



Northern Ireland  
**Audit Office**

# Continuous improvement arrangements in policing

**Report by the Comptroller  
and Auditor General**

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This report has been prepared under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 for presentation to the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with Section 30 of the Act.

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She certifies the accounts of all Government Departments and a wide range of other public sector bodies; and she has statutory authority to report to the Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and other bodies have used their resources.

**Dorinnia Carville** *Northern Ireland Audit Office*  
Comptroller and Auditor General *10 August 2023*

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# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## Background

1. The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) was established on 4 November 2001 by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which put the recommendations of the Patten Report on policing into practice. At the same time, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (the PSNI) came into being, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.
2. Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is required to prepare and publish a Performance Plan for each financial year. The Board also has to prepare and publish a performance summary in respect of the previous year.

## Basis and scope of the audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General

3. As the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland, I am required under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 to audit the Policing Plan and Performance Summary and to send a report to the Board, the Chief Constable and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (the Department).

## The C&AG's certificate and audit opinion to the Assembly on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Performance Summary and Performance Plan

4. In accordance with Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended<sup>1</sup>, I certify that I have audited the Board's and the PSNI's:
  - Performance Summary for the year ended 31 March 2022; and
  - Annual Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2023.

## Basis of my opinion:

5. I planned and performed my work to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether:
  - (i) for the 2021-22 Performance Summary** - the Board has prepared and published a summary assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2021-22, measured by performance actions and performance measures against the Board's Business Plan and the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 respectively. My work included examination, on a test basis, of the evidence supporting both the objectives and actions and the performance indicators and measures as set out in the above documents; and
  - (ii) for the 2022-23 Annual Performance Plan** – arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvements; the Performance Plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation; the arrangements for publishing the Performance Plan complied with those requirements; and that the performance indicators and measures are reasonable.

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<sup>1</sup> Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003; The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

## Main findings of my review

6. I have given an unqualified audit opinion on the 2021-22 Annual Assessment and the 2022-23 Annual Performance Plan (**Appendix 1**). I have raised one recommendation for the attention of the Board and the PSNI, details of which are outlined in the following paragraphs.

### On 2021-22 performance – The Policing Board and the PSNI

7. Performance actions and measures are published for both the Board and the PSNI in the Board's Business Plan and the Annual Performance Plan respectively.
8. The Board's Business Plan for 2021-22 included 13 performance actions underpinning four corporate objectives. The 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan for PSNI sets out nine indicators with 13 performance measures. The same three overarching outcomes align both the Board's Business Plan and the Annual Performance Plan as well as the draft Programme for Government and the Department's Corporate Plan. These are:
- We have a safe Community;
  - We have confidence in Policing; and
  - We have engaged and supportive communities.
9. The Board has reported its own performance in its Annual Report for 2021-22. Overall the Board reported that in 2021-22, 11 of its 13 actions (85 per cent) (2020-21: 85 per cent) had been achieved and the remaining two actions were partially achieved. The Board's Annual Report for 2021-22 also provided a narrative summary of PSNI's performance against the Annual Performance Plan outcomes and concluded the status of each indicator at the year-end as having been achieved or otherwise.
10. The PSNI has reported its own performance against the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 in its Annual Report for the same year. The reporting against the outcomes, indicators and measures encompasses a large volume of both narrative and numerical information, with detail of the numerous underlying operational activities. We note the introduction of illustrative information which is a welcome addition and aids user understanding.
11. The Policing Board's Annual Report contains further information in the 2021-22 year with the introduction of 'Impacts / Updates' for each specific measure. It highlights the initiatives to continuously improve performance.
12. In a previous report, I recommended that the PSNI should include an assessment of each measure at the end of the reporting period. I am pleased to see this year that PSNI have continued to include its assessment of the status of each of the performance indicators at 31 March 2022; reporting that, in its opinion, of the total 13 indicators; one indicator (8 per cent) was fully achieved and 12 (92 per cent) were partially achieved.
13. The Policing Plan Review Working Group (PPRWG) was set up with the aims of reviewing the 2020-2025 Policing Plan and Performance Plan 2021-22, reviewing impacts, considering NIAO recommendations and creating surveys to aid evaluation of the Policing Plan.
14. A set of measures and baselines have been developed. I am pleased to see that baseline values have been developed for use in 2021-22 reporting.

