



Scottish Railways Policing Committee Performance Report

Key Points

- *BTP has continued to adapt to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ‘enhanced posture’ of Q4 saw increased focus on visibility and proactivity in ensuring the safety of staff and public and this will continue as the country emerges from Lockdown.*
- *The end of year figures show the full impact of the pandemic, with crime 29% lower than 2019-20 and a profile of crime that reflects the unique and unprecedented circumstances of 2020-21.*
- *There were very low levels of high harm crime during 2020-21 and detection rate remains high in this area.*
- *Throughout Q4, BTP officers in Scotland continued to work alongside partners to achieve national and local objectives in reducing crime, disruption and in protecting rail staff and the travelling public.*

COVID-19 Policing Response

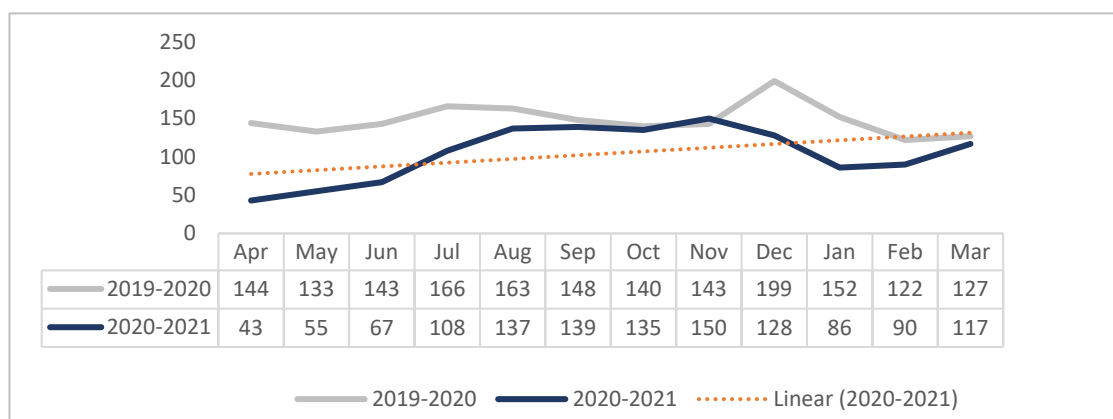
An enhanced posture of *Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce* continued in Q4, ensuring compliance with regulations of Lockdown. A total of 6044 interventions have been made in Scotland since the start of the pandemic, with 200 Fixed Penalty Notices issued. BTP have continued to adapt and respond to the challenges in each phase and this will continue as restrictions are lifted in Scotland. The table below provides overarching themes of policing in Q4:

Key Themes: January – March
In Q4, officers in Scotland continued work to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues caused by large groups of youths travelling by train in breach of COVID-19 regulations. With youths being the largest group using the network throughout the pandemic, activity to target ASB has been closely associated with COVID policing response. This issue has affected the whole division throughout the pandemic and officers have engaged with partners to identify and target key locations and groups. A multi-agency approach, with Police and rail partners along with targeted patrols and social media messaging has had a positive impact in several locations. Engagement with Police Scotland occurs routinely with weekend plans shared and a joint approach agreed to tackle local crime trends. It is predicted that the return of on- train revenue collection will herald a reduction of people travelling short journeys without challenge. Officers will continue to support staff members in this transition which could bring with it issues of public order and a heightened risk for threatening behaviour and assault. Higher level multi-agency meetings have taken place to discuss plans for the May bank holiday and summer periods.
Multi-agency initiatives have taken place in West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire which focus on passenger interventions and combatting non-essential travel. BTP deployed OSU officers, dog officers and officers on train through Operation Red Cedar to tackle non-compliance. In Glasgow in particular, this has proven to be a successful method and has fostered a greater relationship with a host of emergency and support services in the area. This was deemed a successful initiative and therefore replicated in the West End of the city to combat similar issues.
Safeguarding demand has remained constant throughout the pandemic. The economic impact and mental health impact of COVID, resulting from job loss and prolonged isolation for some, can be predicted to lead to an increase in safeguarding concerns.
With the additional impact of COVID infections and isolation periods, resourcing will continue to be a challenge with demand needing to be reviewed constantly to ensure resources are directed effectively and BTP deliver a policing response which provides value for money.

