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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

Number of homicides in Scotland at lowest level since records began

THE number of homicides across Scotland has more than halved in the last 15 years, with the figure being the lowest its been since records began in 1976.

The latest official data, released on Tuesday, show 53 people were victims of homicide in 2021/22, six less than the previous year, and down 54% over the past 15 years. Of the victims in the last year, 70% (37) were male and 30% (16) were female. More than half of the female victims (56%) were killed by a partner or ex-partner. - Read more [here](#).

Isle of Skye community still recovering from firearms incident, reverend tells MPs

AN island community is suffering from “vicarious trauma” following a series of incidents involving firearms, according to a local pastor.

Reverend Gordon Matheson, from the Sleat & Strath Free Church, gave evidence to MPs on the Scottish Affairs Committee on Monday as it began its inquiry into firearms licensing. The inquiry comes two months after John MacKinnon, 47, was killed after a firearm was discharged on the Isle of Skye. - Read more [here](#).

Rape Crisis Scotland calls for independent legal advice for all survivors throughout court proceedings

Rape Crisis Scotland is calling for survivors to have access to independent legal advice throughout court proceedings – something currently unavailable in Scotland. Countless survivors have reported the process of going through court is more traumatising than the rape itself. However, a new proposal from Rape Crisis Scotland hopes to help change this.

Survivors taking a case in the criminal courts at the moment have no right to independent legal advice (ILA) unless their personal records – for example, medical records – are introduced in a trial. - Read more [here](#).

In Britain, a jail sentence is often a death sentence. What's going on in our prisons? (Comment)

Britain has the [most draconian](#) prison system in western Europe. Recent deaths in police custody have increased public consciousness of state violence and its relationship to institutional racism and sexism. And yet we are still often oblivious to the inherently harmful and too often fatal consequences of imprisonment that affect our most vulnerable people beyond the scrutiny of the general public.

Last year, [371 people](#) in England and Wales died in prison behind closed doors – the [highest death toll](#) since records began. Yet, despite this, there has been near silence on the issue. On the few occasions when prison deaths have garnered attention on a national scale, they have often been dismissed and even rationalised on account of the status of those who die as prisoners – as if they deserved what was coming to them. - Read more [here](#).

The most serious crimes cause intergenerational trauma that we must learn from – Karyn McCluskey

How many times have you uttered the phrase “what doesn't kill you makes you stronger”? I thought it was something passed down in families as some sort of drive-by feedback – a sort of “you'll live and you'll be better for the experience”. I realise now it comes from Friedrich Nietzsche – who coined the phrase “what does not kill me makes me stronger”. - Read more [here](#).

A chance for change: how trauma awareness is challenging Scotland's justice system (Comment)

“Quiet please”, reads the screen. “Court is in session.” Livingston's busy summary court sits obediently silent while today's sheriff reads the reports one more time and looks up at the 20-year-old woman sitting opposite him. Jen, as we're calling her, is here because when she encountered the man she accused of raping her she “saw red”, lashed out, and ended up with a charge for assault. - Read more [here](#).

Judiciary in England and Wales 'institutionally racist', says report

The judiciary in England and Wales is “institutionally racist”, with more than half of legal professionals surveyed claiming to have witnessed a judge acting in a racially biased way, [according to a report](#). The study by the University of Manchester and barrister Keir Monteith KC found judicial discrimination to be directed particularly towards black court users – from lawyers to witnesses to defendants. - Read more [here](#).

By filming trials, we risk turning justice into reality television (Comment)

The first woman to be sentenced to life imprisonment on television in the UK was broadcast live for the world to watch. Jemma Mitchell, 38, was [given a minimum sentence of at least 34 years](#) after she was [found guilty of murdering Mee Kuen Chong](#), an extremely isolated and vulnerable woman. It was a heinous act. A new law came into force this summer allowing TV cameras to broadcast from crown courts for the first time in England. - Read more [here](#).

UK justice system 'ill-equipped' for rise in fraud, say MPs

The UK's justice system is “ill-equipped” to tackle a spiralling fraud epidemic and needs a rapid overhaul, a cross-party committee of MPs has concluded. The justice select committee found that traditional crimes were being wrongly prioritised by police and prosecutors in a report released on Tuesday, and described Action Fraud, the UK's centre for collating allegations of cybercrime, as “unfit for purpose”. - Read more [here](#).

