Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: MONDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2026

TIME: 2.00PM

AGENDA

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

2. **MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2026**

   To note the minutes of the previous meeting and any actions arising.

3. **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN**

   Presentation attached.

4. **COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS**

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members of the public are invited to attend this meeting online
in an observation capacity only. You can register for the event here:
Meetings & Events | Get involved | Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner

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PUBLIC SCRUTINY BOARD

Notes of the Public Scrutiny Board held on 21 July 2026 at Runcorn Town Hall.

Present:

D Price, Police and Crime Commissioner
M Roberts, Chief Constable

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner
G Southern, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
D Taylor, Chief Executive
A Murphy, Governance Officer

Cheshire Constabulary
M Evans, Deputy Chief Constable
P Woods, Head of Performance & Planning

Members of the public observed the meeting online.

1. Introductions

The Commissioner opened the meeting and emphasised the importance of public scrutiny sessions in providing transparency, accountability, and assurance to the public of Cheshire. The Commissioner outlined that the refreshed Police and Crime Plan builds on the existing plan, taking account of changing policing demands, public feedback, and emerging challenges. He said that the session would examine complaints, use of force, emergency response performance, domestic abuse, sexual offences, neighbourhood policing, and public confidence.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous Public Scrutiny Board held on 29 June 2026 were approved.

3. Quarterly Performance Update against the Police and Crime Plan

The Performance Pack setting out performance against the police and crime plan was made available via the OPCC website.

4. Commissioner's Questions

Slide 34 - Neighbourhood Policing

The Commissioner opened the questions by focusing on the number of PCSOs in Cheshire as slide 34 shows that PCSO numbers are currently at 49.

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Question

What is being done urgently and specifically to increase PCSO numbers, and can residents realistically expect to see these numbers moving back in the right direction?

Answer

The Chief Constable acknowledged the decline in PCSO numbers and explained that recruitment had been constrained by funding considerations and the need to run cost-effective training courses with sufficient candidate numbers.

He said that following a review of financial forecasts and workforce attrition, the Constabulary plans to launch a PCSO recruitment campaign in September 2026. Successful recruits are expected to join the organisation early in 2027, restoring numbers towards the agreed target level.

The Commissioner welcomed the commitment to recruitment and noted that it would provide reassurance to residents concerned about visible neighbourhood policing.

Question

What is the current compliance rate with the requirement to have a named neighbourhood officer and PCSO in every area?

Answer

The Chief Constable confirmed that compliance currently stands at 100%. He said that a monthly monitoring process is in place, overseen by designated officers, to ensure continued compliance despite factors such as sickness, maternity leave, or staff departures.

Question

Are PCSOs receiving the necessary training and support?

Answer

The Chief Constable confirmed that PCSOs operate as integral members of neighbourhood policing teams and receive ongoing support and supervision. He said that dedicated neighbourhood sergeants oversee delivery of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, and further recruitment and training are planned to follow the September recruitment exercise.

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Question

What are the current abstraction levels for neighbourhood policing and how do they compare with targets?

Answer

The Chief Constable reported abstraction rates of:

- April: 12%
- May: 23%
- June: 13%

He explained that the target is to remain at or below 10% and higher abstraction rates were attributed to exceptional operational demand, including record levels of 999 calls, major operations in Crewe, ongoing public protection activity, demonstrations, hot weather, increased night-time economy activity and policing requirements associated with the World Cup. The Chief Constable stated that these factors explain the temporary increase and that the aspiration remains to keep abstractions at or below the target.

Question

What is being done to improve neighbourhood crime outcomes?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that improved outcomes are the result of a whole-force approach, including:

- Outstanding emergency response performance
- Investment in detective capacity
- Improved investigative structures
- Enhanced digital forensics capability
- Strong performance management
- Effective neighbourhood policing activity

The Chief Constable advised that Cheshire currently achieves some of the highest charge rates in the country across numerous offence categories, including burglary, residential burglary, sexual offences, violence offences and stalking and harassment.

