



# COMMUNITY SAFETY MEDIA MONITOR



## October 2023: Edition 1

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 from outwith Scotland, but are included as developments in the rest of the UK and internationally may be relevant to community safety here 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 and Justice

### Scottish Stories

Prison overcrowding warning as inmate numbers rise

The chief inspector for Scottish prisons has warned the number of people in custody is projected to soar in the next year. Wendy Sinclair-Gieben said inmate numbers had fallen during the Covid pandemic - but were on the rise again. In her [annual report](#) she said they were likely to go above 8,000 over the coming year. The Scottish government said it was taking action to reduce the prison population. - Read more [here](#).

Scotland's prison officers are facing significant danger from organised crime gang members – Teresa Medhurst

Often reluctant to take the limelight and quick to say they are “just doing their job”, prison officers are a unique group of individuals. So today's ‘[Hidden Heroes Day](#)’ gives us an important opportunity to recognise the work they and the UK's prison and youth justice services do daily to keep us all safe. Prison officers wear many hats and demonstrate many skills; they are everything from mentors to counsellors, first aiders to teachers. Most of all, they are role models, sometimes the first and only one an individual in our care has had. - Read more [here](#).

If prison governor retiring after 30 years still believes in rehabilitation, so should we – Karyn McCluskey

Leadership is a much-hackneyed word, we talk about ‘leaders’ as if occupying that position imbues one with the essential qualities of being a good boss. History, some of it recent, across the world, reminds us that it's often not the case, indeed far from it, as toxic leadership abounds. Many years ago on a leadership course, someone very long in the tooth said that the mark of someone good a being in charge is “the ability to reach down and under and pull others less able along with you”. Clumsily put, but I knew what he meant. - Read more [here](#).

## Senior judges raise concerns over juryless trials in Scotland

Some of Scotland's most senior judges have raised concerns about a pilot of juryless trials for rape cases. The Senators of the College of Justice said the proposal may not meet fair trial requirements in a [response to the criminal justice committee](#). Juryless trials, proposed to tackle low conviction rates, are one of a number of measures being considered in a criminal justice review.—Read more [here](#).

## Rape accused cannot opt out of juryless trial pilot, says Constance

PEOPLE accused of rape or attempted rape would not be allowed to refuse to take part in a pilot scheme under which serious sex offences cases are heard by a single judge without a jury, according to the justice secretary. Angela Constance made the position clear when she was giving evidence to MSPs examining the Scottish Government's reforms to the criminal justice system. - Read more [here](#).

## Crime in Scotland at lowest levels in 50 years, but increase in rape offences

The overall number of crimes recorded by Police Scotland officers for the year ending June 2023 was four per cent lower than pre-pandemic levels in June 2019 and is at one of the lowest levels seen for a 12-month period since 1974. This included falls in sexual crimes and violence.

However, while sexual crimes were one per cent lower compared with the year ending June 2022 (decreasing from 14,880 to 14,834 crimes), they were eight per cent higher compared with the year ending June 2019 – up from 13,678 to 14,834 crimes. This included a five per cent increase in rape and attempted rape. - Read more [here](#).

## Scottish Biometrics Commissioner calls for scrutiny powers over entire criminal justice sector

A report by the [Scottish Biometrics Commissioner](#) (SBC) Brian Plastow looks to end restrictions over his overseeing powers, which currently only include Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC). [Biometric data](#) such as DNA, fingerprints and photographs is used across criminal prosecutions, prisons and multi-agency management arrangements for violent and sexual offenders. - Read more [here](#).

## Livingston boss David Martindale issues gang culture warning to violent youths heading for life of crime

[Livingston](#) boss [David Martindale](#) has told how being stabbed and slashed as a teenager drove him to a life of gang violence in a bid to gain 'social status'. Martindale is speaking out to warn youths who are tempted to become involved in gang culture about the serious consequences of choosing a life of crime. The football gaffer is backing the Record's [Our Kids ... Our Future](#) campaign, which aims to take kids off the streets by demanding the Scottish Government ring-fence funding for community resources. - Read more [here](#).