Crime Overview

End of year figures for Scotland indicate that a total of 1,255 crimes were recorded between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. The pandemic has had a severe impact on rail travel over the past year and on recorded crime as a result and this is evident in the 29% decrease (-525) in crime (compared with 2019-20). Figures from the Office of Rail and Road indicate that there was a total of 4.95 million passenger journeys recorded with ScotRail in Q3 and this was 18% of the 2019-2020 figure for Q3 (Q4 figures are due to be published later this month). Full end of year crime totals and comparisons with previous year have been included at the end of this report (please see Appendix).

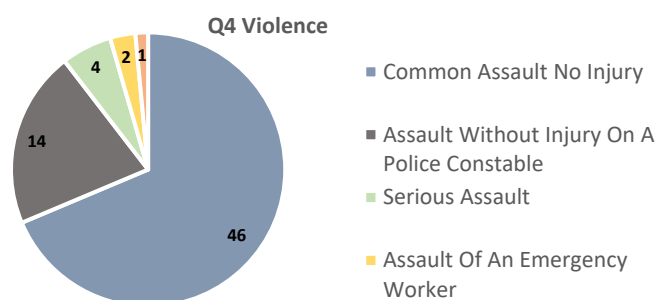
Low numbers of crime were recorded in January and February following Lockdown. In Q4, there was a total of 293 crimes recorded and 40% of these (117) were in March. Overall, there was a 29% decrease (-120) from Q3 (413). The top recording crime groups in Q4 were Violence (67), Criminal Damage (55) and Drugs (52). The line graph below indicates the upward trend in February – March (+30%, +27).



This increase occurred before any restrictions were lifted in Scotland and it is expected that there will be a significant rise across many areas of criminality as more areas of the economy open back up. This is especially the case regarding crimes of dishonesty that are closely linked to footfall, such as Theft Passenger Property, Theft Shoplifting and Pedal Cycle Theft. As well as an escalation to ‘normal’ crime levels, the unique circumstances of the past year are likely to bring distinct challenges in the next phase. For example, the exuberance of new freedoms will likely lead to alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and violence.

The top recording crime groups in Q4 were Violence (67), Criminal Damage (55) and Drugs (52). All three of these had lower levels recorded in January and February and saw increases in March.

Violence Against the Person was the highest recording category throughout 2020-21 and accounted for 22% of all crime for the year.



There was a 72% increase in violent crime from February into March (+15) and while most of these were *Common Assault with No Injury* (46 in Q4, 203 for year), there was a slight increase in staff victims (14 in Q4, 51 for year). Assaults on police officers were up 34% (12 crimes) compared with 2019-20 and were 21% of violence in Q4. Data indicates that, in many ways, the same pre-COVID patterns in relation to time, date and location exist for violent crime, albeit in a greatly reduced scale and so it is expected that violence could increase beyond normal levels in the summer months with return of night time economy.

The other high recording crime in Q4, Criminal Damage, is closely linked to the ongoing issues of youth ASB that have previously been mentioned. For 2020-21 there were a total of 196 crimes recorded and most of these were incidents of Vandalism and damage to building works within station environments. Stations in the Glasgow sector were most affected and in Q4, 42% (23) of crimes occurred at Glasgow locations.

The issue of youth ASB is multi-faceted and has led and continues to have potential for development into higher harm incidents. Youths have continued to use the network as a meeting place, travelling short distances and loitering in groups at stations – wifi availability has proved to be a main draw for this activity. Although incidents of both ASB and criminal damage were slightly lower in Q4 than in Q3 because of lockdown, there was a marked increase in March and it is of note that secondary pupils returned to school mid-month, on 12th March. Positive results in targeting problem areas have come following BTP activity and inter-operability with local police. BTP have worked closely with Police Scotland to identify local crime trends, target key locations and resource these areas for maximum effect.