Question

What measures are used to assess the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing teams beyond crime outcomes?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that effectiveness is assessed through a combination of crime outcomes, public confidence measures, inspection findings, and external recognition of operational excellence across multiple departments including firearms licensing, vetting, and fleet management. The Constabulary also monitors public confidence through survey data and independent assessments.

Question

Is the revised neighbourhood policing model delivering improved outcomes?

Answer

The Chief Constable clarified that the policing model itself has not changed, only the workforce mix. Evidence of effectiveness includes reductions in key crime categories, improved charge rates, and extensive use of preventative measures such as Community Protection Notices, Domestic Violence Protection Notices, and closure orders.

The Constabulary continues to deliver neighbourhood engagement commitments, including public surgeries, school visits, faith community engagement, and communication through Cheshire Alert.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Question

How will neighbourhood policing manage anti-social behaviour during the summer period?

Answer

The Chief Constable outlined a layered approach involving:

- Strong neighbourhood policing coverage
- Weekly reviews of ASB hotspots
- Local problem-solving plans
- Strategic governance structures
- Flexible deployment of resources in response to weather, school holidays, and local events

Additional resources are deployed to identified hotspots when required, particularly around open water locations and seasonal demand.

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Commissioner

Complaints

Question

Can you explain the current complaints picture and how the Constabulary learns from complaints?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that complaints are not automatically evidence of wrongdoing but are an important source of organisational learning. Complaints are analysed to identify recurring themes and inform improvements in training, supervision, and processes.

Recent themes include service standards, communication, updates provided to victims and expectations regarding police responses. Complaint data is regularly reviewed by local command teams and chief officers, with additional scrutiny from the OPCC, IOPC and community oversight groups.

Question

What does success look like in managing complaints and is there a target?

Answer

The Chief Constable advised that the Constabulary does not seek to use targets to reduce complaint numbers because complaints provide valuable feedback and should be encouraged where concerns exist. Instead, success is measured through:

- Timely handling of complaints
- Quality of investigations
- Identification of learning opportunities
- Implementation of improvements

The Chief Constable stated that complaints will never reduce to zero given the proactive nature of policing and the increased level of enforcement activity undertaken by Cheshire Police.

Use of Force

Question

Does the increase in use of force forms reflect increased force being used or improved recording?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that the increase is primarily due to significantly improved compliance with recording requirements rather than an increase in force being used.

A focused programme led by the Assistant Chief Constable has improved awareness and compliance among officers. The enhanced recording enables better identification of trends and informs training and organisational learning. The Constabulary continues to ensure robust supervision and independent scrutiny through community review panels.

Crime Outcomes

Question

What does "Outcome Brought to Justice" (OBTJ) mean and why is it important?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that OBTJ refers to crimes where the offender has been identified and some form of formal outcome has been achieved. This may include:

- Criminal charges
- Out-of-court disposals
- Restorative justice outcomes
- Other formal sanctions

The measure is important because it demonstrates that offences have been resolved and that victims receive closure.

Question

The Commissioner noted concerns raised by the Out of Court Resolution Panel regarding missed opportunities when applying conditions to offenders. Is the Constabulary working to improve conditions attached to out-of-court resolutions?

Answer

The Chief Constable advised that he was not aware of specific issues but committed to reviewing any evidence provided by the OPCC.

Question

Is the new sentencing legislation having an impact in Cheshire?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that the impact is already becoming visible. Fewer offenders are receiving custodial sentences, including some repeat offenders who previously would have been imprisoned. Emerging impacts include:

- More prolific offenders remaining in the community

- Reduced remand rates
- Increased prison recalls
- Increased breaches of electronic tagging conditions

The Constabulary is gathering evidence locally and contributing to national evidence gathering through the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Emergency Response Performance

Question

What has delivered improvements in Grade 2 response performance?