## On the 2022-23 Annual Performance Plan

15. The Annual Performance Plan for 2022-23 supports the third year of *The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-25* and comprises nine indicators and 13 measures (2021-22: nine indicators and 13 measures) across the same three overarching outcomes noted above. A Policing Plan Review Working Group (PPRWG), comprising both Board members and PSNI representatives, was established in November 2020 to take forward the statutory requirement to review the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 and propose any changes to the new Performance Plan for 2022-23. There are no additional measures included in the 2022-23 Performance Plan. The 13 measures are carried forward from the previous 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan and remain unchanged.
16. Whilst described as measures, baseline and impact data is only starting to become available for certain measures. I am pleased to see a set of baselines have been developed in 2021-22 which can be used going forward into 2022-23.
17. PSNI should continue to develop these baselines and data. If this data is not available and being continuously developed, then the value of these indicators could be reduced as it may prove to be more difficult for PSNI to demonstrate the achievement or improvement of individual measures. It would also be difficult for the Board to prepare an assessment of PSNI's annual performance measured by reference to performance indicators and the extent to which these were met as required by Section 28 (5) of the Act.
18. Annex A has been added to the 2022-23 Annual Performance Plan. This includes Baselines and Draft Impacts for Outcomes One, Two and Three. Descriptions of baselines have been given but quantitative baseline figures have not been included.
19. I had recommended in my previous years' reports that the Annual Performance Plan would benefit from the inclusion of baseline data as it becomes available. We understand that further data is now available from the 2022 policing survey and this should be included in the performance plan going forward.

## On the continuous improvement arrangements

20. In my previous year's report, I noted that continuous improvement arrangements were not included as an annex within the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 and as such, I was pleased to note the introduction of Annex A in the Annual Performance Plan 2022-23.
21. Section 28 (4) of the Police (NI) Act 2000 requires the Board's Annual Performance Plan to contain details of its arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which it functions and those of the Chief Constable regarding economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
22. To satisfy this requirement, the Board has stated that both the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-25 and the subsequent Annual Performance Plans have been developed using the Outcomes Based Accountability Framework (OBA)<sup>2</sup>. This new approach is in line with the draft Programme for Government (PfG).

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2 The OBA Framework for the performance level follows a "How much did we do? > How well did we do it? > Is anyone better off?" report card approach. For further information see link to research paper on Outcomes Based Accountability and the Programme for Government: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2021/executive-office/O221.pdf>



23. The key features of the OBA approach include working in reverse from a set of desired outcomes, the use of indicators and performance measurement – ‘How much did we do?’, ‘How well did we do it?’ and ‘Is anyone better off?’. The validity of the approach requires good quality and relevant datasets and baseline information is fundamental. Whilst there have been improvements in the provision of this baseline information, it is important that this continues to be developed and I have made a recommendation to this effect.

## Update on the legislation supporting the continuous improvement arrangements

24. As I have reported in a number of previous reports, in my opinion, it is important that the Department of Justice considers changes to the legislation underpinning the audit of continuous improvement, which has been in place since 2000. The role of the C&AG defined in the 2000 Act in respect of continuous improvement in Northern Ireland now appears to be unique in the UK with the Department finding that many of the corresponding provisions to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 in the UK have been repealed and, for the most part, ‘best value’ arrangements in England and Wales no longer apply to the police. Any such proposal would be subject to Ministerial approval.



### Summary of Recommendation

The Performance Plan requires the inclusion of up to date and relevant data and baseline information for all indicators and measures. Whilst baselines and measures have been set and reported on in the 2021-22 year, these data sets should be further developed and become more robust as further information becomes available. This would include updating the indicators and measures to absorb any information gleaned from the Policing Plan Survey. This is essential in order to monitor performance and for the evaluation of success against the measures, indicators and outcomes stated in the Annual Performance Plan.



**Part One:**

# **Introduction and background**

## Introduction and background

### Responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Policing Board

- 1.1** Under Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions, and those of the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (the PSNI), are exercised, with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2** The Board must prepare and publish a performance plan for each financial year, containing details of how these continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. In particular, the Performance Plan must:
- identify performance indicators, by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured;
  - set performance outcomes to be met in relation to those performance indicators; and
  - include a summary of the Board's assessment of:
    - its, and the Chief Constable's, performance in the previous financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators and measures; and
    - the extent to which any performance standard, which applied at any time during that year was met.
- 1.3** In practice, the Board works in partnership with the PSNI to develop the Performance Plan and monitor and review progress in its implementation, within an overall context of continuous improvement.

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- 1.4** Under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I am required to audit the Performance Plan (including the assessment of the previous financial year's performance) to establish whether it was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Act. Accordingly, I must issue a report (**Appendix 1 and 2**):
- certifying that I have audited the Performance Plan;
  - stating whether I believe the Performance Plan was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of Section 28;
  - stating whether I believe the performance indicators and measures are reasonable and, if appropriate, recommending changes to them;
  - if appropriate, recommending how the Performance Plan should be amended so as to accord with the requirements of Section 28; and
  - recommending whether the Department of Justice should give a 'direction' to the Board, under Section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. Such a direction would require the Board to take appropriate corrective action to ensure compliance with the Act.

- 1.5 Under Section 30 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I may carry out an examination of the Board's compliance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Act.
- 1.6 In July 2022, I published a similar report summarising my audit of the previous (2020-21) Annual Performance Plan. My report at that time contained a number of recommendations that are presented at **Appendix 2**, along with an update from the Board on progress of such.