## UK Wide Stories

### One in 10 prisons in England and Wales should be shut down, watchdog says

One in 10 prisons in [England](#) and Wales are barely fit for purpose and should be shut down if alternative buildings can be found, the official watchdog has said. Charlie Taylor, the chief inspector of prisons, told the Guardian that about 14 Victorian jails were so poorly designed, overcrowded and ill-equipped that they could not provide proper accommodation for inmates. - Read more [here](#).

Prisons struggle to keep staff as officers leave for Border Force and police

Prisons near ports and airports in England and Wales are struggling to retain staff because so many are leaving for "less stressful" jobs in the Border Force.

Younger members of staff are also quitting because they do not like being without their mobile phones all day, according to senior prison officers. - Read more [here](#).

Childhood in care raises risk of entering English youth justice system eightfold

The largest ever study of care experience and the youth justice system in [England](#) has revealed that children who have lived in care are eight times more likely to have received a youth justice caution or conviction than those who have not.

Using data [collated by](#) the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Department for Education, the study monitored the experiences of almost 2.3 million children born in England between 1996 and 1999. Their data was recorded between the ages of 10 – the minimum age of criminal responsibility in England – and 17. - Read more [here](#).

Sextortion on Snapchat is not the end of my world, says victim

What started off as a bit of flirting on Snapchat ended in an ultimatum for Nathan McErlean - either he could pay thousands of pounds or explicit photos of him would be shared on social media. He became a victim of sextortion, a form of blackmail where people are persuaded to send intimate images of themselves, usually to people online, which criminals then threaten to share. - Read more [here](#).

Pornography driving UK teens towards child abuse material, say experts

Child abuse experts and police are warning that access to increasingly extreme pornography is driving a rise in harmful sexual behaviour among young people, from sexting to watching online child abuse. One charity that works to prevent child sexual abuse said there had been a 30% increase in under-18s contacting them, and a 26% rise in adults contacting them because they were concerned about the behaviour of a young person. - Read more [here](#).

### **UN highlights 'psychological harm' to UK man jailed since 2012 for phone theft**

A UN torture expert has called the case of a man driven to psychosis after being jailed in the UK for more than a decade for stealing a mobile phone "emblematic of the psychological harm" caused by indeterminate sentences.

Thomas White was handed an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence in 2012 for stealing a mobile phone – four months before such prison terms were abolished. He has been in jail ever since after initially receiving a minimum two-year tariff. - Read more [here](#).

## Alcohol & Other Drugs

### Scottish Stories

Plans for UK's first facility for safer consumption of illegal drugs approved in Glasgow

Plans for the UK's first facility for the safer consumption of illegal drugs have been approved - despite the opposition of the government in Westminster. The proposed pilot facility will be based at Hunter Street Health Centre in [Glasgow](#). The plans were rubber-stamped by the city's integrated joint board of council and health officials on Wednesday, subject to the receipt of Scottish government funding. - Read more [here](#).

Glasgow's safe consumption room could lead to a 'network' of help in Scotland

OFFICIALS behind Scotland's first safe consumption room in Glasgow are hopeful that the project can act as a springboard to help similar facilities develop across the country.

It was confirmed on Wednesday morning that the £2.3 million project for Hunter Street in Glasgow's east end has now been given the green light. It comes after the Scottish Government's top lawyer Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain (below) said it would not be "in the public interest" to prosecute people using such a facility. - Read more [here](#).

Words mean little without action on drugs policy – Peter Krykant

Over the last few weeks, Scotland's drug deaths crisis has been the focus of much media attention, starting with drug death figures for 2022 being published last month showing the lowest figures since 2017 and a 21 per cent drop from the previous year. This however, also highlighted the scale of the problem. With 1,051 deaths, this is still the highest in Europe and 2.7 times higher than in England and Wales. - Read more [here](#).

Council formally support decriminalisation of drug use

Glasgow has formally come out in support of the decriminalisation of personal drugs use as the council continues to back the need for safe consumption rooms.

