

NORTHERN IRELAND

APPROPRIATE ADULT SCHEME

**BEEN ARRESTED?
IN A POLICE STATION?
FRIGHTENED,
CONFUSED, ALONE?**

**IF YOU ARE A YOUNG PERSON
UNDER 18 OR MENTALLY
VULNERABLE PERSON WHO
WILL NOT FACE THIS ALONE,
AN APPROPRIATE ADULT CAN
BE THERE WITH ADVICE,
SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE.**

APPROPRIATE ADULTS

**ARE PEOPLE TRAINED TO HELP
YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS
AND WHAT HAPPENS IN A
POLICE STATION, TO BE THERE
WHEN POLICE QUESTION YOU
AND TO ASSIST YOU THROUGH
THE PROCESS.**



Annual Report 2019-2020

To the Department of Justice, the Northern Ireland Appropriate Adult Scheme (NIAAS)
Delivered by MindWise



Introduction

The Department of Justice is accountable for ensuring the effective provision of the Northern Ireland Appropriate Adult Scheme (NIAAS). The Northern Ireland Appropriate Adult Scheme is managed by MindWise who are responsible for delivery of the service.

Reporting

The statistical information is drawn from a data base which provides an insight into trends and patterns of service delivery. Records of the NIAAS are retained for inspection and audit purposes. This report is in respect of the period 1st December 2019 – 30th November 2020.

MindWise

MindWise is a membership charity which supports those affected by severe mental illness and other mental health difficulties and promotes early intervention.

Our Mission:

To transform lives and develop new visions for mental health.

Our Values

Underpin everything we do in supporting people affected by severe mental health illness and mental health difficulties, they are:

- Passion
- Respect
- Empathy
- Togetherness

NIAAS Manager's Introduction

2020 Service Delivery and Covid 19

The Coronavirus Covid 19 made this year unlike any other as staff delivered a 24/7 service across 16 venues during the pandemic. The challenge for Management was that of keeping staff safe from infection by ensuring they took all appropriate safety measures whilst still meeting service delivery demands.

The continued service delivery within Musgrave Street Covid Custody Suite, and other suites across the PSNI estate not knowing if the detainee was or was not infected is testament to the professionalism of our team. I place on record my immense pride in our team for their commitment throughout this most difficult period.

Confidentiality prevents this report from including specific challenges and case complexities; neither can it reveal how particular vulnerable people were navigated through a series of processes that were intimidating and alien to them.

Our support staff ensure that young people and vulnerable adults in custody who may be facing a mental crisis are supported and assisted to understand what is happening to them and why, and to assist them to make informed choices when helping police with their enquires. They deliver this support in a compassionate and caring manner to the highest of standards, focusing on the quality service provided irrespective of public holidays and unsocial hours.

We acknowledge the professionalism of the PSNI custody staff, and we have found them to be courteous and compassionate towards the people we are called upon to support. I wish to acknowledge those officers who take the time to feedback on our service I know the NIAAS team appreciate those officers who at the close of a difficult case record a positive comment about the Appropriate Adults involvement in the case, and some of those comments are reflected within this report.

Stanley Booth MBE
Manager NIAAS

Our 2019-2020 Report

The NIAAS service was delivered throughout Northern Ireland 365 days of the year between 08.00 hours and 23.00 hours, with an out of hour's call out facility between 23.00 hours and 08.00 hours when circumstances necessitated attendance. The 'out of hours' call out service was utilised on 222 occasions, averaging 4.2 calls per week, which is a reduction of 91 occasions from last year's report averaging 6 calls per week.

During this reporting year the NIAAS staff team responded to 3,556 calls to attend PSNI stations. This was 215 lower than last year's attendance, however we identified that dip occurred in Q2 and was directly related to the lockdown period announced by the NI assembly.

Month	Quarter	
Dec	316	Q1 980
Jan	331	
Feb	333	
Mar	209	Q2 698
Apr	219	
May	270	
Jun	323	Q3 962
Jul	332	
Aug	307	
Sep	303	Q4 916
Oct	309	
Nov	304	
Total	3,556	3,556

Risk Management

Strategies to minimise risks are outlined within the NIAAS Risk Management Plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated by the NIAAS Manager who is responsible for all aspects of risk analysis and is supported by the MindWise Senior Management Team. The Scheme is compliant with the DOJ security framework, reporting regularly against Key Performance Indicators, relating to Governance, Health and Safety and ICT. These form part of specific performance indicators across a range of issues, such as service delivery, health and safety, ICT, risk management and finance. The CEO of MindWise, upon being satisfied the service is meeting the governance directives, provides assurance statements of compliance with HMG standards and DOJ security framework contractual standards.

We provide quarterly reports to our governance board representatives as part of our reporting process. All risks (including information and IT security risks) are assigned an owner. Our governance body are advised that a copy of the MindWise Risk Register is available for viewing on request. Travelling to and from police stations requires both route planning, and the use of 'People Safe' which is a lone working support and monitoring system which played a role in staff safety when they become available to attend at another PSNI station.