## Scope of the review

- 1.7 During the course of the review, my staff liaised closely with the Policing Board and the PSNI. My findings are set out as follows:
- **Part Two: Review of Performance:** summarising the Boards and the Chief Constable's performance in 2021-22 and the extent to which performance standards were met;
  - **Part Three: Review of the Annual Performance Plan:** considering whether the Performance Plan meets the Board's statutory obligations and whether proposed performance indicators and measures are reasonable; and
  - **Part Four: Continuous Improvement:** reviewing the arrangements made by the Board to secure continuous improvement and, examining how such arrangements are being implemented.



**Part Two:**

# **Review of Performance**

# Review of Performance

## Introduction

- 2.1** The Board is required to report, each year, a summary of its assessment of:
- its, and the Chief Constable's performance in the previous financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators; and
  - the extent to which any performance standard which applied at any time during that year was met.
- 2.2** In this part of the report, I consider whether the performance summary published in the Annual Reports for 2021-22 meet the statutory obligations of the Board and PSNI.

## Policing Board performance

- 2.3** The Board's Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2023<sup>3</sup> sets out the Board's Purpose, Vision and Values and outlines the key challenges envisaged during the period. The Board has set four key objectives based on the three overarching outcomes in line with the outcomes in The Policing Plan 2020-25. See **Figure 1**.
- 2.4** The detail of how the Board will deliver these four key objectives is set out in the Corporate Plan and is published within the Annual Business Plan for 2021-22. For each of the four objectives, a number of associated actions have been identified (13 in total) which will be used by the Board to gauge its progress in achieving the overall objective.
- 2.5** In accordance with the legislation, the Board's performance was summarised in its 2021-22 Annual Report<sup>4</sup>. **Figure 1** presents a summary of the Board's performance against the key objectives and associated actions as set out in the Annual Business Plan 2021-22. Of the 13 actions identified, 11 are reported as fully achieved (85 per cent) and the remaining two reported as partially achieved (15 per cent).
- 2.6** The two actions that were reported as partially achieved at 31 March relate to the monitoring of actions which remain outstanding in the Local Policing Review (LPR) Implementation Plan and implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of revised guidance to 'Selected Medical Practitioners and Independent Medical Referees'.

3 NI Policing Board Corporate Plan 2020-2023 [Corporate Plan 2020-2023 and Business Plan 2021/22 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)

4 NI Policing Board Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 [Annual Report and Accounts 2021 - 2022 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)



**Figure 1: Summary of progress against Objectives and Actions**

Objectives	Actions	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved
<b>A.</b> To monitor resourcing plans for the PSNI; advocating on issues which support policing, including transformational change, and delivery of a representative service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Progress appointment of PSNI Chief Officer and Senior staff vacancies</li> <li>ii. Monitor the effectiveness of PSNI Financial Management and the Action Plan to address recommendations from the NIAO report on 'Reducing Costs in PSNI'</li> <li>iii. Monitor the effectiveness of measures taken to ensure that membership of the PSNI is representative of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>
<b>B.</b> To monitor, oversee and assess the performance of the PSNI through the Board and its Committees and ensure the delivery of Human Rights based, community focussed policing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Deliver the 2021-22 Performance Plan in line with the 2020-2025 Northern Ireland Policing Plan</li> <li>ii. Implement a framework to assess PSNI's compliance with the Human Rights Act (1998)</li> <li>iii. Monitor delivery of those Actions which remain outstanding in the Local Policing Review Implementation Plan</li> <li>iv. Deliver and report on the work of the Board and its Committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Partially Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>
<b>C.</b> To work collaboratively with the community, Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and partners, to deliver the outcomes for policing and allow them to be informed and engaged with the Board's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Support the delivery of PCSP Action Plans which contribute to increased community safety and confidence in policing</li> <li>ii. Deliver a Communications Action Plan</li> <li>iii. Deliver the Engagement Strategy 2020-23 to support the Board's outcomes</li> <li>iv. Deliver a funding programme to support and increase community engagement with policing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>
<b>D.</b> To deliver independent, fair and transparent processes for former and serving officers in line with Police Pension, Injury Benefit and Appeal legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Implement and monitor the effectiveness of revised guidance to Selected Medical Practitioners and Independent Medical Referees</li> <li>ii. Progress any recommendations made by the Northern Ireland Audit Office from their reporting on the Northern Ireland Injury Benefit Scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially Achieved</li> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>

Source: NIAO summary based on the NIPB Annual Report 2021-22

- 2.7** The performance information in the Board's Annual Report reproduces the detailed information from the Board's Business Plan and is consistent with it, supporting the higher-level Corporate Plan outcomes. The Annual Report also contains a progress summary and status of each of the Business Plan actions as at 31 March 2022.