Consultation opens on whether dog theft should become specific offense in Scotland

A CONSULTATION on whether dog theft should become a specific offense in Scotland has been launched. Conservative MSP Maurice Golden has proposed a bill which would carry a maximum prison sentence of five years for those found guilty of dog theft. He said the crime had been increasing recently, driven by demand for certain breeds and a desire for pets during lockdown. - Read more [here](#).

Violence Against Women & Girls

Experts fear rising global 'incel' culture could provoke terrorism

Almost 1,000 references to dehumanising misogyny or violent action are recorded each day in the "incelosphere" as the toxicity of male supremacist content continues to intensify.

Analysis of the [incel movement](#) found that online references to inflicting violence and extremely degrading language on dedicated incel forums are running eight times higher than in 2016, when researchers first began tracking misogynist content on the internet. - Read more [here](#).

60 per cent increase in number of women killed in Scotland

SIXTEEN women were murdered in Scotland last year, up from 10 in the previous year. The 60 per cent increase came as the latest official figures showed 53 people were the victim of homicide in Scotland in 2021-22, six less than the previous year and down 54% over the past 15 years.

While that is the lowest number on record since 1976, there are concerns over the number of women killed. Nine of the women killed last year were murdered by a partner or an ex-partner, around 52%. - Read more [here](#).

Calling all men: this is what we can do to help women feel safe exercising in the dark (Comment)

The clocks have gone back, the evenings are drawing in, the weather is changing. None of this makes it easier for people to exercise. For many, the winter nights can be a threat to mental wellbeing.

People like me (men) have historically dealt with these winter fears by ignoring them. Active men like me love telling anyone who will listen how good exercise is for physical and mental health. And when my wife hasn't immediately rushed out the house to jog around the block in the dark and gloom, I've just repeated the message, but louder. - Read more [here](#).

Cost of Living Crisis/Poverty

Children in deprived areas of Scotland 2.6 times as likely to die before their first birthday

Growing health inequalities which mean children in the poorest areas are more likely to suffer from obesity and are at greater risk of infant mortality are a "national problem for Scotland", researchers have said.

Dr Anna Pearce, an expert at the University of Glasgow, said the "widening of inequality" in some areas of children's health was "worrying", particularly as the financial situation for many families is expected to worsen. - Read more [here](#).

One in five disabled people can't afford essentials, survey reveals

Disabled people are being "forgotten and effectively abandoned", forced to rely on foodbanks, and having to cut back on how much they eat, because of the cost-of-living crisis, according to new research by 15 disabled people's organisations in Greater Manchester.

Disabled people surveyed by Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel* reported skipping meals, being forced to stop receiving social care support, and even having to be brought leftovers by a neighbour. - Read more [here](#).

Food bank charity launches first-ever emergency appeal amid 'devastating rise in need'

A food bank charity has launched its first-ever emergency appeal to meet a "devastating rise in need" as it warns of its "hardest winter yet" amid the cost of living crisis.

The Trussell Trust said food banks are "struggling" to meet "a tsunami" of demand which was now outstripping donations - and called on the government to do more to help. - Read more [here](#).

Alcohol & Other Drugs

Germany plans to legalise recreational cannabis

Germany's coalition government has agreed on a plan to legalise recreational cannabis use among adults. Possession of up to 30g (1oz) for personal use would be allowed. Licensed shops and pharmacies would sell it. The plan has yet to be approved in parliament - but also receive the green light by the European Commission. Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said the plan could become law in 2024. - Read more [here](#).

Make cannabis Class A drug, say Conservative police commissioners

A group of Conservative police commissioners is calling for cannabis to be reclassified from a Class B to a Class A drug. This would put it in the same category as heroin, cocaine and ecstasy. It would mean tougher penalties for possession, and potential life sentences for suppliers and producers. - Read more [here](#).

'Safer in Service' Days of Action focus on outreach to the most vulnerable people in Aberdeenshire communities

The latest in the 'Safer in Service' Days of Action focused on outreach efforts to support the most vulnerable people within Aberdeenshire communities. Staff from a combination of Social Work, NHS, Housing, Community Safety and Police carried out engagement and house visits in both Inverurie and Peterhead during the multi-agency approach to tackling the issues associated with drug-related harm in our communities. - Read more [here](#).

UK crime gangs rake in millions through supported housing, say police

Organised crime groups are taking millions of pounds of taxpayers' money through unregulated supported accommodation for vulnerable people, police have revealed.

