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**Scottish Railways Policing Committee Performance Report Q3**

**Key Points**

* *BTP has continued to adapt to the challenges presented by the pandemic. An ‘enhanced posture’ has seen increased focus on visibility and proactivity to ensure safety and compliance with regulations.*
* *The effects of COVID continue to be seen in both the level and nature of crime on the rail network in Scotland. Overall, crime -30% on last year and there has been very low levels of serious violence, robbery and sexual crime.*
* *Throughout Quarter 3 (Q3) BTP continued to work alongside partners to achieve national and local objectives in reducing crime and disruption and protecting staff and the travelling public.*

**COVID-19 Policing Response**

***Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce* has been the consistent method of approach undertaken by frontline officers throughout the pandemic and over the past 3 months, high visibility patrols have continued across the division to support staff and engage with members of the public.** The introduction of the Tier System and subsequent January Lockdown heralded the adoption of an ‘enhanced enforcement posture’ and this has seen an increased focus on visibility and proactivity in intervention for regulation breaches. There have been 1193 FPNs and 81,461 interventions made Force-wide since March 2020. Officers are encouraged to use Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) where a lack of compliance with 4E approach is encountered. The table below provides further detail in relation to Q3 policing response.

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| **October – December** |
| **In Q3, D Division experienced ASB and namely youths travelling by train in large groups, often without masks and not adhering to social distancing.** This issue has affected the whole division but most notably in the North and Glasgow sectors and officers have engaged with partners to identify and target key groups. The North issued a surge in patrols and 9 operations. In the West, 10 operations were commissioned for face mask and essential travel compliance and in December alone, 30 additional initiatives were carried out for ASB on division. Resources continue to be directed to hotspots in each policing post. Liaison with schools has also taken place. |
| **Resourcing has been strained by COVID-related absence (mainly in form of self-isolation).** However, staff levels have been maintained and this has enabled BTP to continue to deliver a quality service. During this period, an exceptional level of support has been provided by the Special Constabulary which has helped with daily activity, deployments and operations. At the beginning of February, the COVID abstraction ratio for D Division is 0.3% (1). |
| **The Divisional festive plan ran during December with no reduction in resources.** Deployments were made every weekend under *Operation Redcedar* to address specific areas of non-compliance and this ensured support and reassurance to the network during what was a unique festive season. |
| **A variety of proactive operations are taking place in line with Force enhanced posture.** Officers continue to carry out on-train patrols, actively engaging with members of the travelling public and ensuring compliance with COVID regulations (Op Red Cedar). These took place throughout December and January. In the North, extra officers have conducted patrols every Friday, Saturday and Sunday Nov 13th – present. In the East 29 operations have been directed. A typical Red Cedar shift will involve policing between 6 – 10 trains. |

**Crime Overview**

**There have been 961 notifiable crimes recorded for Scotland YTD.** Overall, notifiable crime is down by 30% (-412) on last year. In Q3, there were 414 crimes recorded and is a 14% reduction on Q3 2019 (481). Detection rate for crime in Scotland is 49% (+7% on PY).

Estimates published by the Department for Transport indicate that rail usage increased UK wide throughout the summer. This was reflected in the summer crime trends, with Scotland experiencing an increase month on month and by September and October, crime was almost at the same level as last year. **Despite rail usage still being considerably lower than it was before the pandemic, November crime was up 5% on the PY and was the highest recording month YTD with 150 crimes.** At this time, increases were seen in Criminal Damage (*Vandalism and Malicious Damage*) and Serious Line of Route crime (*Culpable and Reckless Conduct and Malicious Obstruction*) which linked to a wider divisional trend of crime linked to young offenders. As the table below shows, there was a marked drop in crime in December (-16% compared with November).

**December crime was 40% lower than last year (-72 crimes) and this can be attributed to the tightening of restrictions and impact of COVID.** The charts below show that while daily averages were only slightly lower than last December, there was a complete absence of the spike in rail usage Christmas Eve – Boxing Day that has been seen previously (it is of note that national figures for retail in Scotland report a 15% reduction in December sales).

The profile of crime has changed as a result of fall in passenger numbers and this has impacted on volume crime such as Theft of Passenger Property, which has seen the largest decrease YTD (70 crimes, -69%, -155 crimes from PY).

