexuality is the next-most-common identity after being heterosexual. Survey respondents from Generation Z - those aged 16 to 26 - are least likely to identify as straight. LGBT charity, Stonewall, which commissioned the study, said the findings told a "positive story" but said more needed to be done to help bisexual people feel safe. - Read more [here](#).

Ankle tags used to target young black men, London mayor's report finds

Electronic ankle tags are being used to racially target and sentence young black men for knife crime offences in a way that "may reflect unconscious bias" among [Metropolitan police](#) officers, according to internal documents from the mayor of London's office. - Read more [here](#).

New Met police chief snubs head of National Black Police Association

The new [Metropolitan police](#) commissioner is at loggerheads with the National Black Police Association after refusing to meet its president and suggesting he will ban officers from "taking the knee". George, who had regularly met Rowley's predecessor, Cressida Dick, described the decision as "baffling" at a time when levels of confidence in Scotland Yard among black and ethnic minority officers and the wider community are at rock-bottom. - Read more [here](#).

Policing

Warning of civil unrest as Police Scotland numbers left 'unsustainable'

Police officer numbers in Edinburgh are "unsustainable" and could be cut despite "unprecedented" demands on overtime in order to keep a safe number of police on the streets, the divisional commander in the Capital has said. Residents could also face more social unrest due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, Chief Superintendent Sean Scott warned, which could be exacerbated by fewer "deployable officers" due to a lack of government money. - Read more [here](#).

Met chief vows to be 'ruthless' in rooting out wrongdoing in ranks

The new [Metropolitan police](#) commissioner Mark Rowley tried to define his leadership of the failing force by saying it had been too "forgiving" of wrongdoing in the ranks and vowing to reconnect with communities to boost dwindling trust. Rowley, in his third week in the job, said he would be "ruthless" in tackling racism and misogyny among officers, and that he hoped to bring London's murder rate down below 100 a year and boost its crime fighting. - Read more [here](#).

Poverty/Cost of Living Crisis

Fears raised over loan sharks preying on Glasgow families amid cost-of-living crisis

MORE Glasgow families could be forced into the hands of loan sharks or payday lenders as it is predicted 95,000 households will survive on credit over coming months. Councillor Audrey Dempsey raised concerns about an "increasing reliance on predatory lenders" and asked what the council will do to prevent it in the city. - Read more [here](#).

Volunteer numbers could plunge due to cost of living crisis

Volunteer Scotland has said that as the cost of living crisis grows the work of volunteers will be affected. The poorest areas in Scotland could be worst hit if the ongoing cost of living crisis engulfing households leads to a reduction in volunteers across the sector, a new report has warned. Research [published by Volunteer Scotland](#) has warned that targeted support must be offered to communities in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) lowest quartiles, where the demand for volunteering support will be highest. - Read more [here](#).

Poverty report paints bleak picture as Scots families struggle to heat and eat

A new report published today by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) in Scotland says that nearly one in five households on low incomes have gone both hungry and cold this year. The Poverty in Scotland report includes data from a survey, thought to be the biggest of its kind, of 4,196 Scottish households in July and August this year. - Read more [here](#).

'Soaring living costs means I'll have to do more on OnlyFans'

A Scots model who has made thousands from selling sexual content online predicts more people will join OnlyFans to help pay soaring bills.

Athena Aster, 25, was able to move out and quit her retail job to dedicate herself to the platform full-time after tripling her income in 2019. She had around 1000 subscribers and was making between £5,000 and £6,000 a month during her busiest period in 2019 and 2020. - Read more [here](#).

Road Safety

Cost of living crisis is risk to UK road safety, says Halfords boss

The boss of Halfords has warned that the UK cost of living crisis is creating "a risk to road safety" as drivers buy older cars and struggle with maintenance costs. The warning came as the motoring and cycling retailer reported higher sales over the past 20 weeks as it was boosted by its expanding car repairs business. - Read more [here](#).

Highway Code: 61% of drivers have not read new guidance, AA survey suggests

More than three-fifths of UK motorists have not read recent updates to the Highway Code, according to the AA.

The motoring group's survey of 13,327 members suggested 8,090 (61%) drivers had not read changes made in January. Some 6,972 motorists had heard about the new rules but had not read them yet, while 1,118 drivers were completely unaware of the changes. - Read more [here](#).

Glasgow to become 20mph city with £4.5m plan to slow down drivers

Glasgow is set to become a default 20mph city as the city's council prepare a £4.5m plan to slow down drivers on residential streets. The roll-out of 20mph streets is due to come into force by 2024 to 2025 with the limit to be considered the normal speed across neighbourhoods. It could be even sooner as discussions are underway with Transport Scotland about Glasgow becoming a pilot for the national delivery of 20mph areas. - Read more [here](#).

General Community Safety Stories

New firework law to come into force before Bonfire Night

LEGISLATION to improve public safety by banning the supply of fireworks to under-18s is set to come into force ahead of Bonfire Night. In addition, the Fireworks and Pyrotechnics (Scotland) Act - set to come into force on October 10 - will see attacks on emergency workers using fireworks become "aggravating factors" taken into account when courts sentence offenders. - Read more [here](#).

I'm a psychologist – and I believe we've been told devastating lies about mental health

Society's understanding of mental health issues locates the problem inside the person – and ignores the politics of their distress. We are living, we're told, through a "[mental health crisis](#)". Mental health services [cannot cope with the explosion of demand](#) over the past two years: 1.6 million people are on waiting lists, while another 8 million need help but can't even get on these lists. Even children are showing up at A&E in despair, wanting to die. - Read more [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



World on brink of five 'disastrous' climate tipping points, study finds

The climate crisis has driven the world to the brink of multiple "disastrous" tipping points, according to a major study. It shows [five dangerous tipping points](#) may already have been passed due to the 1.1C of global heating caused by humanity to date. These include the [collapse of Greenland's ice cap](#), eventually producing a huge sea level rise, the [collapse of a key current](#) in the north Atlantic, disrupting rain upon which billions of people depend for food, and an abrupt [melting of carbon-rich permafrost](#). - Read more [here](#).

Climate change: Why air pollution, a deadly threat, is getting worse as the world warms and wildfires rage

As we reflect on the last few months, it is clear that climate change is already affecting lives and lungs of millions of people worldwide. One major impact is that higher temperatures lead to increased air pollution. We've seen that levels of ozone pollution, in particular, have risen as a direct result of hotter weather.

In addition, smoke and soot from wildfires in the UK and across Europe have caused spikes in air pollution. As we accelerate towards [climate breakdown](#), the quality of our air will only get worse. - Read more [here](#).

Record excess deaths in UK's heatwave summer

As the UK endured record high temperatures of 40C this summer, there were around 3,000 more deaths in the over-65s than usual in England and Wales - the highest figure since 2004. Many happened during the hottest days towards the end of July and in early August. - Read more [here](#).

UK climate activists held in jail for up to six months before trial

Climate campaigners arrested on suspicion of blocking roads or other offences are waiting up to six months in prison before being tried.

Josh Smith, a 29-year-old stonemason from Manchester, has been held on remand in HMP Peterborough for more than two months. - Read more [here](#).

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