Criminals have been cashing in on the recent boom in "exempt accommodation", designed to support vulnerable people such as prison leavers, recovering addicts and those fleeing domestic violence. - Read more [here](#).

Policing

Police Scotland in warning over impact of Scottish Government's resource spending review

SCOTTISH Government spending plans could result in a "fundamental reduction" in policing, MSPs have been warned, with police chiefs claiming they could be forced to make savings of up to £300 million over the next few years. - Read more [here](#).

Police Scotland 101 phone line at risk from spending cuts

Police Scotland has warned it may have to suspend its 101 non-emergency phone line and lose thousands of officers and staff under government spending plans. The Scottish government has proposed giving the criminal justice sector, including the police, a total of £11.6bn over the next four years. This would see most services receive the same amount of cash every year. - Read more [here](#).

UK police use of live facial recognition unlawful and unethical, report finds

Police should be banned from using live facial recognition technology in all public spaces because they are breaking ethical standards and human rights laws, a study has concluded. LFR involves linking cameras to databases containing photos of people. Images from the cameras can then be checked against those photos to see if they match. - Read more [here](#).

Equalities & Hate Crime

Dover migrant centre: 'Horror' over fire attack

Dover residents are "horrified" after a fire attack at a Border Force migrant centre at the port, a Kent county councillor says. Two or three devices - described as petrol bombs by a witness - were thrown by the suspect, who was found dead at a nearby petrol station on Sunday. - Read more [here](#).

Charity joins council in tackling disability hate crime

A charity has teamed up with Somerset County Council to raise awareness about disability hate crime. OpenStoryTellers, based in Frome, has created a series of videos about it after researchers found victims often failed to recognise it was a crime. It said people with disabilities were also vulnerable to "mate crime" when victims are befriended by someone who later exploits or manipulates them. - Read more [here](#).

Home Safety

Older people at risk of malnutrition as living costs soar

Money pressures are being blamed for one in five people over 65 being at risk of malnutrition. Lothians charity Food Train, which provides meals and grocery deliveries to older people, said that cases of malnutrition are being under reported. Around one in 10 older people are officially thought to be at risk of malnutrition. However the charity says the figure is far worse. - Read more [here](#).

Cost of Living: People urged to heat homes safely as energy costs soar

People in Northern Ireland need to be aware of the dangers involved with heating their homes this winter, the fire and rescue service has warned. As the cost of living continues to rise, for some it could mean turning to energy sources which have not been regularly serviced. - Read more [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



COP27: Prioritise climate or face catastrophe - UN chief

Countries must re-prioritise climate change or the world faces catastrophe, the UN chief has told BBC News. Secretary General António Guterres was speaking in New York ahead of a major climate conference in Egypt. "There has been a tendency to put climate change on the back burner," he said. "If we are not able to reverse the present trend, we will be doomed." - Read more [here](#).

Lawyer appearing in Oil Machine documentary sounds alarm on UK's direction

NEW Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has been warned that urgent support is needed to help North Sea oil and gas workers transition to renewable industries. The warning has been given by prominent environmental lawyer Tessa Khan who features in a documentary about the industry which receives its Scottish premiere this week.

The Oil Machine by Edinburgh-based filmmaker Emma Davie explores the conflicting imperatives around North Sea fossil fuels and asks how the industry can be dismantled or repurposed. "This new [UK] government is hugely worrying as they seem to be going in exactly the wrong direction on every count," said Khan. - Read more [here](#).

Concern about climate change shrinks globally as threat grows, survey shows

Concerns about climate change shrank across the world last year, with fewer than half of those questioned in a new survey believing it posed a "very serious threat" to their countries over the next 20 years. Only 20% of people in China, the world's biggest polluter, said they believed that climate change was a very serious threat, down 3 percentage points from the last survey by Gallup World Risk Poll in 2019. - Read more [here](#).

Government to unveil crackdown on climate activism and strike action

Ministers are pressing ahead with a dual crackdown on climate protests and strike action, a controversial move that followed a day of direct action in [London](#) including clashes with the public and milk poured on the floor of Harrods. Home secretary Suella Braverman will unveil plans on Sunday to grant police new powers to take a more "proactive" approach to counter tactics favoured by climate activists such as Just Stop Oil and [Extinction Rebellion](#). - Read more [here](#).

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