**Violence Against the Person is also down 37% with a total of 263 crimes YTD (-152 crimes).** However, violence is still the highest recording crime category and accounts for 27% of all notifiable crime. The same pre-COVID patterns exist in relation to time, date and location, albeit in a reduced scale. Within this category, 163 crimes relate to violent behaviour and 54 to weapon offences (weapon crime is discussed in the section below). Most violent crime on the network in Scotland is Common Assault which results in no injury (93%, 152) and is mainly related to disputes between passengers. However, violence against staff (discussed in separate section below) accounts for 24% (37) of this total. There have been 33 assaults on Police officers YTD and 12 of these occurred in the last quarter. The current detection rate for Violence Against the Person is 74%.

Other crime groups with significant reduction areMotor Vehicle and Pedal Cycle crime (68 YTD, -47%, -41 crimes) and Theft of Railway / Commercial Property (86 YTD, -36%, -48 crimes). Hate crime (4 YTD) and Sexual crime (12 YTD) also have very low yearly totals.

**The largest increase in crime numbers has been seen in Graffiti.** Graffiti is a crime group which persisted throughout the first Lockdown in March 2020 when the network was at its quietest. There have been 88 crimes recorded which is 66% higher than last year (+35 crimes). Detection rate for graffiti is 16%. Divisional CID continue to lead on Graffiti and have created a problem-solving plan, working with the industry to target key problem areas and find implementable solutions.

**There has been a total of 129 drug crimes recorded YTD (+55%, +46 crimes from PY).** As in Q2, the high amount of crimes in this category is the direct result of police-generated searches attributed to an increase in County Lines days of action across the Division. This is particularly the case for locations in the East Sector, where most searches under the Misuse of Drugs Act took place.

**Quieter trains with less revenue collection in place have led to an increase in groups of youths using the network and engaging in anti-social behaviour. There has been a persistent lack of compliance regarding face coverings and social distancing.** In Q3, D Division experienced a trend of nuisance behaviour escalating into more serious crime and violence against staff (detailed further in ‘Staff Violence’ section). Criminal Damage is down 19% (33 crimes), however is the highest recording group and relatively high in relation to footfall and this can be attributed to ongoing issues with young offenders. Throughout the reporting period, a significant amount of joint working with Police Scotland has taken place to reduce COVID-related anti-social behaviour across the Glasgow area. Joint patrols between BTP Police Scotland in the area has had an extremely positive impact with a vast reduction in groups in the area.

**Serious Violence**

**Serious violence causing injury remains very low on the network in Scotland.** There has been a total of 9 crimes YTD (25% less than PY (12)) and these relate to 8 incidents in total. All have been passenger on passenger violence and the detection rate for this type of crime is currently 56%.

Robbery also remains at a low level, with 4 crimes recorded this year (50% less than last year (8)). Detection rate for robbery is 125%.

**Conversely, weapon crime is up by 17% (+8) with a total of 54 crimes YTD** (46 PY) and in October and December there were also higher numbers of weapon offences than in the corresponding months of 2019.

As previously stated, there is a direct correlation between weapon detections and County Lines activity and this is most evident in the East sector, where days of action have resulted in a 340% rise in weapon detections. Overall, detection rate for weapons is 89%.

The BTP Operation Sentinel ‘Focused on Your Safety’ Campaign seeks to reassure the public and rail staff and deter offenders by increasing visibility and presence on the network through visual messaging. Recent proactive activity utilising the walkthrough ‘Knife Arch’ metal scanner took place in the Inverclyde area (66 passengers checked resulting in 15 activations) which generated positive media coverage. There are further operations planned.

The increase in weapon offences for BTP mirrors the national picture, with nearly every division of Police Scotland experiencing increase in this area of crime. Joint working with Police Scotland has taken place to target certain locations to address this issue.

One notable example of this joint working is in relation to an incident at Glengarnock Station on 13/12/2020 where a young male was attacked by youths and struck with a baseball bat. Diligent enquiry work and early preservation of the scene saw 2 youths charged with Assault and Offensive Weapon crimes. Regular joint action plans with Police Scotland have targeted youth disorder in and around the train stations. This has had a real positive impact in lessening violent crime, particularly at Glasgow Central station.