This year we saw risk of a different kind, namely around infection control and PPE provision. The PSNI were proactive in providing suitable



PPE provision for both the high risk Covid suite where detainees were confirmed as positive, and non Covid suites where the appropriate adult does not know if the detainee is infected or not.

The role of the Appropriate Adult

The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 Codes of Practice require that a parent or legal guardian be always the first to be contacted. On occasions a Trust may be a legal guardian when a care order exists, or the child is a looked after child (LAC), meaning the Trust is the corporate parent under the Children (NI) Order 1995.

When the PSNI have difficulty contacting a parent or family member, to perform the role of Appropriate Adult they turn to our scheme. Our Appropriate Adults ensure that Police adhere to the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 (PACE) and the PACE codes of practice.

This is a complex role which demands and encompasses an understanding of the rights of the detained person as well as a clear understanding of the Appropriate Adult role and its boundaries. Good interpersonal and communication skills, being conversant with police procedures and fully appreciating the various mental health conditions that can impact upon a person's vulnerability are all important skills necessary to carry out this role.

The Appropriate Adult has specific rights to ensure they can fulfil their role, examples which include:

- A. To inspect the custody record of the detained person upon arrival at the police station, and at any time during their detention.
- B. To intervene in an interview if it is necessary in the interests of the detained person to facilitate effective communication with the police.
- C. To request a break in any interview for the detained person to seek legal advice or consult with the detained person (particularly if the interview is a lengthy one, or if the detained person is distressed or ill).

Covid Impact: In conducting the Appropriate Adult this year we saw routine procedures being disrupted with a range of measures:

- Remote Legal Advice
- None signing NICHE custody records
- Doors left open for air circulation
- Interview room screening
- Distanced engagement with detainee where possible
- Mask wearing and sanitising
- Full PPE covers, gloves, goggles, mask
- Staff self-isolating
- Frequent staff ROTA management

Safeguarding, Children and Vulnerable Adults

MindWise have a clear safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures, as well as Child and Adult Safeguarding Champions within the organisation. Our staff team are trained to be alive to safeguarding issues regarding children and vulnerable adults and to report any concerns. In this reporting period staff identified two safeguarding issue that were passed to PSNI for investigation.

Looked after Children (LAC)

Following discussions with PSNI custody management and the delivery of Appropriate Adult training to Trust staff, the trust engage with a looked after children and NIAAS involvement is with a looked after child is quite rare.

Throughout the year staff encountered safeguarding issues on 10 occasions, all of which were discussed with PSNI Custody Sergeant.

Periods spent within PSNI stations

PSNI processes and procedures within police custody are identical however the cases are not the same and the circumstances of a case may be unique. It is important for our staff to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of our service users through these cases and respond appropriately to their mental condition as they move through a difficult process.

An array of procedures may occur during the detention period which impact on the

length of time an Appropriate Adult may be inside a police station. We may be required to wait for the outcome of a detainee's medical examination, or guide a detainee through identification procedures, fingerprinting, DNA sampling, and not least the interview. These and other aspects of the investigation can all impact on the total length of time an Appropriate Adult attends a police station, and when they become free to attend at another PSNI station.

Length of cases

Within PACE, a person may be detained by police for a maximum of 96 hours, occasionally in the most serious of cases we are called upon to support a person throughout the full detention period.

Many cases are straight forward and take very little time and others are complex and take all day, and occasionally the next day. Our staff have become skilled and carrying several brief cases at the same time moving in and out of cases to speed processes along. The average period staff spend engaged with a case in a police station has in recent years been around 180 minutes (3 hours per case). This year we see a reduction in this time frame to 122 minutes (2 hours 2 minutes per case).

This has occurred due to an accumulation of reasons, not least the impact of Covid 19 as our staff worked with PSNI to create speedy turnaround times to minimise our client and officer contact time. Alongside this we see solicitors attending via Skype and providing telephone consultations, and we have an onsite presence at Musgrave Street which housed the Covid suite which was one of only two stations open when other stations were closed, all these collectively reduced the case involvement time.

Voluntary Interviews

A voluntary attendee can appear at a station with their solicitor when requested by police to do so, and interviews can be conducted on a voluntary basis. These enquiries are usually short but occasionally they can last for days, with people returning each day to be interviewed until matters are cleared to the satisfaction of the investigators.

Arrival times

This year we responded to 3,556 calls, these calls are divided between planned calls and unplanned calls.

Planned / Unplanned attendances

These are calls to attend a police station however immediate arrival is not necessary, this is because a particular activity must occur before an interview can take place. For example, the detained person must be examined by a Forensic Medical Officer (Doctor) or Nurse and they cannot be interviewed until they are sufficiently sober, or the detainees Solicitor is present which may be delayed if they are court or travelling from a distance.