The city is understood to be the first major UK local authority to announce it is in favour of a change in the law and could have a major role in addressing the drugs death crisis. - Read more [here](#).

Scottish Government proposes increasing alcohol minimum unit price to 65p

The minimum unit price for alcohol could be increased by 15p under new proposals put out by the Scottish Government. It would mean alcohol must be sold at a minimum price of 65p per unit. Ministers have opened a consultation on the subject ahead of new regulations being brought forward, as the legislation setting the current unit price of 50p comes to end in April. - Read more [here](#).

UK Wide/International Stories

### **\$1bn in aid has been used to support failed 'war on drugs' over past decade, says report**

Almost \$1bn (£800m) of aid has been spent on a global "war on drugs" over the past decade that has fuelled human rights abuses, [according to a new report](#).

Analysing data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the NGO Harm Reduction International (HRI) found that, between 2012 and 2021, the US and the EU spent \$550m and \$282m of their aid budgets respectively on programmes that supported drug control policies. - Read more [here](#).

UK drug advisers recommended decriminalising possession in 2016, leak reveals

The UK government's official drug advisers privately advocated for a formal repeal of the criminalisation of personal-use drug possession in 2016, a leaked document has revealed.

The Guardian has seen a copy of the 27-page pro-decriminalisation report, which the Home Office ignored at the time but then fought a three-year battle to keep confidential after a freedom of information request. - Read more [here](#).

## Dangerous Dogs

### Scottish Stories

No 'firm decision' made on Scottish ban of XL bully dogs, says Humza Yousaf

SCOTLAND will consider introducing a ban on American XL bully dogs, Humza Yousaf said, **although the First Minister insisted a "firm decision" has not yet been made.** He spoke after UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak made clear his determination to ban the dogs – a move which comes after a fatal dog attack on a man in England. Although the Dangerous Dogs Act is UK wide, Scotland is able to make its own amendments when it comes to the specifics of the legislation. - Read more [here](#).

### UK Wide Stories

Hundreds protest in London against American XL bully dog ban

Hundreds of demonstrators have marched in central [London](#) protesting against the prime minister's proposed ban on American XL bully dogs. During the march on Saturday, they held placards with messages such as "don't bully our bullies" and chanted "save our bullies", while one person was pictured wearing a T-shirt that said "muzzle Rishi Sunak don't bully our breed". - Read more [here](#).

Man killed in Stonnall American bully XL attack named

A man who died after suffering multiple injuries in an attack by two suspected American bully XLs has been named as Ian Price. He was left in a critical condition after being attacked by the dogs in Stonnall, near Walsall, Staffordshire. The 52-year-old was taken to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital but was later confirmed dead. - Read more [here](#).

Man arrested after dog mauls three-year-old girl near Liverpool

A man has been arrested after a dog mauled a three-year-old girl near Liverpool, police said. **The animal bit the child's face near the Market Tavern pub in Kirkby on Saturday.** She was taken to hospital, where she was treated for serious but not life-threatening injuries, police said. - Read more [here](#).

## Road & Rail Safety

### Scottish Stories

Safety fears over drop in police road traffic officers

Campaigners have expressed fears over the impact of cuts to road traffic officer numbers in the last decade. Figures obtained by BBC Scotland News reveal there were 548 officers in June - 14% less than in March 2014. The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and road safety charity Brake said a visible presence offered a strong deterrent against offending. But Police Scotland said "hard choices" had to be made to maintain an effective overall service. - Read more [here](#).

Network Rail admits failings caused deaths in Stonehaven crash

Network Rail has admitted a series of failings which led to the death of three people in a train derailment near Stonehaven in 2020. The company pleaded guilty to criminal charges at the High Court in Aberdeen. Three people died and six were injured when a train struck a landslide at Carmont after heavy rain. - Read more [here](#).

## UK Wide Stories

### **Sunak says blanket 20mph zones and low traffic neighbourhoods 'need to stop'**

Rishi Sunak said he is "slamming the brakes" on "hare-brained schemes" such as blanket 20mph speed limits and low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs). The prime minister has vowed to focus on policies that stem the "relentless attack on motorists". He told *The Sun*: "I'm slamming the brakes on the war on motorists – it is as simple as that." - Read more [here](#).