**Staff Violence**

***Local Objective: Prevent Assaults on Rail Staff and Increase Positive Outcomes***

**To date there have been 39 physical assaults and 99 verbal crimes against staff members.** The detection rate for physical assault is 77% (+17% on last year) and verbal is 40% (+8% on last year). Over half of the verbal crime directed towards staff is Threatening and Abusive Behaviour (58%, 58 crimes). Nearly all violence against staff has been mostly Common Assault causing No Injury, yet 1 incident of spittle assault was classified as Culpable and Reckless Conduct.

D Division saw a sharp rise in violence against staff in late October, early November. This mainly took the form of abuse from young offenders and a significant rise in spittle assault. BTP enquiry work relating to a hotspot area of the Fife circle led to 1 youth charged with 5 separate spittle offences. Officers continue to liaise with social work and the Children’s Reporter around the accused. Joint working with Police Scotland and ScotRail along with enhanced target patrols at weekends has resulted in a reduction of offending and in the number of youths travelling on the network unchallenged. A media campaign including engagements with high schools in Fife was also conducted via social media.

BTP continues to be represented at the Abellio ScotRail Security meeting (held monthly) and the Joint Safety Committee (held Quarterly with the industry and Unions). This provides a forum for discussion around emerging trends, areas of concerns and joint working opportunities.

**Safeguarding**

A key focus of BTP is to protect, support and safeguard vulnerable people and those most at risk of harm on the railway.

Serious criminal activity such as County Lines directly impacts on the rail network and vulnerable groups. There has been a notable increase in County lines disruption throughout 2020-2021 and seeking out and targeting this type of activity is now part of normal policing for BTP in Scotland. Days of action in the East and North have provided the opportunity to utilise inter-operability policing methods, with Edinburgh officers and BTP County Lines taskforce working in conjunction with Police Scotland. In Edinburgh, drug detections are up by 218% from last year. Proactive searching in North led to a cash seizure carried out under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) in December. Officers also monitor locations and services that may be used as intermediate routes for County Liens and conduct on train patrols. Another week of intensification is due to take place in February.

With 33% of all incidents (2875) relating to a concern or vulnerability of individuals travelling or potentially presenting on the rail network, BTP have made mental health and vulnerability a key operational focus. Dedicated, multi-agency work takes place in respect of vulnerable individuals. One example is in relation to an elderly male from Ardrossan who persistently travels all over Scotland and typically presents in a confused manner. Engagement has been made with health care professionals. Moreover, BTP sit on a joint working group to tackle the welfare of a vulnerable female in the Lochwinnoch area who was consistently putting herself in dangerous situations. The female was recently remanded for breach of bail offences, but BTP continue to engage with Social Work in anticipation of her release.

BTP continue to engage with the Samaritans and Network Rail on fatalities through meetings held every 4 weeks. Also, the Vulnerability Unit is currently in the final stages of agreeing a new EPSA (Enhanced Police Service Agreement) with Network Rail to create a new team of officers and police staff to manage High Frequency Presenters (HFPs).

**Disruption and Trespass**

***Local Objective: for D Division is to reduce disruption related incidents through a joint problem-solving approach with industry at key red route locations.***

So far in the Performance Year, disruption incidents have reduced by 22% and lost minutes have reduced by 32%.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Incidents** |  | **Lost Minutes** |
| **Previous YTD** | **Current YTD** | **Difference** |  | **Previous YTD** | **Current YTD** | **Difference** |
| Cable Theft | 2 | 0 | **-100%** |   | 813 | 0 | **-100%** |
| Disorder/Drunks | 723 | 427 | **-41%** |   | 12,555 | 6,184 | **-51%** |
| Fatalities | 18 | 24 | **+33%** |   | 8,957 | 6,109 | **-32%** |
| Level Crossing | 120 | 102 | **-15%** |   | 2,528 | 2,012 | **-20%** |
| Trespass | 564 | 573 | **-2%** |   | 24,680 | 20,059 | **-19%** |
| Vandalism / Theft | 185 | 129 | **-30%** |   | 4,492 | 2,510 | **-44%** |
| **TOTAL** | **1,612** | **1,255** | **-22%** |   | **54,025** | **36,874** | **-32%** |

Trespass incidents have now increased slightly by 1.4% (+9 incidents) though minutes lost in this category have reduced by 19%. Much of the increase in trespass incidents is due to mental health incidents (SPMH), with persons presenting at the railway. Youth (CYP) trespass also continues to be an issue and much of the increase relates to the anti-social behaviour issue being experienced at various locations across the Division.