On-train revenue collection is due to be phased back from 26th April, with full collection in place from 17th May. This could see reduction in instances of large groups travelling without paying and may shift what has become an embedded status quo during the pandemic. It is anticipated that there could be a rise in public order, threatening behaviour or violence as revenue collection recommences. BTP have positive relationships with ScotRail Station Managers and run joint operations to prevent non-essential travel and support revenue collection and this will continue in this next phase.

There were 177 drug crimes recorded for 2020-21 (+55%, +73 crimes from PY). As in previous quarters, the high amount of crimes in this category is a direct result of police activity. Drug crime peaked in February 2021 (23) and in August 2020 (20) and these were both periods of intensification in County Lines policing. The detection rate for drug offences at end of year was 91% (161 crimes).

Other areas where D Division saw an increase in 2020-21 (compared with PY) were in Graffiti (+33, 46%) and Weapons (+8, 13%). Graffiti crime was highest in November (15 crimes) and in May (13 crimes) and was lower in the last two quarters of 2020-21. Measures were implemented at key hotspot locations last year to tackle the targeting of trains stabled at depots as deterrent and to aid in detection of offenders. The detection rate for Graffiti in 2020-21 was 17% (18 crimes) and CID continue to work to investigate and identify offenders.

There was a total of 70 weapon offences recorded for 2020-21. Further detail around this crime group is provided in the section below.

Serious Violence

Serious violence resulting in injury remains very low on the rail network in Scotland, 0.8% of all crime (12). In Q4, there were 4 counts of serious violence recorded which relate to one incident at Dalmuir Station and a further instance of weapon enabled serious violence classified as Attempted Murder.

On 13th March, a fight broke out on the platform at Hamilton Central Station and moved to the adjacent bus station where a victim sustained stab wounds. Excellent initial actions by attending officers to secure evidence

at the scene and on train followed by diligent work by CID resulted in five persons being arrested and charged with attempted murder. Detection for Serious Violence in 2020-21 was 91% (11).

Of the 70 weapon crimes recorded for Scotland, 41 were classified as *Possession of Offensive Weapon and 29 as Having a Pointed / Bladed Article in Public Place*. Thus, most offences on the network in Scotland relate to possession or carriage of weapon / bladed article rather than weapons used. Most of these weapons were found during a search and so police-generated (detection rate for weapons, 2020-21 -89%).

As previously stated, there is a direct correlation between weapon detections and drug searches. This is most evident in the East sector, where County Lines operations have resulted in a corresponding increase in weapon detections. However, in Glasgow, where the highest proportion of weapon crimes has taken place, more crimes were recorded where a weapon was observed, when a weapon was brandished or used as part of a threat or when directly linked to an offence.

Work continues under BTP *Operation Sentinel* to reduce serious violence and detect and disrupt weapon crime on the network. One example of this is the walk through 'Knife Arch' metal scanner which has been deployed at key locations in line with crime analysis. Inter-operability with Police Scotland has also been beneficial in disrupting violence and weapon crime in Scotland. For example, the Glasgow sector takes part in *Operation Glaciers* - a Gold Group chaired by the Superintendent for Glasgow in Police Scotland. This group consists of several partners across Glasgow, such as the City Council, Bernardos, Street Wise and other youth charities with the strategic objective of reducing violent crime. BTP contributes to this group by working in partnership with colleagues from Police Scotland to take part in joint patrols and disrupt groups intent on violence and to deter the carriage of weapons.

