



Argyll & West Dunbartonshire Division

Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee

COWAL, BUTE & HELENSBURGH POLICING PRIORITIES 2023-2026

The priorities for your area are decided by data from our strategic assessment which details threats and risks, and also from feedback from local authorities, partners, and residents in the [Local Policing Survey](#)

- Serious organised crime
- Crimes of theft and dishonesty
- Road safety and road crime
- Violent crime
- Public protection.

Serious & Organised Crime

The Helensburgh & Lomond benefits from a dedicated Pro-active Serious and Organised Crime Team (SOCT). These specialist officers are supported by dedicated intelligence officers in tackling serious and organised crime in our communities.

The work of the SOCT and the continued upturn in detection rates of those involved in the supply of controlled drugs in our communities, is underpinned by the valuable work undertaken by our Local Policing Teams (LPT), providing the local connection to target drug dealing, developing local intelligence and progress concerns identified by members of the community.

We encourage our communities to share concerns and suspicions around drug dealing either by calling 101 or by reporting anonymously via Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

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Acquisitive Crime

Crime Type	5 Year Average	PYTD	YTD	% Change from previous Year
Common Theft	57.6	56	77	+37.5%
Fraud	24.2	35	42	+20%
Housebreaking (Domestic)	13.4%	9	10	+11.1%
Theft shoplifting	33.4	39	36	-7.7%

To address the increase in domestic housebreakings, officers have shared material from our “After Dark” campaign on social media, this addressed general home security providing advice and guidance. Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) handed out over 500 leaflets in our local communities which relate to protecting homes and property. Local and Road Policing Officers have increased vehicle checks and operations to disrupt those involved in vehicle crime.

Call Blockers are being installed at addresses throughout the authority to prevent scam calls, figures show system is now blocking 95% of scam calls through the requirement for genuine callers to press a particular number on their keypad to be connected which the automated scam calls cannot circumvent.

Looking forward, a Helensburgh town centre-based Community Policing Unit is being established to counter the rise in acquisitive crime.

Road Safety & Road Crime

The Road Policing Unit continues to deploy marked and unmarked patrols throughout Argyll and Bute in an effort to improve road user behaviour and deter criminality. One of the effects of this is the increase in detections for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which has increased by 48.5% in comparison with the 5 years average.

Police Scotland’s annual festive drink and drug driving campaign took place from 1 December 2023 to 2 January 2024. The total number of roadside tests carried out by police officers increased by 21 per cent compared to the previous year. There were 3,219 breath tests (2,568 in 2022) and 481 drug wipes (481 in 2022). Scotland-wide, detected offences increased, from 722 in 2022 to 831 in 2023. The Preventions & Partnerships Unit are currently arranging a series of road safety events commencing in Helensburgh. The events will include input and advice from Police Scotland and also the opportunity for drivers to take a drive with a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) sitting alongside who will provide the driver with advice and guidance relating to the driver’s

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driving standards. It is part of the 'I Am Road Smart' campaign which has proved to be very effective across the country.

Violent Crime

Violent crime continues to be closely monitored and reviewed with investigations being resourced across Local Policing Teams and the Criminal Investigation Department. Each crime is subject of daily review and scrutiny and thereafter allocated to the most appropriate department to progress to assist in identification of repeat victims, offenders and locations. Any emerging issues and risks are shared and appropriate actions identified

A series of pro-active patrols were undertaken as part of a joint initiative involving Police Scotland, Local Authority ASB officers and Housing Officers to address an increase in violence related calls within the Helensburgh area. This multi-agency approach proved very successful and resulted in a decrease in such calls which directly had a positive impact on the wider community.