## PSNI performance 2021-22

- 2.8** The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-25 sets out three overarching outcomes that the Board have set for policing to deliver over the five-year period. The Annual Performance Plan for 2021-22<sup>5</sup> includes nine indicators and 13 measures, which are used to measure progress in the delivery of the second year of the Policing Plan 2020-25. A summary of PSNI's progress against the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 is set out at **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2: Summary of PSNI's progress against Annual Performance Plan 2021-22**

Outcome	Indicator	Measure	
<b>1. We have a safe community</b>	1.1 Fewer repeat victims of crime	1.1.1 Repeat victimisation rate and report on initiatives to support repeat victims with a focus on victims of (i) Domestic Abuse, (ii) Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) and (iii) Hate Crime in 2021-22	Partially Achieved
	1.2 Fewer repeat offenders of crime	1.2.1 Repeat offending rate and report on initiatives to reduce repeat offenders with a focus on Domestic Abuse in 2021-22  1.2.2 Through Frustrated, Disrupted and Dismantled activity, reduce the capacity and capability of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and paramilitary organisations to engage in criminal activity	Partially Achieved
	1.3 People in all communities feel safe	1.3.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who feel safe in their local area, local high street or town centre and own home  1.3.2 Rate of places repeatedly victimised	Partially Achieved
	1.4 Crime rates and trends showcase an effective police response	1.4.1 Benchmark PSNI crime rates against previous PSNI levels and other most similar police services	Partially Achieved

<sup>5</sup> NI Policing Plan 2020-25 and Performance Plan 2021-22 [Policing Plan 2020-25 and Performance Plan 2021-22 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk)

Outcome	Indicator	Measure	
<b>2. We have confidence in policing</b>	2.1 The level of public confidence in policing	2.1.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who are confident that PSNI is accessible, visible, responsive and victim focused	Partially Achieved
	2.2 The level of satisfaction with the service received	2.2.1 Number of victims who are satisfied with the service that they have received	Achieved
	2.3 The representativeness of the police service	2.3.1 Improve representativeness of the service across ranks, grades and departments by gender and community and socio-economic background	Partially Achieved
	2.4 Delivery of effective crime outcome	2.4.1 Levels of crime outcomes to identify and respond to areas of concern in outcomes statistics, with a particular focus on domestic abuse in 2021-22	Partially Achieved
<b>3. We have engaged and supportive communities</b>	3.1 Police, in partnership with local communities, including PCSPs, identify and deliver local solutions to local problems	3.1.1 In collaboration with the community deliver the commitments outlined in the Local Policing Review	Partially Achieved
		3.1.2 Identify and report on the Neighbourhood Policing Team initiatives to address local problems and tackle local issues, including co-designed solutions, in line with Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines	Partially Achieved
		3.1.3 Assess and evaluate the impact of partnership working with local communities, including but not exclusively, in areas of high deprivation and areas that have been repeatedly victimised	Partially Achieved

Source: NIAO summary based on Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 and PSNI Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

- 2.9** Both the Board and the PSNI have reported on the PSNI's performance against the 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan. The Board's assessment of PSNI's performance should be read in conjunction with that of the PSNI's assessment for a full understanding.
- 2.10** The Board published its assessment of the PSNI's performance against the 2021-22 Performance Plan in its Annual Report 2021-22. The narrative summarises how the PSNI reported how it met each performance indicator through its OBA Report Cards that were presented to the Board via one of its Performance, Partnership or Resources Committees. Additionally, for each indicator, the Board have included a summary box 'Rag Status' identifying the position in respect of data development, baselines and surveys.

- 2.11** The PSNI has reported its own performance against the Annual Performance Plan 2021-22 in its Annual Report for the same year. The reporting against the outcomes, indicators and measures encompasses a large volume of both narrative and numerical information, with detail of the underlying operational activities.
- 2.12** In my previous report, I recommended for the PSNI to include an assessment of each measure at the end of the reporting period. I am pleased to see that PSNI have included a table summarising the designated status of each of the performance indicators at 31 March 2022 as 'achieved', 'partially achieved' or 'not achieved'. PSNI reported that of the 13 measures within the nine indicators included in the Annual Performance Plan for 2021-22, one measure was 'achieved' and twelve measures were 'partially achieved'.
- 2.13** The 2021-22 baselines and measures have been reviewed; these were used for reporting within the Measure Report Cards/annual reporting. The Policing Plan Review Working Group (PPRWG) reviewed the Measures and baselines as part of their work and then reported back to the Board.
- 2.14** Now that the Board is progressing the OBA Framework to develop both the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-25 and the subsequent Annual Performance Plans it has become more important to ensure that they continue to develop baselines against which to judge progress. This will make it easier to understand how the three performance measures synonymous with OBA - "How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?" can be measured.

## Conclusion

- 2.15** The Board has consistently disclosed its own performance against the Corporate Plan and the Business Plan in its Annual Report and Accounts. The Board and the PSNI, in their own respective Annual Reports have reflected the outcomes and measures included in the 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan. Presenting an overall conclusion as to the annual progress against the Annual Performance Plan for 2021-22 as a whole would be beneficial for the reader now that baselines and data trends are starting to become available.