Dear drivers, steady as you go at 20mph. And welcome to the future (Comment)

The foot soldiers fighting back against the "war on the motorist" have been given plenty of ammunition lately. As low-traffic neighbourhoods continue to be adopted across the UK and [Ulez has been expanded](#) to greater London, the latest policy to provoke their ire is the imposition of a [20mph speed limit](#) in residential areas across Wales. - Read more [here](#).

## Human Rights/Equalities

### Scottish Stories

Report calls for care homes for LGBT people

Older LGBT people in Scotland are concerned about having to hide their sexuality when they start receiving care, a new study has found. The report by the LGBT Health and Wellbeing charity calls for care homes and assisted living facilities specifically for LGBT people.

Contributors said they were unable to be open about their sexuality and shared accounts of discrimination. There is currently no LGBT-specific care facility in Scotland. - Read more [here](#).

### UK Wide Stories

Anti-gay discrimination not qualification for asylum, says Suella Braverman

Fearing discrimination for being gay or a woman should not be enough to qualify for international refugee protection, the UK home secretary has said.

Addressing a US think tank on Tuesday, Suella Braverman questioned whether the application of the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention is "fit for our modern age". Laws have morphed from helping those fleeing persecution to those fearing bias, she argued. - Read more [here](#).

Suella Braverman comments condemned by UN refugee agency

THE UK could be seen to be turning its back on those in need in a "direct affront" to human rights, charities have said. It comes after the Home Secretary appeared to suggest that fearing discrimination for being gay or a woman should not be enough to qualify for asylum in the UK. [Suella Braverman's comments, in a speech on migration in the United States](#), have prompted strong criticism from campaigners, while the United Nations refugee agency rejected her call for the definition of who qualifies for protection to be "tightened". - Read more [here](#).

Fire safety report demanded five changes on Bibby Stockholm

Safety inspectors have demanded five urgent alterations to the [Bibby Stockholm](#), the giant barge meant to hold hundreds of people seeking asylum, because of risks to their lives in the event of fire, documents released under the Freedom of Information Act show. - Read more [here](#).

## Climate Crisis Corner



### Earth 'well outside safe operating space for humanity', scientists find

Earth's life support systems have been so damaged that the planet is "well outside the safe operating space for humanity", scientists have warned.

Their assessment found that six out of nine "planetary boundaries" had been broken because of human-caused pollution and destruction of the natural world. The planetary boundaries are the limits of key global systems – such as climate, water and wildlife diversity – beyond which their ability to maintain a healthy planet is in danger of failing. - Read more [here](#).

Heat-related deaths in 2022 hit highest level on record in England

More than 4,500 people died in [England](#) in 2022 due to high temperatures, the largest figure on record, with the number of heat-related deaths increasing over recent years.

Between 1988 and 2022, almost 52,000 deaths associated with the hottest days were recorded in England, with a third of them occurring since 2016, [data](#) from the Office for National Statistics shows. - Read more [here](#).

Antarctic sea-ice at 'mind-blowing' low alarms experts

The sea-ice surrounding Antarctica is well below any previous recorded winter level, satellite data shows, a worrying new benchmark for a region that once seemed resistant to global warming. "It's so far outside anything we've seen, it's almost mind-blowing," says Walter Meier, who monitors sea-ice with the National Snow and Ice Data Center. An unstable Antarctica could have far-reaching consequences, polar experts warn. - Read more [here](#).

### 'Staggering' green growth gives hope for 1.5C, says global energy chief

The prospects of the world staying within the 1.5C limit on global heating have brightened owing to the "staggering" growth of renewable energy and green investment in the past two years, the chief of the world's energy watchdog has said.

Fatih Birol, the executive director of the International [Energy](#) Agency, and the world's foremost energy economist, said much more needed to be done but that the rapid uptake of solar power and electric vehicles were encouraging. - Read more [here](#).

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