There are a variety of legitimate reasons why an interview may not proceed immediately upon a person’s detention and we are required to ensure our availability meets the police requirements. Custody Sergeants in conjunction with investigators routinely arrange for the Appropriate Adult to arrive at the custody suite at a given time which often ties in with the arrival of the Solicitor as part of the efficient running of the custody process,

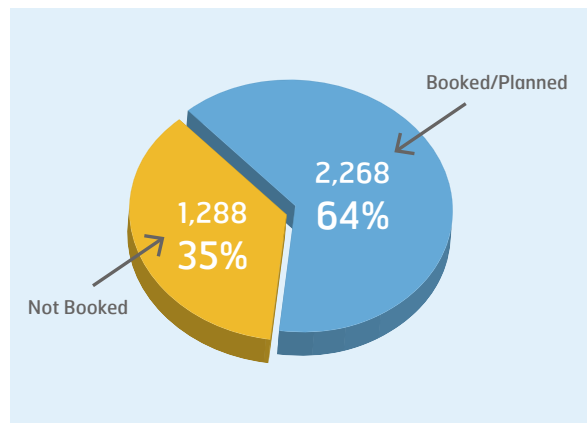
and the Appropriate Adult must be able to respond to a fluid situation where for several reasons the timings may change, such as the detainee being taken ill.

We may also be requested to delay our attendance until a specific time. An overnight call at 3 am may request an Appropriate Adult for 9 am to ensure the detained person has appropriate rest before questioning. Planned calls can also be for future dates, when people are granted police bail to return in the future, or forensic evidence may not be available for many months, therefore the scheme ensures there is an Appropriate Adult available and in attendance at the given time and place, which facilitates the police to continue their enquiries.

This year 2,268 (64%) of calls fell into the planned category 11% down on last year, this results in a ZERO wait time for police, and greatly helps the scheme achieve excellent arrival statistics. (Table 1)

Scheduled/Planned		
Yes	64%	2,268
No	35%	1,288
Total		3,556

TABLE 1: PLANNED/UNPLANNED ATTENDANCES



Calls which required attendance forthwith created the greatest challenge; we have an online booking system which facilitates officers and custody staff to arrange an Appropriate Adult any time of the day and from any device. This has played a key part in the advance booking system with 64% of calls being planned this year. NIAAS staff is still required to attend at any PSNI custody suite without advance notice, this year these unplanned calls occurred on 1,288 occasions being 36% of all our calls.

Since our online booking system launch in 2018 we have now reached over 1000 on line bookings which has a positive impact on arrival times, and annual phone call cost.

Total arrivals

When both planned arrivals and unplanned arrivals requests to attend are collectively counted NIAAS staff team arrived when they

were expected to arrive in 99% of all requests, this is directly attributed to advance online bookings alongside a responsive call handling system delivered through Answerforce and having staff on site at Musgrave street PSNI station.

Arrival outside this time can be due to several reasons mainly because the staff are already fully committed in custody suites elsewhere or within the same suite and are unable to proceed to the next station or detainee until the present matter is concluded, or a high volume of calls arrive at the same time which exceed the number of staff available to respond immediately, which mean PSNI wait until the next appropriate adult becomes available.

This year staff sought information from custody staff as to whether a Covid risk assessment had been carried out by PSNI staff before deciding to attend.



The pattern of Appropriate Adult attendance

The NIAAS service delivery is on a 24 hour per day, 365 days per year basis. We attend at PSNI stations as and when required to do so. Whilst the normal service period is between 08.00 hours and 23.00 hours, we can see a pattern of attendance emerge throughout the reporting period.