## Recommendation

The Performance Plan requires the inclusion of up to date and relevant data and baseline information for all indicators and measures. Whilst baselines and measures have been set and reported on in the 2021-22 year these data sets should be further developed and become more robust as further information becomes available. This would include updating the indicators and measures to absorb any information gleaned from the Policing Plan Survey. This is essential in order to monitor performance and for the evaluation of success against the measures, indicators and outcomes stated in the Annual Performance Plan.

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**Part Three:**

# **Review of the Performance Plan 2022-23**

# Review of the Performance Plan 2022-23

## Introduction

- 3.1 In this part of the report, I consider;
- whether the Annual Performance Plan for 2022-23 meets the Board's statutory obligations; and
  - whether the proposed performance measures are reasonable.

## Development of the Annual Performance Plan 2022-23

- 3.2 Section 25(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides for the Board to determine the objectives for the policing of Northern Ireland. In 2020 I reported that the Board had developed in partnership with the PSNI, an updated five year plan covering the period 2020 to 2025 known as *'The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025'*.
- 3.3 *The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025<sup>6</sup>*, sets out three overarching outcomes for policing to deliver over the next five years. It is accompanied by Annual Performance Plans which will contain indicators and measures used to evaluate the PSNI's progress on a twelve month basis against the outcomes.
- 3.4 In November 2020, the PPRWG was established to take forward the statutory requirements; to include reviewing the Policing Plan 2020-2025, the Annual Performance Plan and to propose any new Performance Plans. This working group comprises of both Board members and PSNI representatives.

## Review of Performance measures and indicators

- 3.5 The Annual Performance Plan for 2022 -23 includes nine indicators and 13 measures (**Figure 3**) covering the three outcomes and as such meets the Board's statutory obligations for this.

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6 replaces the *'Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2016-20'* document

**Figure 3: Annual Performance Plan 2022-23**

Outcome	Indicator	Measures 2022-23
<b>1. We have a safe community</b>	1.1 Fewer repeat victims of crime	1.1.1 Repeat victimisation rate and report on initiatives to support repeat victims with a focus on victims of (i) Domestic Abuse, (ii) Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) and (iii) Hate Crime in 2022-23
	1.2 Fewer repeat offenders of crime	1.2.1 Repeat offending rate and report on initiatives to reduce repeat offenders with a focus on Domestic Abuse in 2022-23 1.2.2 Through frustration, disruption and dismantling activity, reduce the capacity and capability of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and paramilitary organisations to engage in criminal activity
	1.3 People in all communities feel safe	1.3.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who feel safe in their local area, local high street or town centre and own home, including in the online space 1.3.2 Rate of places repeatedly victimised
	1.4 Crime rates and trends showcase an effective police response	1.4.1 Benchmark PSNI crime rates against previous rates and other similar police services
<b>2. We have confidence in policing</b>	2.1 The level of public confidence in policing	2.1.1 Number of people in Northern Ireland who are confident that PSNI is accessible, visible, responsive and victim focused
	2.2 The level of satisfaction with the service received	2.2.1 Number of victims and service users who are satisfied with the service they have received
	2.3 The representativeness of the police service	2.3.1 Improve representativeness of the service across ranks, grades and departments by gender and community and socio-economic background
	2.4 Delivery of effective crime outcomes	2.4.1 Levels of crime outcomes, with a particular focus on domestic abuse, to identify areas of concern
<b>3. We have engaged and supportive communities</b>	3.1 Police in partnership with local communities, including PCSPs, identify and deliver local solutions to local problems.	3.1.1 In collaboration with the community deliver the commitments outlined in the Local Policing Review
		3.1.2 Identify and report on the Neighbourhood Policing Team initiatives to address local problems and tackle local issues, including co-designed solutions, in line with Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines
		3.1.3 Assess and evaluate the impact of partnership working with local communities, including but not exclusively, in areas of high deprivation and areas that have been repeatedly victimised

Source: NIAO Summary based on Annual Performance Plan 2022-23

- 3.6** No additional measures were suggested by the Board for inclusion in the Annual Performance Plan for 2022-23.
- 3.7** In previous reports, I have recommended the need for clear and appropriate outcomes, linked indicators and measures and the fundamental inclusion of baseline information. Together these can demonstrate positive impacts for citizens, communities, and secure the continuous improvement of the organisation as a whole. I was satisfied that the link between outcome, indicators and measures is clear within the Annual Performance Plan 2022-23 with baseline data now starting to be implemented.
- 3.8** Baselines should continue to be developed and amended as appropriate going forward, eventually allowing comparisons to be made year on year. This baseline data is necessary to allow the Board to fully satisfy the requirements of Section 28<sup>7</sup> of the Act and make an assessment of the PSNI's annual performance '*measured by reference to performance indicators*'.

