



## February 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 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.

## Policing

### **Domestic violence charity Refuge places 1,071 rotten apples outside New Scotland Yard in powerful protest**

Powerful images shared by the charity Refuge aims to highlight the number of Met officers who are under or have been under investigation.

The move is to reflect the number of Met officers who have been, or are currently, under investigation for allegations of domestic abuse or violence against women and girls. The protest comes after David Carrick was exposed as being one of the UK's most prolific known sex offenders. - Read more [here](#).

### **Two or three Met officers to face court a week, commissioner says**

Two or three Met Police officers per week are expected to appear in court on criminal charges in the coming weeks and months, the force's chief has said.

Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley says the public should "prepare for more painful stories" as the force confronts the issues it faces. He said cases included "violence against women and girls offences", such as domestic abuse and sex offences. "There's a trickle of them and more are going to be surfacing," he added. - Read more [here](#).

### **Police Scotland has 25 officers suspended over sexual misconduct allegations**

Police Scotland currently has 25 police officers [suspended](#) over allegations of sexual misconduct, according to newly-disclosed figures.

The [Sunday Mail has revealed](#) that within six months of 2022, three complaints of rape and 18 of sexual assault by serving officers and police staff were made to the force. Women's groups have branded the revelations "deeply shocking" with the figures coming in the wake of the conviction of Metropolitan Police firearms officer David Carrick. - Read more [here](#).

## **Met police chief: it's crazy I can't sack 'toxic' officers who broke the law**

The head of the UK's biggest police force has said it is "crazy" that he cannot sack "toxic" officers who have broken the law.

Responding to a disclosure in the Guardian that [150 officers are under investigation](#) over allegations of sexual misconduct or racism, the Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, admitted that the force's vetting procedures were inadequate. Challenged about the figures, Rowley said: "We have some very worrying cases with officers who've committed criminality whilst police officers and yet I'm not allowed to sack them. It's sort of, it's crazy." - Read more [here](#).

## **Police Scotland departure figures higher among BME recruits**

The Scottish Liberal Democrats have challenged Police Scotland to boost efforts to support BME staff after a freedom of information request revealed that a larger proportion of BME officers and staff left compared to those who identified as White Scottish. The party submitted a freedom of information request seeking breakdowns of Police Scotland officer and staff departures by ethnicity and compared to retention rates as a whole. - Read more [here](#).

## **'I was gaslit by my own force': female police report 'systemic' abuse by male officers**

Despite having been a police officer and also married to one, Helen (not her real name) says she now "wouldn't ring the police for anything".

When Helen separated from her husband, he subjected her to emotional and financial abuse and harassment. After reporting his behaviour, she was left with little option but to leave the force she had served for more than a decade. He was later arrested for harassment, but is understood to still be working as a police officer. - Read more [here](#).

## **Calls to 'demolish and rebuild' police as Memphis mourns Tyre Nichols**

As Nyliayh Stewart marched along Interstate 55 alongside protesters on Friday night, the moment of sorrow and anger felt familiar. Nearly a decade ago, in 2015, Stewart had been a teenager in Mississippi when she received word in the middle of the night that her cousin Darrius had been killed by a white Memphis police officer during a traffic stop while he was running away, [according](#) to witnesses at the time. - Read more [here](#).

## **'One Police Scotland staff member referred to counselling every day'**

At least one Police Scotland officer or staff member is referred for counselling on average every day, official figures have revealed. It has been revealed that almost 1,000 calls were made to a phone line which helps struggling employees in the force deal with wellbeing matters, money worries and concerns over job stress or bullying and harassment. - Read more [here](#).

## **Crime & Justice**

### **Fears overhaul of Scotland bail system will lead to 'increased danger' for victims**

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) said the "unfortunate reality" of proposed legislation is more people will commit crimes while on bail.

The Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill would require courts only to refuse bail to an accused person in the interests of public safety or if their release pending trial would present a "significant risk of prejudice to the interests of justice". The legislation seeks to ensure the use of custody for remand is a last resort. - Read more [here](#).

## **Can victims of crime hope for justice from a crumbling system? (Comment)**

Channel 4's drama series, [The Light in the Hall](#), featuring the remarkable Joanna Scanlan, exposes the damage inflicted on the family and friends of a teenager murdered 18 years earlier whose body has never been found (hence the light on in the hall) and whose alleged killer is released on parole against the wishes of dead girl's mother. However, the mental injuries, the injustices inflicted and the disregarded demands of victims are rarely so central. - Read more [here](#).

## **Children born of rape to be classed as victims of crime**

Children conceived through rape will be officially classified as victims of crime under new government plans. The changes, due to be made in the forthcoming Victims Bill, will entitle those conceived as a result of rape access to information about their case. The legal changes will also make it easier for victims to receive support from police and the criminal justice system "whenever they may need it". - Read more [here](#).

## **Laughing gas to be banned under anti-social behaviour crackdown**

The Home Office is preparing to ban the sale and possession of laughing gas to crack down on anti-social behaviour. Ministers want to revise drug misuse laws to allow people found with nitrous oxide gas in public to be prosecuted. The party drug, commonly known as laughing gas, is the second most commonly used drug among 16 to 24-year-olds in England after cannabis and there are [concerns about health problems caused by its usage](#). - Read more [here](#).

## **Police attend fewer than 4 in 10 reports of antisocial behaviour**

Police sent officers to fewer than four in ten reports of antisocial behaviour in Scotland over the past five years, according to new figures.

The attendance at reports of such incidents — including disturbances, noise and vandalism — have prompted renewed calls for more officers in Scotland's communities.