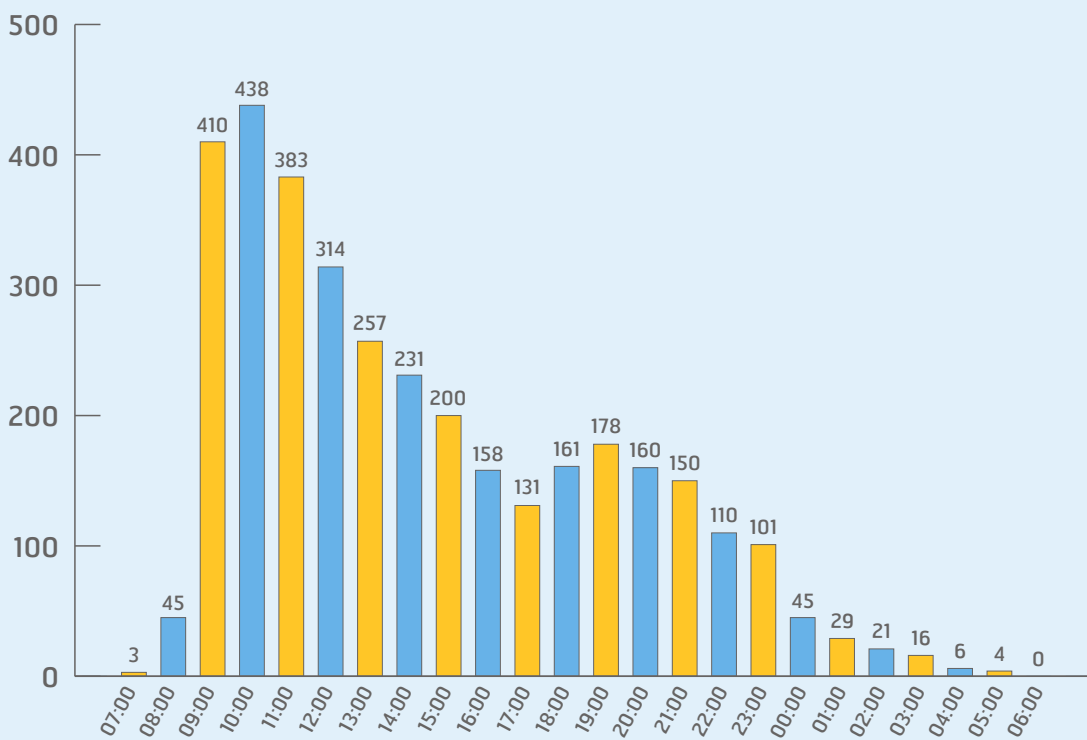
The main attendance period for the NIAAS was the morning period between 08.00 hours and 13.00 hours, with 1847 attendances, which made up 52% of all our attendances with a peak at 10.00 hours which is largely impacted by staff being on site at Musgrave street Monday-Friday 8am-5pm and ready to deal with a matter immediately after the detainee has had breakfast, seen a doctor, met their Solicitor etc. (Table 2)

Overnight attendance

The 'out of hours' call out service was utilised on 222 occasions, averaging 4.2 calls per week. This year we saw the overnight staff being called out after midnight on 121 occasions, to meet specific PSNI requests. This may relate to an interview, or it may be a non-interview procedure, such as the urgent need to obtain forensic samples, to compare with samples found at a crime scene.

The attendance of an Appropriate Adult's after 22.00 or 23.00 hours can take them into early hours of the morning before a matter is concluded, therefore it is not uncommon for staff to arrive at a station at 22.00 and leave at 01.00 or 02.00.

TABLE 2: ATTENDANCE TIME CHART



Comments from PSNI and Detainees

When staff attend at difficult or complex calls, or attend during unsocial hours, or public holidays or late at night, they value positive feedback from custody staff. We capture written comments in our reporting process, and I'm delighted to copy a sample of these comments into this report.



Mentally vulnerable

On arrival at a police custody suite a Custody Sergeant is responsible for identifying people as being mentally vulnerable. He/she communicates with the detainee and forms an opinion as to the person’s condition assisted by a police computer program for booking in detained people. From this the need for an Appropriate Adult is established. An examination of the detained person by a Forensic Medical Officer (FMO) or Health Care Nurse at Musgrave street may also result in the requirement for an Appropriate Adult being established.

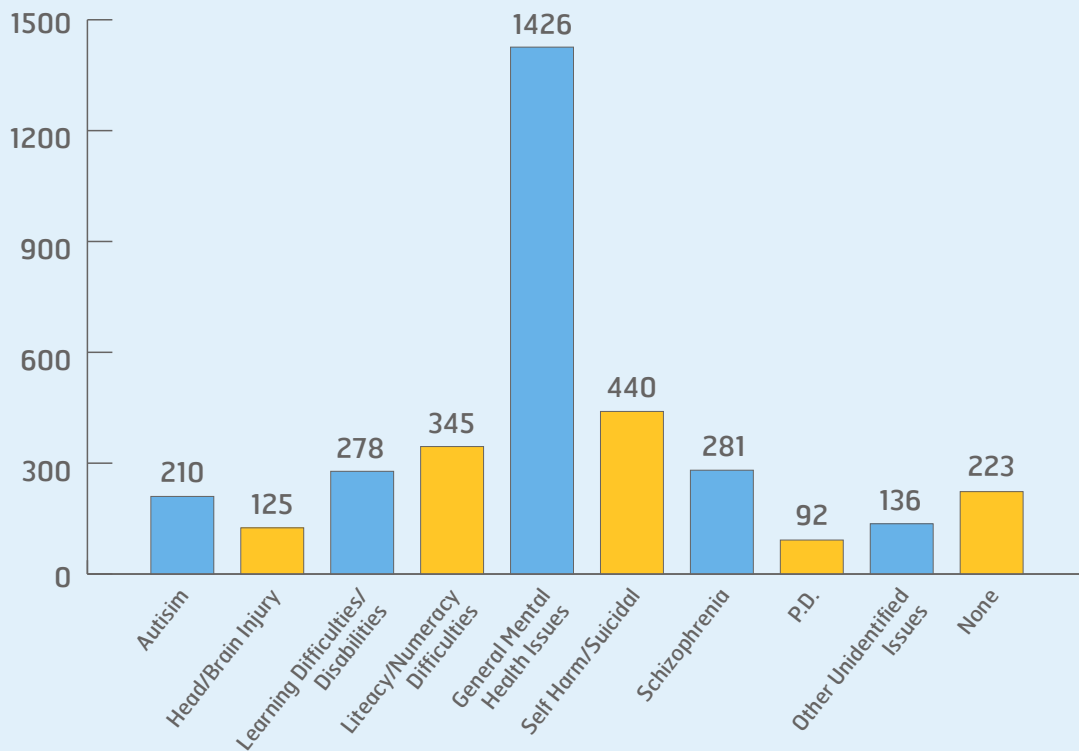
Our engagement with Custody Sergeants training courses and the Custody Duty Officers (CDO) training courses has helped enhance the officers’ understanding of the Appropriate Adult role and mental health issues.