## Conclusion

- 3.9** The Board and PSNI should continue to develop the OBA approach through clear defined outcomes linked to indicators and quantifiable measures. The inclusion of up to date and relevant data and baselines that can be used to clearly demonstrate performance is fundamental to this.



## Recommendation

The recommendation is the same as that at the end of section 2.

<sup>7</sup> Section 28 paragraph (5) The performance plan shall (a) identify factors ("performance indicators") by reference to which performance in exercising functions can be measured; (b) set standards ("performance standards") to be met in the exercise of particular functions in relation to performance indicators; **F1..F1(c). F2(5A)**The Board shall prepare and publish for each financial year a summary (its "performance summary") of the Board's assessment of (a) its and the Chief Constable's performance in the year measured by reference to performance indicators; (b) the extent to which any performance standard which applied at any time during that year was met.



**Part Four:**

# **Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme**

# Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

## Introduction

- 4.1** Section 28 (4) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement within its and the PSNI's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is also required to carry out reviews of the way in which its functions are exercised.

## Continuous improvement within the Policing Board

- 4.2** The Board's previous Continuous Improvement programme 2017-20, supported the action plan for the Board to obtain the Investors in People (IIP) reaccreditation. I am pleased to report that the IIP accreditation was achieved on the 7 June 2022. To achieve this accolade a survey was carried out and discussions and engagement took place with a sample of employees.
- 4.3** The Board has no other continuous improvement projects planned at present. Continuous improvement projects ended in 2018 and they were part of the previous Policing Plan 2016-2020.

## Continuous improvement within the PSNI

- 4.4** This is the second year I will be reporting on Continuous Improvement within the PSNI under the Board's newly adopted Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) framework methodology.
- 4.5** The development of the Policing Plan 2020-25 follows the OBA framework and aims to embed continuous improvement throughout the design and monitoring of the outcomes of the Annual Performance Plans. To facilitate this new methodology, the PPRWG reconvened to support the Board in its review of PSNI past performance; and to challenge future Annual Performance Plans, ensuring that the measures within remain appropriate and relevant. The monitoring of the individual measures and indicators is delegated to the Board's Performance, Partnership or Resources Committees. PSNI provide monthly information to the Board using the OBA methodology in 'report card' format, setting out the three OBA performance measures "How much did we do? > How well did we do it? > Is anyone better off?"
- 4.6** The Board's approach to securing continuous improvement using the OBA framework methodology relies on four key documents:
- Performance Plan Timetable;
  - OBA Report Card (produced by PSNI) How much did we do? > How well did we do it? > Is anyone better off?;
  - Board Analysis (scrutiny of OBA report card - identifying issues or opportunities); and
  - PSNI Update (presentation to the Board).

**4.7** To obtain assurance that the Board's new approach is fully compliant with Section 28 (4) of the Act and, in particular, the Board's requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement within the PSNI we selected and tested the following two performance indicators:

- 1.4 'Crime rates and trends showcase an effective police response'; and
- 2.3 'The representativeness of the police service'.

**4.8** These indicators were both designated as 'partially achieved' within the Board's Annual Report for year-end 31 March 2022. The audit work therefore focused on reviewing the underlying supporting documentation, in particular the four key documents listed above.

#### Figure 4: Summary of NIAO findings from key documentation review

Indicator 1.4 Crime rates and trends showcase an effective police response	
Document	Findings
Performance Plan Timetable 2021-22	Performance Committee minutes were dated 2 December 2021
OBA Report Card	<p><b>Measure 1.4.1: Benchmark PSNI crime rates against previous PSNI levels and other most similar police services.</b></p> <p>We noted recorded crime figures are available for the period April to October 2021 and have been compared to the baseline.</p> <p>Comparisons have also been made between PSNI and other similar police services in England and Wales.</p>
Board Analysis	We noted that the Performance Committee identified the following:
PSNI Update	<p><i>'The Board Official advised Members that in order to make complete a comparative analysis of UK and PSNI crime rates, figures from seven comparable UK Services have been considered.'</i></p> <p><i>Information continues to become available and baselines continue to progress and become more meaningful.</i></p> <p><b>NIAO View: Overall we conclude there is reasonable data and baseline information for indicator 1.4.</b></p>