Answer

The Chief Constable attributed the improvement to:

- Increased staffing in the Force Control Centre
- Improved remuneration helping retain experienced staff
- Enhanced staffing levels
- Better demand analysis and resource deployment
- Strong vulnerability assessment processes
- Effective performance management

He added that HMICFRS has recognised these improvements.

Question

Do call handlers still build rapport while managing demand and reducing waiting times?

Answer

The Chief Constable confirmed that they do and said that training emphasises empathy, active listening, and vulnerability identification. Staff receive ongoing mentoring, quality assurance and immediate feedback where required. The Constabulary is also exploring how AI can assist call handling without reducing service quality.

Question

What incidents typically receive a Grade 3 response?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that Grade 3 incidents are those requiring police attendance but without immediate risk, vulnerability, or evidential urgency. He said that attendance is scheduled according to risk and operational priorities.

Question

Is there any risk attached to delayed attendance for Grade 3 incidents?

Answer

The Chief Constable acknowledged that any delay carries some risk; however, all incidents are subject to risk assessment and ongoing review. Resources are prioritised according to threat, harm and risk, with emergency and priority incidents taking precedence.

Domestic Abuse

Question

Does the reduction in recorded domestic abuse offences reflect a genuine reduction in offending?

Answer

The Chief Constable advised caution when interpreting reductions. He said that while offending may be reducing, maintaining public confidence in reporting remains essential. The Constabulary has significantly increased arrests for domestic abuse, from approximately 22% of incidents in 2020-21 to around 55-60% currently. The Chief Constable believes that consistent positive action is likely having a deterrent effect but warned against drawing premature conclusions.

Question

How is the Constabulary ensuring victims remain supported while improving outcomes?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that victim support and successful outcomes are inseparable. Victims receive safeguarding and support regardless of whether a prosecution proceeds. The Constabulary uses integrated local teams including public protection specialists, detectives, investigators, and neighbourhood officers to provide holistic support and improve outcomes.

Question

How are counter-allegations in domestic abuse cases managed fairly?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that investigations remain evidence-led and open-minded. He said that officers examine:

- Independent evidence
- Previous history
- Digital evidence
- Witness accounts

The objective is to identify the full circumstances and reach an evidence-based conclusion.

Sexual Offences

Question

What types of offences are included within the sexual offences category?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that sexual offences include a broad range of crime types, including:

- Rape
- Sexual assault
- Child sexual exploitation
- Grooming offences
- Indecent exposure

He said that each offence type requires different investigative and preventative approaches.

Question

What preventative activity is being undertaken to reduce sexual offending?

Answer

The Chief Constable highlighted a range of preventative initiatives including:

- School-based consent education
- Night-time economy safeguarding measures
- Ask Angela campaigns
- Staff training for licensed premises
- Operation Vigilant
- Behavioural detection patrols
- Safe refuge facilities
- Safer Streets initiatives
- Robust investigation of indecent exposure offences

Question

Are staff trained in trauma-sensitive practices?

Answer

The Chief Constable confirmed that staff receive training throughout their careers, with additional focus placed on those most likely to engage with victims. Training includes:

- Empathy and active listening techniques
- Vulnerability identification
- Trauma awareness
- Virtual reality-based learning
- Victim-focused workshops

He said that the Constabulary also provides wellbeing support for staff exposed to traumatic incidents.

Hate Crime

Question

How are victims of hate crime supported throughout investigations?

Answer

The Chief Constable explained that every hate crime investigation follows a structured approach, including:

- Risk assessment
- Victim needs assessment
- Safeguarding considerations
- Referrals to specialist support organisations

He said that dedicated hate crime leads exist across the organisation and partnerships with community organisations help provide additional support.

Question

Are improved hate crime outcomes increasing willingness to report?

Answer

The Chief Constable stated that it is difficult to measure definitively, but improved outcomes suggest greater victim confidence in reporting and supporting investigations through the criminal justice process.