On arrival at a PSNI station our staff identified a range of mental health issues, either from a known diagnosis or from information provided to custody staff by the detainee, or identified by the Forensic Medical Officer, or other professional in the health care field.

In 3,333 (93.7%) of attendances issues were identified or there was an issue but undefined, in only 223 (6.3%) did staff not identify any condition, this is because some young people were vulnerable due to their age only by being under 18 years of age with no other underlying issue.

We supported many young people who were vulnerable because of age 764, but many of these 70.8% had other issues that compounded their vulnerability, which left only 223 that were vulnerable purely by virtue of their age.

TABLE 3: NATURE OF VULNERABILITIES



Vulnerabilities can be listed under specific categories; With our report the term mental health issues are a wide all-embracing term incorporating the most common mental health conditions depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder. We have a specific category of schizophrenia due to engaging with a significant number of people with this diagnosis.

Learning difficulties includes attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The category 'other unidentified issues' apply when we can't place the persons condition in any of the other categories.

None applies to those cases where there are no Mental Health issues existing and we may be attending because a young person is vulnerable purely because of their age and has no mental health issues, or co-existing problem. (Table 3).

Age Range

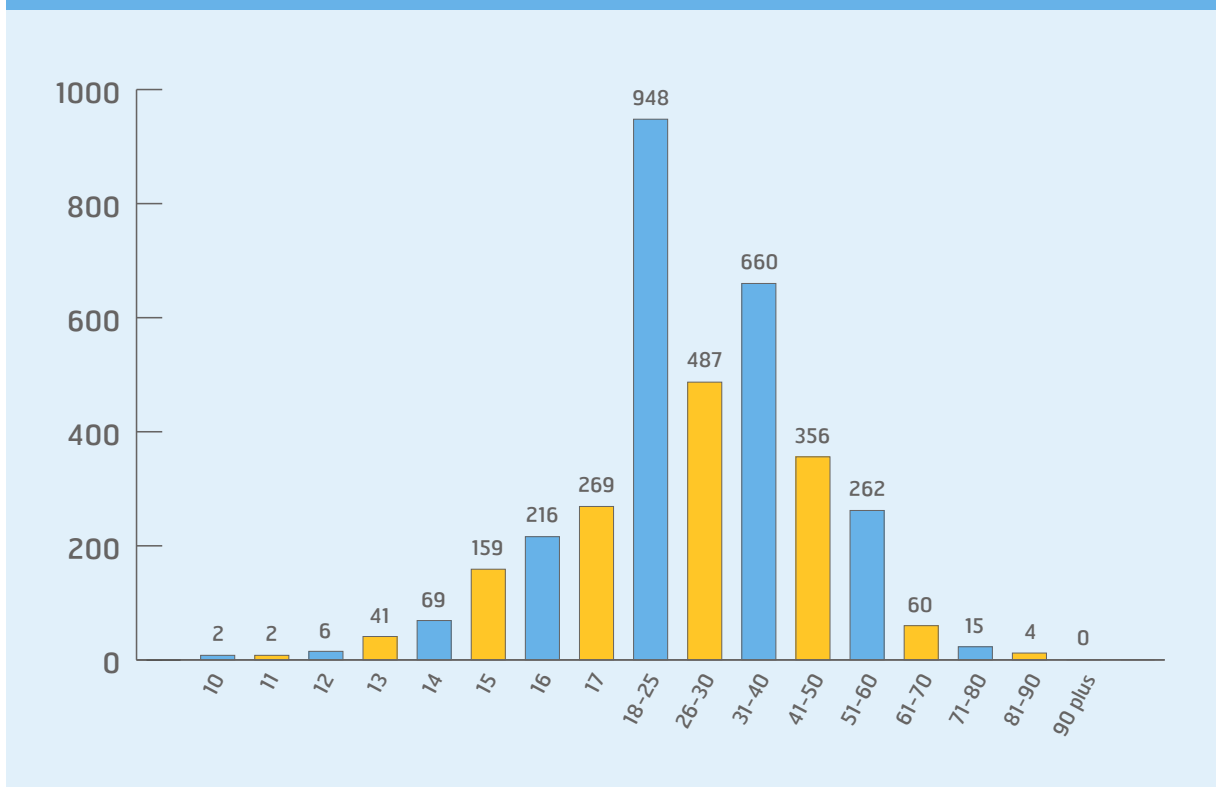
Juveniles: This year we supported 2 x 10 year olds, 2 x 11 year olds, 6 x 12 year olds and 41 x 13 year olds, and 69 young people aged 14 years.