Indicator 2.3 - The representativeness of the police service.	
Document	Findings
Performance Plan Timetable 2021-22	Resource Committee minutes were dated 8 September 2021 and 9 February 2022
OBA Report Card	<p><b>Measure 2.3.1 – Improve representativeness of the service across ranks, grades and departments by gender and community and socio-economic background.</b></p> <p>Police Officer and Police Staff representation figures by Rank / Grade as at 31 July 2021 were disclosed.</p> <p>We note the Student Officer Recruitment Campaign of November 2021 was compared with the equality representation in PSNI's last recruitment campaign in 2020.</p> <p>NIAO notes that comparisons are not included in the report card to show representation as at 31 July 2020 etc or similarly for the last recruitment campaign in 2020. This would have been a good visual aid to show comparisons.</p>
Board Analysis	<p>We noted that the Resource Committee identified the following:</p> <p>'Members also provided feedback of the layout of the report card and how best to present the information to enable the reader to easily assess progress against objectives going forward.' September 2021 Resource Committee</p> <p><i>'Members noted the many commendable activities which are ongoing but stressed that more people data is necessary to measure the impact/success of the actions being taken. Members discussed a change in the format of the report card which would give a broader range of information on representativeness across the area of People and Organisational Development rather than just focus on Student Officer Recruitment. Members advised that they would like this to include areas such as diversity training, reverse mentoring etc and PSNI acknowledged that further data capturing behavioural change was necessary, rather than just reporting on numbers taking training in certain areas.'</i> February 2022 Resource Committee</p>
PSNI Update	<p>Reporting has further evolved to include a 'measured report card' which will report against three strands recruitment, progression, and retention.</p> <p><b>NIAO View: Overall we conclude there is reasonable data and baseline information for indicator 2.3.</b></p>

Source: NIAO Summary of review of four key documents – Performance Timetable, OBA Report Card, Board Analysis and PSNI update to the Board

- 4.9** Our review of the key documents identified the same theme across both indicators and measures selected; the introduction of clear baselines makes judging performance easier. Further improvements can be made going forward as the dataset for comparison becomes more developed.
- 4.10** I am pleased to see that the Policing Plan survey was completed in April 2022. We do note that the results of this survey were not included in the 2021-22 annual report as the report had only being finalised post year end. However, going forward into 2022-23 reporting this survey will be considered alongside existing baselines.
- 4.11** I also note that the Northern Ireland Policing Plan Survey is going to be an annual process which will further aid the development of baseline data going forward. The next survey results are due to be published in 2023.
- 4.12** The development and introduction of current data and baselines are starting to compliment the rationale stated in the Board's Annual Report 2020-21 in adopting the OBA methodology. The Board values *'evidence-based monitoring, analysis and evaluation'* and that the OBA approach *'enables the Plans to focus on outcomes which clearly demonstrate continuous improvement in police performance and a positive impact within the community.'*
- 4.13** The three performance measures synonymous with OBA "How much did we do? > How well did we do it? > Is anyone better off?" can only be facilitated with up-to-date data and relevant baselines with success defined as 'doing better than the baseline' and 'turning the curve'. I acknowledge that the Board has made some progress through its implementation of the new OBA approach with the Policing Plan Review Working Group having developed clear baselines and impacts.

## Conclusion

- 4.14** At this point of the five-year Policing Plan 2020-25 baselines have finally been developed for all indicators which will enable an assessment of performance to be made. I intend to revisit this area in more detail in my future reports as the new OBA methodology becomes fully embedded. We note that baselines will become more robust in subsequent years as comparisons can be drawn.



# Appendices

# Appendix 1: The Comptroller and Auditor General's certificate and opinion to the Assembly on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Performance Plan and Performance Summary

1. In accordance with Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended, I certify that I have audited the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Service of Northern Ireland's:
  - performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2022; and
  - annual performance plan for the year ended 31 March 2023.

## Basis of my opinion

### Audit of the Performance Summary

2. I planned and performed my work to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published a summary of the Board's assessment of its own, and the Chief Constable's, performance in 2021-22, measured by reference to performance objectives and performance indicators.
3. My work comprised a review and assessment and, where appropriate, examination on a test basis of the evidence supporting performance against the indicators and measures as prescribed in the 2021-22 Annual Performance Plan. I obtained sufficient evidence to satisfy myself that the summary provided includes those matters prescribed in legislation, and that the arrangements for publishing the summary complied with those requirements.

### Audit of the Performance Plan

4. I planned and performed my work to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether:
  - the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements; and
  - the performance indicators and performance measures for 2022-23 are reasonable.
5. My work comprised a review and assessment of the plan and, where appropriate, examination on a test basis of relevant evidence sufficient to satisfy me that arrangements to secure continuous improvements are in place, that the plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation, and that the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with those requirements.



## Opinion

6. In my opinion:

- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its and the Police Service of Northern Ireland's performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000;
- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its Performance Plan for the year ended 31 March 2023, as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000; and
- the performance indicators included within the Performance Plan 2022-23 are reasonable.

## Recommendation to the Department of Justice

7. Under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I am required to make a recommendation as to whether the Department of Justice should issue a direction to the Policing Board under Section 31 of the Act.
8. On the basis of my work, I do not recommend that the Department of Justice issues a direction under Section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.