Crime Type	5 Year Average	PYTD	YTD	% Change previous Year
Minor Assault	120.6	139	146	+5%
Attempt Murder	0.2	1	0	-100%
Serious Assault	7.8	8	16	+100%
Murder	0.4	0	0	
Robbery	1.6	0	3	

Public Protection

16 Days Against Gender Based Violence Campaign

Between 25th November and 10th December, officers supported the 16 Days Against Gender Based Violence Campaign. The theme for 2023 was 'Imagine a Scotland without Gender Based Violence'. During the campaign period Police Scotland as part of the wider Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership in Argyll and Bute heavily promoted support networks for all affected by gender based violence as well as the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland (DSDAS). DSDAS aims to prevent domestic abuse by giving people the right to ask about the background of their partner. It also (anonymously) allows concerned members of the public, such as relatives or friends, the right to ask about someone's partner if they are concerned that person has been abusive in the past. DSDAS enables potential victims to make the choice on whether to remain in a relationship, and working with partners, provide them with support to assist them in their decision. The campaign also involved some local pledges by prominent male roles models in our community showing positive messages about what gender based violence means to them and what they can do to make a positive difference.

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Fraud Prevention

Frauds and scams continue to be a focus as offences are still being reported on a regular basis and we would welcome invites from any community groups or organisations in the Helensburgh and Lomond area after some successful inputs at Grey Matters Active Ageing, Centre 81, Helensburgh and Lomond Carers and Garelochhead Station Trust. Currently, officers are making use of a free call blocker initiative being run by 'Friends Against Scams' who are a National Trading Standards organisation. Any devices requested are being sought through this scheme which means there is no local funding is required at this time. The most updated figures from trueCall who provide these devices is that we now have 262 call blockers installed in Argyll and Bute to protect older and vulnerable people from nuisance and scam phone calls. So far 86,504 calls have been blocked, and trueCall estimate that 141 scams have been prevented. It is estimated that over the 4 year life of these units they will have blocked 207,370 nuisance calls (of which 57,149 will have been scam phone calls), prevented 337 scams, saved vulnerable households £995,357, led to a reduction of £924,550 in NHS, social care & police costs, and an increase in wellbeing & quality of life valued at £1,072,235 - total benefits of £2,992,142. The financial benefits of £1,919,907 are 28 times the project costs of £67,858.

Out and About

Partnership and Prevention officers provided personal safety inputs to Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service (LAAS) staff as well as information on county lines drug dealing methods and risks. Officers also attended the Welcome Day for Ukrainian resettlers in Helensburgh to ensure barriers were broken down between police and new members of our community and that personal safety advice as well as Scottish legislation was passed over. Retail premises are also being offered free crime prevention security surveys following recent reports of shoplifting. 3 of these crime prevention surveys have taken place in the Helensburgh area.

Divisional Recognition Awards 2023

The Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Divisional Awards 2023 took place in Oban this year to recognise the outstanding work that our officers, staff and partners do in the communities. The awards included Probationer of the Year, Special Recognition, Partnership, Outstanding Bravery, Unsung Hero, Commander's Award, Above and Beyond and Team of the Year. The Partnership Award was presented to Jim Bowles, National Observer for the Institute of Advanced Motorists. Jim acts as a volunteer in his role to promote road safety and was vital in his role during the Helensburgh Road Safety event earlier this year. The runner up for the Partnership Award was Sheena McLean from Argyll and Bute Council. Sheena was nominated for her unmatched knowledge of Anti-Social Behaviour legislation.

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Useful Links/Contacts

- **Argyll and Bute Community Directory** - <https://abcd.scot/> including warm spaces information
- **Crimestoppers** – [Crimestoppers in Scotland | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/)
[0800 555 111](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/)
- **Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime** – www.scottishparc.co.uk
- **Women's Aid** - [Home - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/)
- **Citizens Advice** – 0808 164 6000
- **Argyll and Bute Council Trading Standards** – 01546 605 519
- **Argyll and Bute Council** – <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/my-council/how-contact-us>
- **Transport Scotland** – road related incidents and road closures - <https://www.traffic.gov.scot/traffic-information/incidents>
- **Scottish Water** - <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Help-and-Resources/Contact-Us>
[0800 0778 778](https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Help-and-Resources/Contact-Us)
- **NHS24 (including mental health support)** – 111 or <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

Follow us on Social Media and help share local appeals and education messages

- Facebook - Police Scotland Argyll and West Dunbartonshire
- X (formerly Twitter) – PSOSArgyllBute and PSOS ArgWestDunb

Sign up to Neighbourhood Watch to receive local alerts and bulletins for your community area - <https://neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/#0>

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Have your say on your local policing priorities - <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/your-police-2023-2024/>

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