Violence against Staff

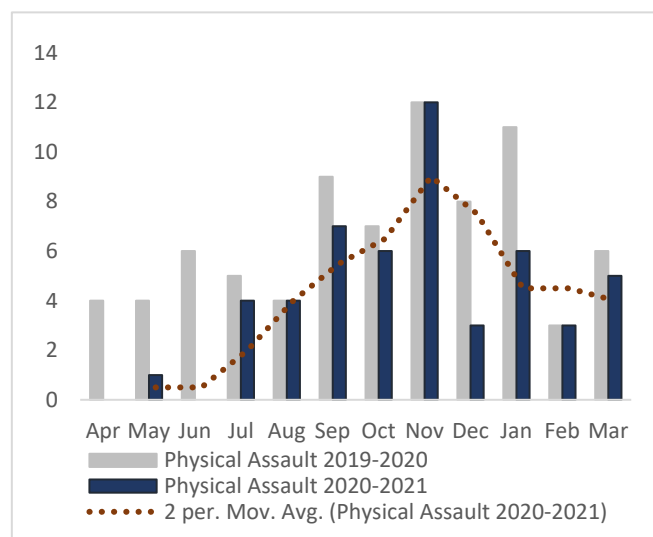
There were 51 physical assaults and 134 verbal crimes against staff members in 2020-21. Overall, physical crime was 35% (-28) lower than in the previous year and verbal crime was 42% lower (-96).

Instances of physical violence against staff fluctuated in prevalence throughout the year and it is of note that in some months, levels approached, or were as high as they were in the equivalent months of 2019-20.

There was an upward trend in violence against staff in late October. At this time there was a significant rise in spittle assaults and general abusive behaviour towards staff by young offenders and in several cases this abuse had links to COVID regulations. BTP have adopted a holistic approach towards tackling youth disorder and this has taken

form of targeted patrols at key routes, locations and detection and of individuals responsible. As a result, youth-related abuse and staff assault and has lessened in the last 3 months.

Moving into the next performance year, BTP aim to prevent physical and verbal assaults on staff members, increase positive outcomes. Performance in this regard is monitored under key indicators such as the number of physical and verbal assaults, the number of positive detections and in maintaining regular communication to provide support and inform victims of crime.



Safeguarding

BTP support and safeguard vulnerable people and those most at risk of harm on the rail network. Mental health and vulnerability are a key operational focus and demand in this area has been a constant over the past year. As well as immediate response to live incidents, dedicated, multi-agency work regularly takes place in respect of vulnerable individuals.

The impact and mental health impact of COVID has meant that there has been a rise in persons presenting as suicidal on the network. This has been the case in the Motherwell area and of note were two incidents within a 24-hour period which involved the same individual. After intervention by police officers, contact was made with partner agencies which led to an Adult Protection Case Conference and this forum was helpful to the individual concerned.

BTP are also liaising with Police Scotland as they work to adopt a trauma-informed approach when interacting with vulnerable people and victims of crime. This involves applying an understanding of the effects that trauma can have on brain processes, such as recall, to initiate a move away from traditional interview methods that can be ineffective and anxiety-provoking for trauma sufferers. This can help the victim or witness feel more comfortable and can maximise chances of obtaining useful information from their accounts for use in the police process.

There was a notable increase in County Lines policing in 2020-2021 and it has been previously discussed that targeting this type of activity, which directly impacts vulnerable groups in Scotland, has now been fully embedded into routine policing for BTP. The County Lines Task Force funding has been extended for 2021-22, with a slight uplift to create an additional team. Whilst this funding is from the Home Office and relates specifically to England and Wales, there continues to be opportunities to utilise this resource and some funding for County Lines which originate in England and operate into Scotland. There are continued links between County Lines and Human Trafficking primarily in England and Wales, it is now evident to a lesser extent in Scotland.

Fatalities

There was a 58% reduction in minutes of disruption from fatality incidents in 2020-21. The average time for line handback for fatalities (non-suspicious and unexplained incidents) overall in 2020-21 was 106 minutes and 99 minutes for non-suspicious incidents. The average handback time for non-suspicious incidents in 2019-20 was 101 minutes.

Fatality locations are closely monitored to identify any repeat areas or hotspots. There was a recent fatality at Broughty Ferry in December – a previous hot spot location and BTP have liaised with both the NHS and local Police suicide intervention hub to review previous measures in attempts to prevent the location becoming a hot spot again.