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8 June 2023

## Appendix 2: Progress on Recommendations in the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report

### NIAO Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing Report 2022

NIAO Recommendations	Board and PSNI Response	Progress
<p><b>The Performance Plan requires the inclusion of up to date and relevant data and baseline information for all indicators and measures. This is essential in order to monitor performance, to establish targets and for the evaluation of success against the measures, indicators and outcomes stated in the Annual Performance Plan.</b></p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> - During 2022-23 the Board once again focussed on seeking from PSNI the relevant data and baseline information for all indicators and measures. The Policing Plan Review Working Group focused their attention to this task and produced a set of baselines and impacts for each Measure of the Policing Plan for PSNI to report against. In addition, a major Policing Plan survey was delivered and published in May 2022 and this has provided a set of confidence measures that will serve as the baseline for multiple measures in the subsequent years of the Policing Plan. This has assisted officials in identifying and reporting on impacts and continuous improvement in each measure in this year's Annual Assessment that will be subject to the 2021-22 NIAO Audit. The Policing Plan Review Working Group will again revisit this work as part of their review and will also address the concerns raised within this report as part of its remit and report back to the Board. Therefore, this recommendation is being fully implemented.</p> <p><b>Police Service of Northern Ireland Response:</b></p> <p>The Police Service of Northern Ireland broadly accepts this recommendation. We agree with the requirement to benchmark and stretch performance. However, the use of targets is inconsistent with the approach in England and Wales and comes with a risk of generating negative internal behaviours. The Police Service remains focussed on developing the necessary data and baseline information to enable the monitoring of performance, and for the evaluation of success against the measures, indicators and outcomes stated in the Annual Performance Plan. Priority actions include the completion of a Force Management Statement (FMS) process, as well as the on-going development and deployment of the Pulse performance portal to generate real time data targets.</p> <p>The Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently undertaking an organisational-wide data collection exercise to support a self-assessment of future demand versus the organisation's capacity to respond to it. It is fully expected this will improve data collection processes and build upon existing baselines.</p> <p>The aim of the Pulse performance portal is to provide a corporate source of performance information to enable the organisation to consider both quantitative and qualitative data within the context of its strategic priorities and to improve its ability to demonstrate performance.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 1</b> concerns the inclusion of up to date and relevant data and baseline information for all indicators and measures. The Working Group last year focussed on developing the Baseline and Impact Framework and this has been used and implemented since April 2022 to assist with the reporting of impact. As noted above the Performance Framework has been reviewed and updated by the Working Group this year with the aim of making it more effective and improving it further. The information gathered in the first Policing Plan Survey 2022 has been considered and is being factored into the existing baselines. It is intended that this work will result in improved monitoring that will result in more effective reporting of baseline and impact information in the remaining years of the Policing Plan.</p>

NIAO Recommendations	Board and PSNI Response	Progress
<p><b>The Board should undertake a review of existing arrangements to ensure that it is content with the new approach under the OBA Framework; that it is able to fully support the requirement to assess PSNI performance and as such make arrangements to secure Continuous Improvement within the PSNI as required by Section 28 of the Act.</b></p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> - The Policing Plan Review Working Group is made up of Board Members and senior PSNI representatives. The remit of the Working Group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Policing Plan and the Annual Performance Plan Summary to determine if any changes are necessary to these strategic documents;</li> <li>• Review the reporting of impact to date; and</li> <li>• Consider the recommendations of the NIAO in its report on the Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing.</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, the Working Group will be considering this recommendation and reviewing the existing arrangements and reporting back to the Board by February 2023. The work of the group last year advanced these recommendations and provision was made with the Annual Performance Assessment to report on impact and continuous improvement. Therefore, this recommendation is being fully implemented.</p> <p><b>Police Service of Northern Ireland Response:</b></p> <p>This recommendation is accepted, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland would concur with the Board's comments above. The organisation recognises the importance of this work; key priority actions include the on-going implementation of the Horizon 2025 service modernisation plan, the implementation of supporting organisational strategies, as well as a "Plan on a Page" for 2022-23. This latter initiative consolidates the organisation's strategic priorities to provide greater strategic focus on both organisational and service improvement.</p> <p>The Police Service notes that an Outcomes-Based Approach (OBA) has been adopted for the development of these two Plans. We would seek clarification on the role of target-setting within this approach (as referenced in Recommendation 1), as well as the practicalities of taking this forward.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2</b> requests that Members undertake a review of existing arrangements to ensure that it is content with the new approach under the Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) Framework. The Working Group concluded that the OBA methodology has been slow to deliver impact data but that this is now starting to improve and will continue to get better as we move into the latter years of a five-year programme. The reporting of impact is always difficult in the early years of a programme but as the Policing Plan 2020-2025 now moves beyond the halfway point the OBA methodology will now begin to produce results. This has already started to happen with the Annual Assessment for the 2021-22 year where a section on the "Draft Impacts" and "Initiatives to Continuously Improve Performance" were included for each Measure within the Assessment. This will improve and develop in the subsequent annual assessments for the remaining years of the Policing Plan.</p> <p>Therefore, the Working Group Members recommend the continuation of the OBA methodology for the remainder of the implementation of the Policing Plan 2020-2025 and to continue with refining and improving the Baseline and Draft Impact Framework to improve the overall impact reporting on the Policing Plan 2020-2025.</p>



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