Public Confidence

Question

What is the current position regarding public confidence in Cheshire Police?

Answer

The Chief Constable advised that public confidence remains strong and is reflected through positive survey results and inspection findings. The Commissioner noted that many questions regarding public confidence and neighbourhood policing had already been addressed during earlier discussion, particularly concerning PCSO recruitment and neighbourhood visibility.

5. Any Other Business

None reported.

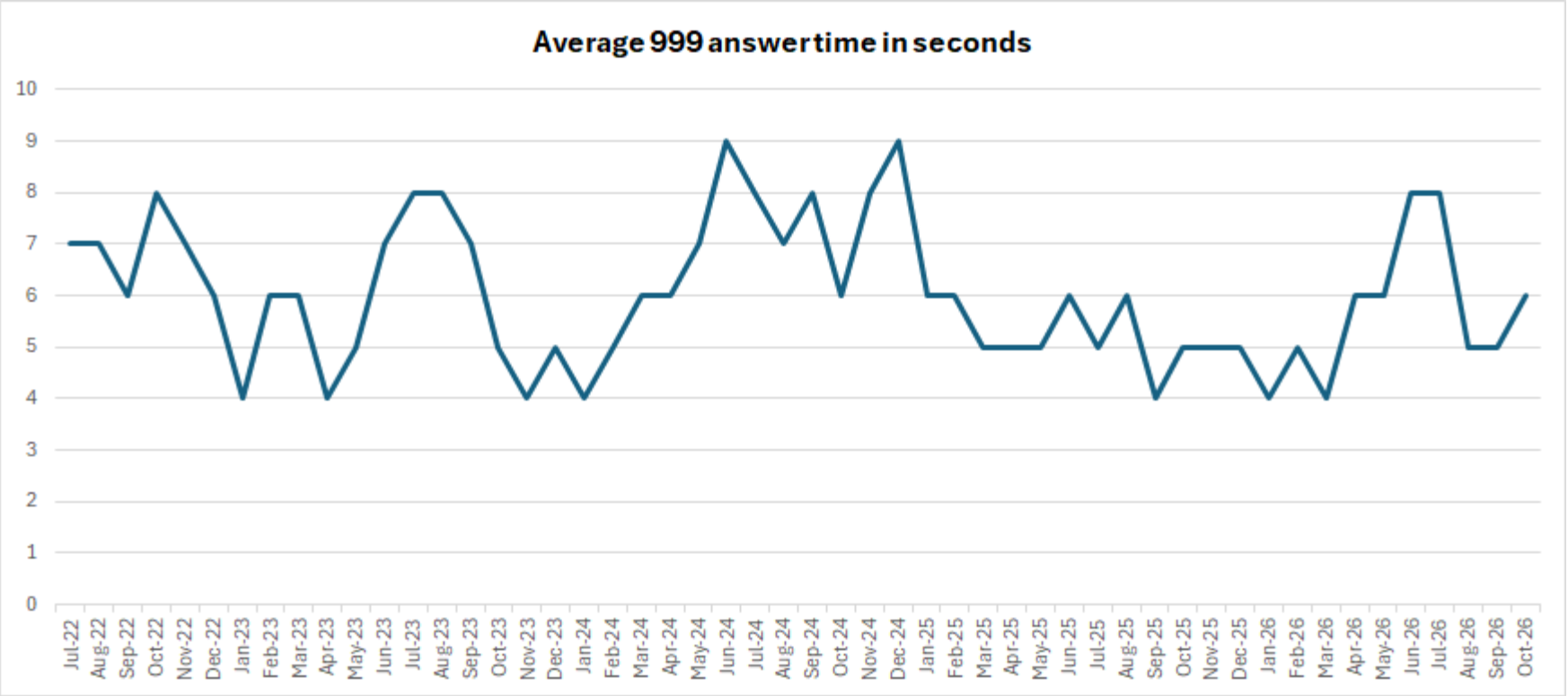
The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable and the Constabulary for their openness and transparency throughout the session, thanked members of the public for attending and formally closed the meeting.