Officers were recorded "at scene" for 105,000 incidents in 2022, a total of 37 per cent of the 282,000 incidents reported according to the freedom of information request data. - Read more [here](#).

## **Gangland contracts worth £2.8m put on Scottish prisoners**

Serious organised crime groups took out contracts worth £2.8m for attacks on rivals in Scotland's jails last year.

The Scottish Prison Service, which released the figures, is dealing with the consequences of a huge increase in convictions for gang-related crimes. It said the number of prisoners linked to serious and organised crime groups (SOCGs) had doubled in six years. An anti-corruption drive is now helping staff who are pressurised to take drugs and phones into jails. - Read more [here](#).

## **More conflict, more violence: that's the future if the UK's new anti-protest law is passed (Comment)**

Decades of study expose this legislation as the perfect playbook for turning peaceful events into scenes of chaos and disorder. The government is to introduce legislation this week that, [according to Downing Street](#), is designed to stop such heinous tactics as "slow marching", and will mean that police "will not need to wait for disruption to take place and can shut protests down before chaos erupts". - Read more [here](#).

## Equalities & Hate Crime

### Transgender hate crime rising faster than any other in Scotland, new figures show

Hate crimes recorded by police against transgender people are rising faster than any other aggravator in Scotland, new figures published by the Scottish Government have shown.

Race-related hate crime remains the most prevalent type of hate crime recorded by police, making up almost two-thirds of the total number of crimes. In total, almost 7,000 crimes were recorded in 2021/22, with 6,927 incidents in total – the highest since 2014/15 when 7,029 were recorded by police. - Read more [here](#).

### Moral panic demonising trans people as danger to women resembles Section 28 fearmongering (Comment)

If you travelled 23 years back in time today and tuned in to the debates gripping Scottish politics and the newly minted Scottish Parliament in early 2000, I think you'd barely be able to tell the difference between then and now.

"Our opposition is based not on intolerance, but on what we feel is a genuine concern that hasn't been listened to", said a leading children's rights campaigner. "Parents and pupils are sick to the back teeth of liberal-minded people foisting their morality onto them", wrote a Scottish teacher in the letters pages of TES. - Read more [here](#).

### Kirkcaldy LGBT+ hub target of vandalism for fifth time

Police are investigating after a Kirkcaldy LGBT+ hub was once again the target of vandalism. Staff members at The Hive on Whytescauseway were sickened to discover the building daubed with spray paint, and toothpaste smeared on windows upon arriving at the premises on Tuesday. Stuart Duffy, from Pink Saltire, said: "There was toothpaste strewn over one of the windows, and spray paint on the building. That's the fourth or fifth incident since we opened in June." - Read more [here](#).

### UK failing to address systemic racism against black people, warn UN experts

A UN body has written to the UK government to express "very extreme concern" about its failure to address "structural, institutional and systemic racism" against people of African descent in Britain. The UN working group of experts on people of African descent called for an immediate and unconditional moratorium on the use of joint enterprise, warning it was leading to the disproportionate imprisonment of black adolescents. - Read more [here](#).

## General Community Safety

### Greens urge Scottish politicians to aid firefighters risking illness

Maggie Chapman of the Scottish [Greens](#) has called on MSPs to support firefighters who are at risk due to inadequate station facilities. Firefighters are more prone to developing cancer at a younger age due to exposure to intense heat, smoke and toxins, recent research has suggested. - Read more [here](#).

### Revealed: scores of child asylum seekers kidnapped from Home Office hotel

Dozens of asylum-seeking children have been kidnapped by gangs from a Brighton hotel run by the Home Office in a pattern apparently being repeated across the south coast, an *Observer* investigation can reveal. A whistleblower, who works for Home Office contractor Mitie, and child protection sources describe children being abducted off the street outside the hotel and bundled into cars. - Read more [here](#).

# Climate Crisis Corner



## **Warning of unprecedented heatwaves as El Niño set to return in 2023**

The return of the El Niño climate phenomenon later this year will cause global temperatures to rise “off the chart” and deliver unprecedented heatwaves, scientists have warned.

Early forecasts suggest El Niño will return later in 2023, exacerbating extreme weather around the globe and making it “very likely” the world will exceed 1.5C of warming. The hottest year in recorded history, 2016, was driven by a major El Niño. - Read more [here](#).

## **No new oil and gas fields, say Scottish ministers**

The Scottish government has announced a presumption against new oil and gas exploration as part of its new energy strategy. Scottish ministers say they can no longer support the previous position of “maximising economic recovery” of fossil fuel reserves. Licensing new developments in the sector is reserved to Westminster. The Scottish government's plan for the energy sector over the next 20 years is focused on boosting renewables. - Read more [here](#).

## **Warning climate change impacting on avalanche risk**

Avalanche forecasters say they are seeing likely impacts of climate change high in Scotland's mountains. The Scottish Avalanche Information Service said conditions were changing more rapidly and avalanches occurring in tighter spaces of time.

It said named storms - such as 2021's Storm Barra - brought short, significant periods of “proper winter”, raising the avalanche risk. The storms have often been followed by rising temperatures and snow loss. - Read more [here](#).

## **Climate activists vow to take to streets to stop fossil fuel extraction**

Hundreds of thousands of young climate activists have said they will continue “protesting in the streets in huge numbers” against fossil fuels, a day after Greta Thunberg was removed by German police from a condemned village atop a massive coal deposit.

In a [cease-and-desist letter](#) to the CEOs of fossil fuel companies, youth campaigners accuse them of a “direct violation of our human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, your duties of care, as well as the rights of Indigenous people”. - Read more [here](#).

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