These figures are similar to last except for the 12 year old detainees that dropped from 21 to 6.

The juveniles we supported accounted for 764 (21%) of all our attendances, with the 14-16 year age range within this group accounting for 444 (12%) of all our attendances. The 17 year olds alone accounted for 269 (7%) of all our attendances, during this reporting period.

Adults: Each year we see the 18-25 year old age range accounting for the majority of all our attendances, this cohort accounted for 948 (27%) slightly less than the 29% last year. At

TABLE 4: AGE RANGE

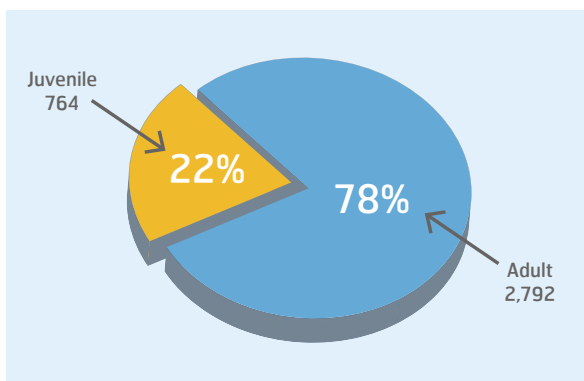


the other end of the age range, we supported people aged between 71 -80 years of age on 15 occasions a 50 % drop from last year, and 4 aged 81-90 years. (Table 4).

Adult / Juvenile ratio

This year we supported 2,792 adults (78%) and 764 juveniles (22%) the percentage of which is similar to the 80% and 20% ratios of last year. There is a steady year on year demand for juvenile support which make up between 1/5 and 1/4 of all attendance each year. This requirement arises when a parent cannot attend a police station due to their circumstances, such as no available transport or they choose not to attend for a variety of personal or domestic reasons, or it may be inappropriate for them to attend such as when they are the complainant or a witness in the case. (Table 5)

TABLE 5: ADULT/JUVENILE RATIO

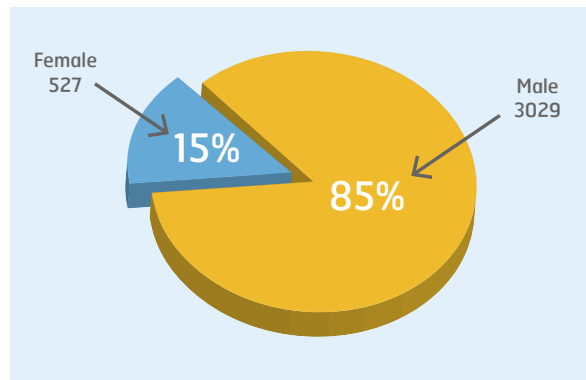


Gender

The gender figures show that out of 3,556 requests for support, 527 (15%) of these requests refer to female detainees, being lower than the 19% of female we supported last year,

and 3,029 (85%) relating to male detainees, slightly higher than then the 81% last year. When this figure is read in conjunction with the age chart, it becomes evident that young men in their late teens and early 20s are a specific group in need of our services (Table 6).

TABLE 6: GENDER



PSNI Station Attendance

The attendance at PSNI stations depends entirely upon police requirements, the NIAAS staff team attends as and when they are requested to attend.

Musgrave Street station as the main holding centre for the greater Belfast City area is by far the busiest station for the scheme. Staff experience daily attendance there and often find that before completion of one requested attendance, another detainee has arrived or is already in custody that is in need of the support of an Appropriate Adult.

We have experienced several Appropriate Adults being present in Musgrave custody suite at the same time, all being engaged in different matters, running concurrently within the suite.

The PSNI have an ongoing refurbishment plan for custody suites which mean they may

be closed for a period. Also many provincial towns may not have an operational custody suite; this can inflate attendance figures in another area whilst providing no figures for that particular area.

An example can be seen in the provincial towns such as Newtownards and Downpatrick, which do not have onsite custody suites. Therefore those detainees taken to Musgrave Street custody suite inflated the figures for that Belfast station, so our attendance figures at PSNI stations should not be seen as a reflection of crime figures for that area, The pattern of NIAAS attendance at stations fluctuates to meet these changes.