PCC Performance Report

November 2026

Listen to the Public

999 Call Handling

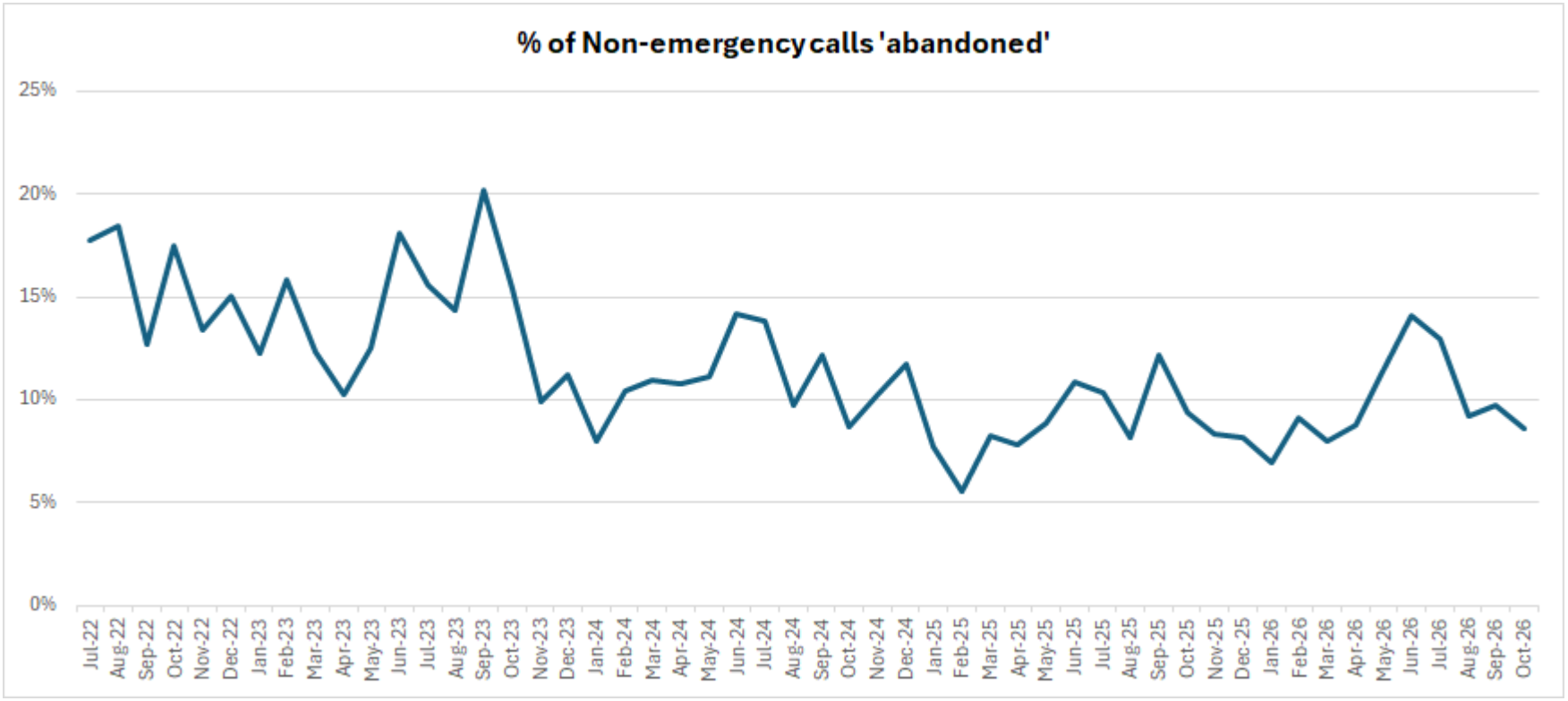


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary received 154,369 emergency (999) calls, a 5% increase on the same period last year.