With individuals struggling financially, struggling with death and all aspects of COVID, the continued impact is likely to bring further challenges for individuals, families and communities and it is assessed we could experience an increase in vulnerable persons coming to BTPs attention. BTP continue to engage with the Samaritans and Network Rail on fatalities through meetings held every 4 weeks.

Disruption and Trespass

Overall disruption incidents are down 21% with trespass incidents the only category experiencing an increase of 4% (+27 incidents).

Category	Incidents				Lost Minutes			
	Previous YTD	Current YTD	Difference	% Difference	Previous YTD	Current YTD	Difference	% Difference
Cable Theft	3	0	-3	-100.0%	849	0	849	-100.0%
Disorder/ Drunks	913	592	-321	-35.0%	16,080	7,935	8,145	-50.7%
Fatalities	30	30	0	0%	16,286	6,823	9,463	-58.1%
Level Crossing	157	121	-36	-23.0%	3,161	2,291	870	-27.5%
Trespass	741	768	27	+3.6%	30,724	24,344	6,380	-20.8%
Vandalism / Theft	238	176	-62	-26.0%	5,302	3,497	1,805	-34.0%
TOTAL	2,082	1,687	-395	-19.0%	72,402	27,512	27,512	38.0%

In January 2021, a 6-month trial commenced for a dedicated Disruption Unit consisting of a Sergeant and 6 constables. The team are involved in pro-active work, concentrating on 'Red Routes' as outlined in previous industry concerns, as well as emerging locations which come to attention via BTP data, NDFU, SMIS and Truss data. Further locations are identified in regular calls with the industry.

As well as Trespass locations, the team also focus on vulnerable locations where there has been repeat impactive suicide incidents or interventions and PiPP locations. There have been several positive outcomes and interventions conducted by the team within the first 12 weeks. Trespass incidents are again closely linked to the presence of youths at stations and most trespass committed by youths is the crossing of line from platform to platform. The disruption team have identified key trespass locations for this activity and have been deployed to locations where there has been increase in youths congregating. The increase in trespass offences in Motherwell and Dalmeir – and indeed nearly all stations in the West Outer sector - during February was consistent with a general rise of incident reports and recorded crime. The team have been able to disrupt these gatherings.

Joint working with Police Scotland continues in an effort to minimise trespass disruption. Officers have regularly liaised with Police Scotland during joint operations to ensure that information regarding youths trespassing for the purposes of gaining access to local parks and open water areas is shared to further disrupt this activity.

ScotRail have recently commissioned the instalment of analytical cameras at 60 stations across Scotland. These cameras have geo-fence capability which sends a notification to CCTV if triggered. The cameras have further capability to detect loitering persons and this can be used to detect groups engaging in ASB or individuals displaying pre-suicidal behaviour. There is currently one trial camera at Bellgrove Station.

Events and Football

Liaison has taken place between BTP and the industry to ensure adequate plans are in place for the safe queueing of passengers as well as increase of staffing levels at main stations once fans are allowed back in stadiums and large-scale events resume. An International tournament (4 fixtures) is due to be held at Hampden Stadium in June and the Scottish government has proposed 12,000 fans attendance at each fixture (TBC).

Appendix

Crime Group	2019-2020	2020-2021	Solved Crimes	Solve Rate
01A Violence	482	279	200	71%
01B Weapons	62	70	61	87%
02A Sex	60	21	11	52%
03A Criminal Damage	228	196	30	15%
03B Graffiti	72	104	18	17%
04A Line of Route (Serious)	61	50	20	39%
05A Theft of Passenger Property	286	87	10	11%
06A Motor Vehicle	56	34	8	24%
06B Pedal Cycle	85	43	4	9%
07A Robbery	11	4	4	100%
08A Burglary & Theft Railway	118	59	25	41%
08B Theft Cable & Plant	54	49	11	22%
09A Public Order (Serious)	14	12	8	67%
10A Fraud (Serious)	18	14	6	43%
11A Drugs	104	177	161	91%
12A Other (Serious)	69	56	34	60%
Grand Total	1,780	1,255	611	49%