Covid Impact on Attendance:

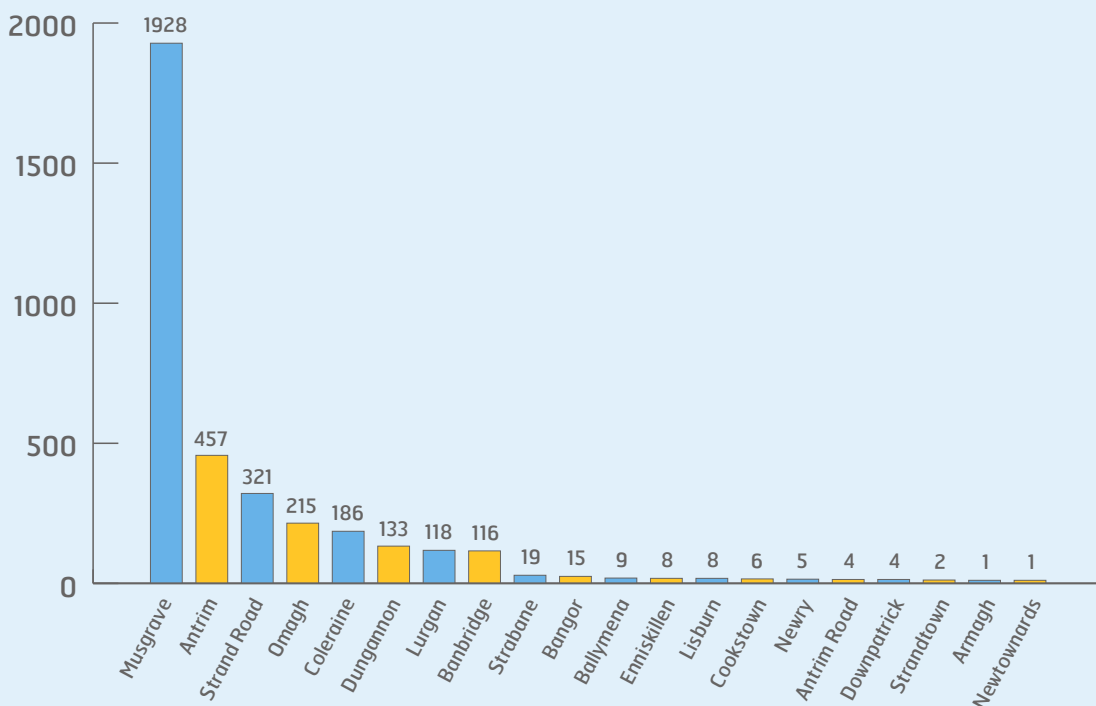
This year in quarter two March-May we experienced exceptional circumstance where all but four custody suites closed. During the early onset of the Covid 19 a UK wide lockdown

from 23rd March 2020, reduced custody attendance to Musgrave Street, Lurgan, Omagh, and Strand Road, with Antrim and Coleraine opening at later dates. Musgrave Street housed the Covid 19 Suite on the upper floor of the custody suite, and our team had to respond to this by wearing a mask whilst attending the ground floor of the suite and full PPE head to toe cover for the upper floor.

Throughout this the NIAAS staff team responded to all request to attend both non Covid and Covid19 suites and no call / request was declined.

We had two occasion when staff raised concerns regarding the detainee’s high temperature in the non Covid custody suite at Musgrave Street and one detainee was moved to the Covid wing as a precaution but was later found not to have Covid 19, the detainee was found to be withdrawing from drug and alcohol abuse.

TABLE 7: STATIONS ATTENDED



By quarter three June-Aug we were attending 16 stations as the PSNI custody estate opened. As more station came online so too did the risk of infection to staff. Bangor became the back-up Covid 19 suite similar to the upper floor of Musgrave Street and our team attended there on six occasions wearing suitable PPE.

We had three occasions during the year when infection was detected by PSNI and we liaised with Senior PSNI staff to confirm that our staff were not linked to the infected cases.

Staff engaged with detainees not knowing if the detainee was in the infection incubation period or not, however we took all reasonable precautions and service delivery continued. (Table 7)

Alcohol and Drugs

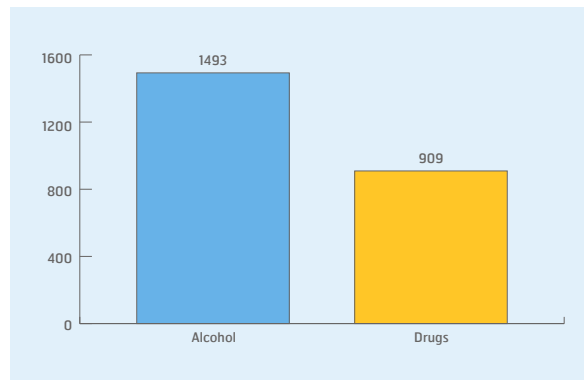
Whilst staff are consulting with a detainee and examining the police custody record, they can discuss a person’s personal difficulties and capture data beyond mental health issues such as the misuse of alcohol and drugs prior to arrest.