The average answer time was 6 seconds which is the same as the previous 12 months.

93% of emergency calls in the year ending October 2026 were answered in 10 seconds or less.

Non-Emergency Call Handling



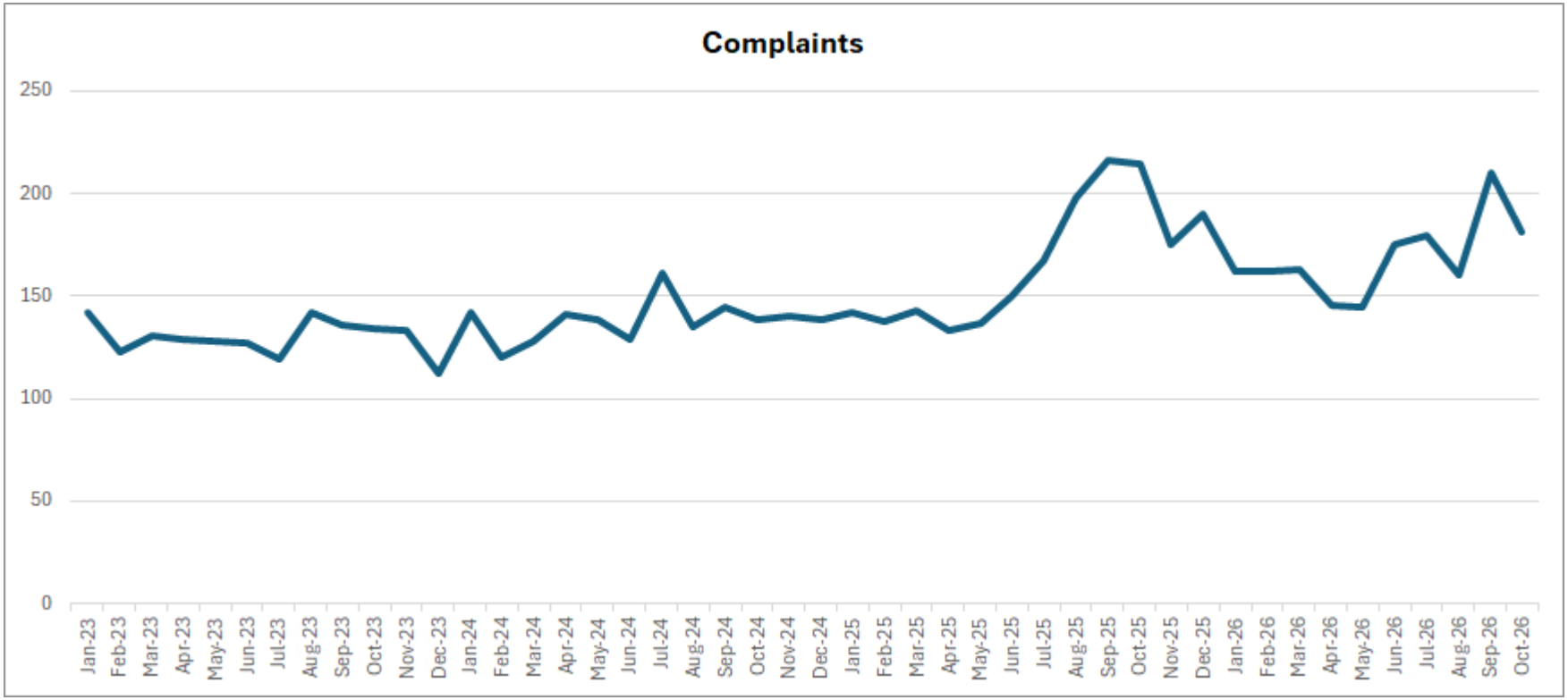
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary received 167,620 non-emergency calls.

The average answer time was 3 minutes and 18 seconds, a slight reduction on the 3 minutes 24 seconds for the previous 12 months.