Work is ongoing to reduce trespass and the impact it has on the network. Mobile patrol strategy is reviewed each month and additional focus is given to any repeat or hotspot location. In the East Sector, the Neighbourhood Policing team deliver railway safety presentations covering the dangers and risks associated with trespass, stone-throwing, criminal damage, line obstruction, overhead lines and use of Level Crossings. Due to COVID, these have started to be carried out via Safety Presentations via MS team and the feedback has been very positive. Locations for these are determined by trespass incidents and any areas highlighted by the embedded Inspector within Network Rail.

As stated, youth trespass is a divisional problem and multiple days of action have taken place in the Girvan and Maybole area after reports from staff of issues involving trespass and surfing at the location. Moreover, on 01/12/2020, online images of children trespassing at Belmont Level Crossing in Ayr were brought to BTP attention. Excellent early enquiry work lead to the detection of 3 youths and subsequent engagement work with Belmont Academy. A multi-agency site visit is also being arranged at Kilpatrick Station following several CYP trespass incidents which will include representatives of the railway industry.

***Local Objective: Maintain an average handback time of under 90 minutes for non-suspicious incidents.***

Fatalities and non-fatal incidents involving persons struck by trains has increased by 33%, from 18 to 24. There have been no repeat locations for fatalities in Scotland in the reporting period.

The average handback time is currently higher than 90 minutes (106) and this is due to several incidents where the handback time was significantly high – namely a fatality on 13/07/2020 at Forth Rail Bridge (244 minutes) which was treated as unexplained. A search of the bridge resulted in a high number of delay minutes. Handback time is largely dependent on arrival time and geographical location. Other high recording incidents include a fatality at Newtonhill (191, when there was no relief driver availability) and at Newburgh (174).

January 2021 saw the launch of a dedicated Disruption Reduction Unit which has been set up to target police-related disruption on the rail network and which reports directly to the Embedded Inspector.

**Football**

Liaison has taken place between BTP and the industry to ensure adequate plans are in place for the safe (socially distanced) queueing of passengers once fans are back at stadia. Staffing levels will also be increased at main line stations to ensure segregation and to monitor queues and ensure safety of passengers and staff.

**Appendix**

The table below shows all notifiable crime between April 1st – 31st December 2020.

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| **Crime Group** | **PYTD** | **YTD** | **Diff** | **% Diff** |
| **01A Violence Against the Person** | **415** | **263** | **-152** | **-37%** |
| 01A Violence | 369 | 163 | -206 | -56% |
| 01B Weapons | 46 | 54 | 8 | 17% |
| **02A Sexual Offences** | **47** | **12** | **-35** | **-74%** |
| **03A Criminal Damage / Malicious Mischief** | **227** | **229** | **2** | **1%** |
| 03A Criminal Damage | 174 | 141 | -33 | -19% |
| 03B Graffiti | 53 | 88 | 35 | 66% |
| **04A Serious Line of Route Offences** | **49** | **40** | **-9** | **-18%** |
| **05A Theft of Passenger Property** | **225** | **70** | **-155** | **-69%** |
| **06A Motor Vehicle / Cycle Offences** | **115** | **68** | **-47** | **-41%** |
| 06A Motor Vehicle | 36 | 29 | -7 | -19% |
| 06B Pedal Cycle | 79 | 39 | -40 | -51% |
| **07A Robbery Offences** | **8** | **4** | **-4** | **-50%** |
| **08A Theft of Railway / Commercial Property & Burglary** | **134** | **86** | **-48** | **-36%** |
| 08A Burglary & Theft Railway | 97 | 49 | -48 | -49% |
| 08B Theft Cable & Plant | 37 | 37 | 0 | 0% |
| **09A Serious Public Disorder Offences** | **9** | **9** | **0** | **0%** |
| **10A Serious Fraud Offences** | **13** | **8** | **-5** | **-38%** |
| **11A Drug Offences** | **83** | **129** | **46** | **55%** |
| **12A Other Serious Offences** | **48** | **43** | **-5** | **-10%** |
| **Grand Total** | **1373** | **961** | **-412** | **-30%** |