Police interviews are not conducted whilst a person is under the influence of a substance; however, many of the offences that police were investigating were related to or resulting from the misuse of drink or drugs. Many detainees including juveniles are frank with staff and acknowledge that drink or drugs play a part in the events that lead to their arrest, and some are agreeable and appreciative of a staff referral to other support such as the ‘Linked-In’ project (LIP) which is a MindWise initiative providing an early-stage intervention approach to post custody support for young people aged 13-24 years old.

This year staff identified alcohol in 1,493 (42%)

and drug use in 909 (25%) these percentages are almost identical to last year’s findings. (Table 8)

TABLE 8: ALCOHOL AND DRUGS



Drugs	
Yes	909
No	2647
Total	3556

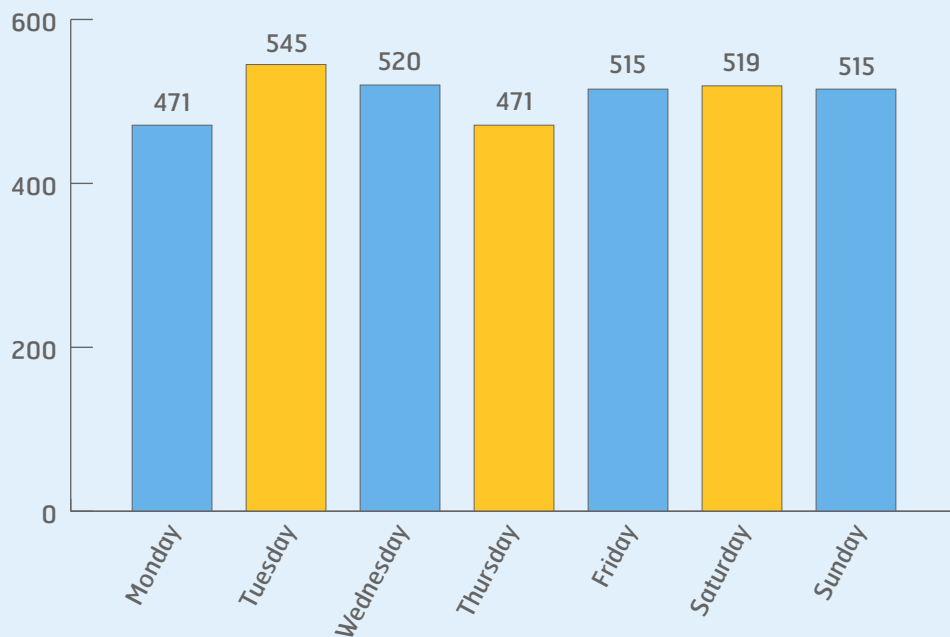
Alcohol	
Yes	1493
No	2063
Total	3556

Days of the week attendance

Throughout the year we saw Tuesday (545 / 15.3%) as the busiest periods. This year we saw Monday (471 / 13.2%) and Thursday (471 / 13.2%) as being less busy and an increase in attendance on Friday (515 / 14.4%) Saturday (519 / 14.5%) and Sundays (515 / 14.4%) which is a change from previous years. We now incorporate a weekend call management process to ensure there is a staff member monitoring call response between 5pm Friday to 9am Monday.

We deliver the service continually seven days per week and whilst particular days may be seen to have a higher volume of calls annually there is still a requirement to maintain sufficient staff availability to meet the day-to-day fluctuations that occur in service demand.

TABLE 9: DAY OF THE WEEK ATTENDANCE



The report does not specifically highlight public holidays such as Christmas and Easter when there can be a dip in call outs however we noted the sharp drop in attendance during the Covid pandemic first lockdown in quarter two of our reporting cycle March-April. (Table 9).

Conclusion

In December 2019 we anticipated attending 3,750 call and we believe that had there not been a worldwide pandemic and the lockdown in quarter two March-April period we would have reached that figure; therefore, we fell short of our target, and attended 3,556 being 215 less than last year’s 3,771.

I am immensely proud of our team that continued delivery throughout this awful year 24/7 365 days with staff attending both the Covid suite wearing PPE and the non Covid suites, which speaks volumes about the calibre of staff we have within our team.

Whilst all people we engaged with needed our support, the PSNI and our staff identified that 3,333 (93.7%) of detainees had a mental health issues that required our support, this figure is 41 higher than last year’s 3,292.

I wish to express my thanks to the DOJ who have been very understanding of the challenge we faced. I also express my thanks to the MindWise Chief Executive, Board of Trustees, and Senior Management Team, for the organisational support we received, and I would particularly like to thank the MindWise administration and financial staff, for their help with our data base reports and financial reports.

I believe that the scheme has shown that it can deliver this service in both normal and exceptional times, thanks to the professionalism of our staff and the managerial team supporting them.

Stanley Booth MBE
Appropriate Adult Scheme Manager

**TRANSFORMING LIVES AND
DEVELOPING NEW VISIONS
FOR MENTAL HEALTH BY
CHALLENGING STIGMA
AND DISCRIMINATION
AND PROVIDING QUALITY
SERVICES AND SUPPORT**



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