The abandonment rate for the year ending October 2026 was 9.8% which is a slight increase on the previous 12 months (9.3%).

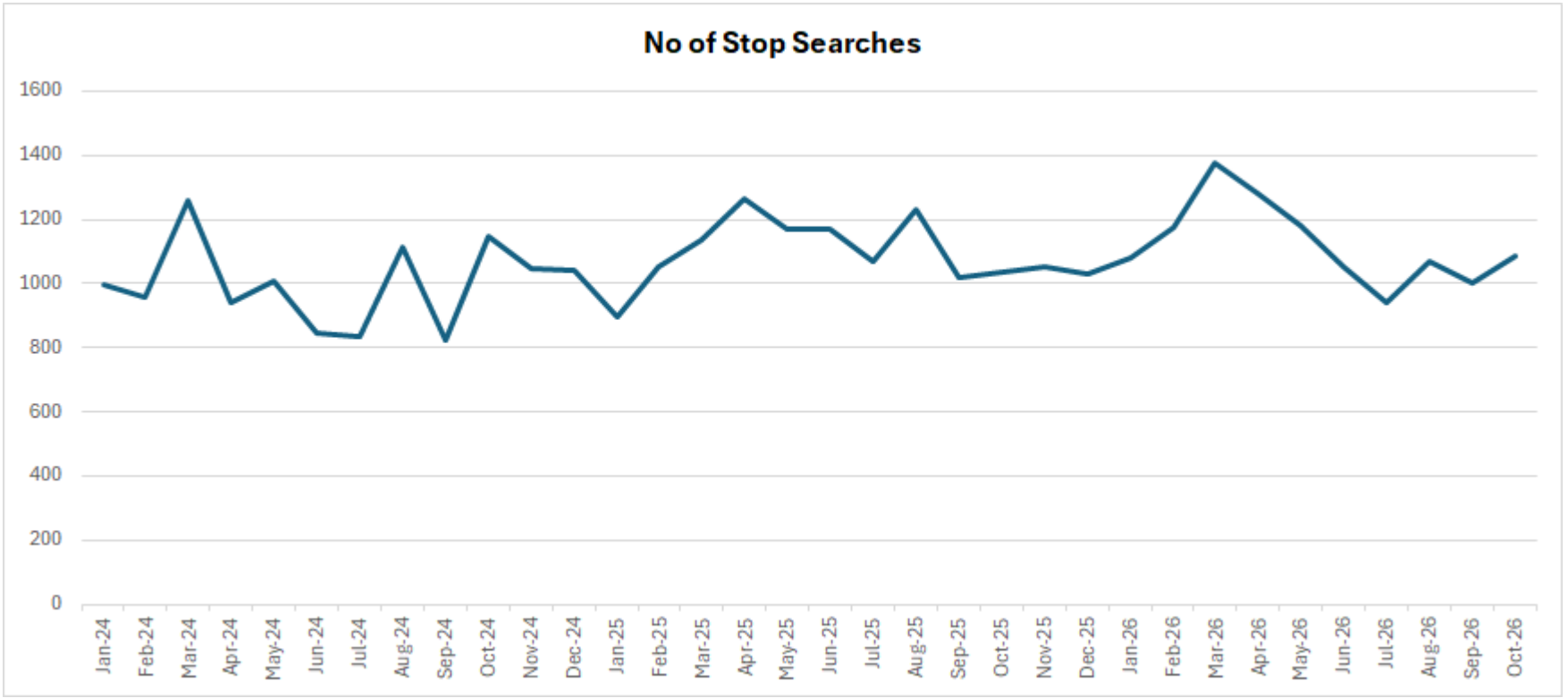
It is important to note that a call will count as abandoned if a caller decides to use an alternative contact method following the automated message.

Complaints



In the 12 months to end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 2049 complaints, a 7% increase on the previous 12 months.

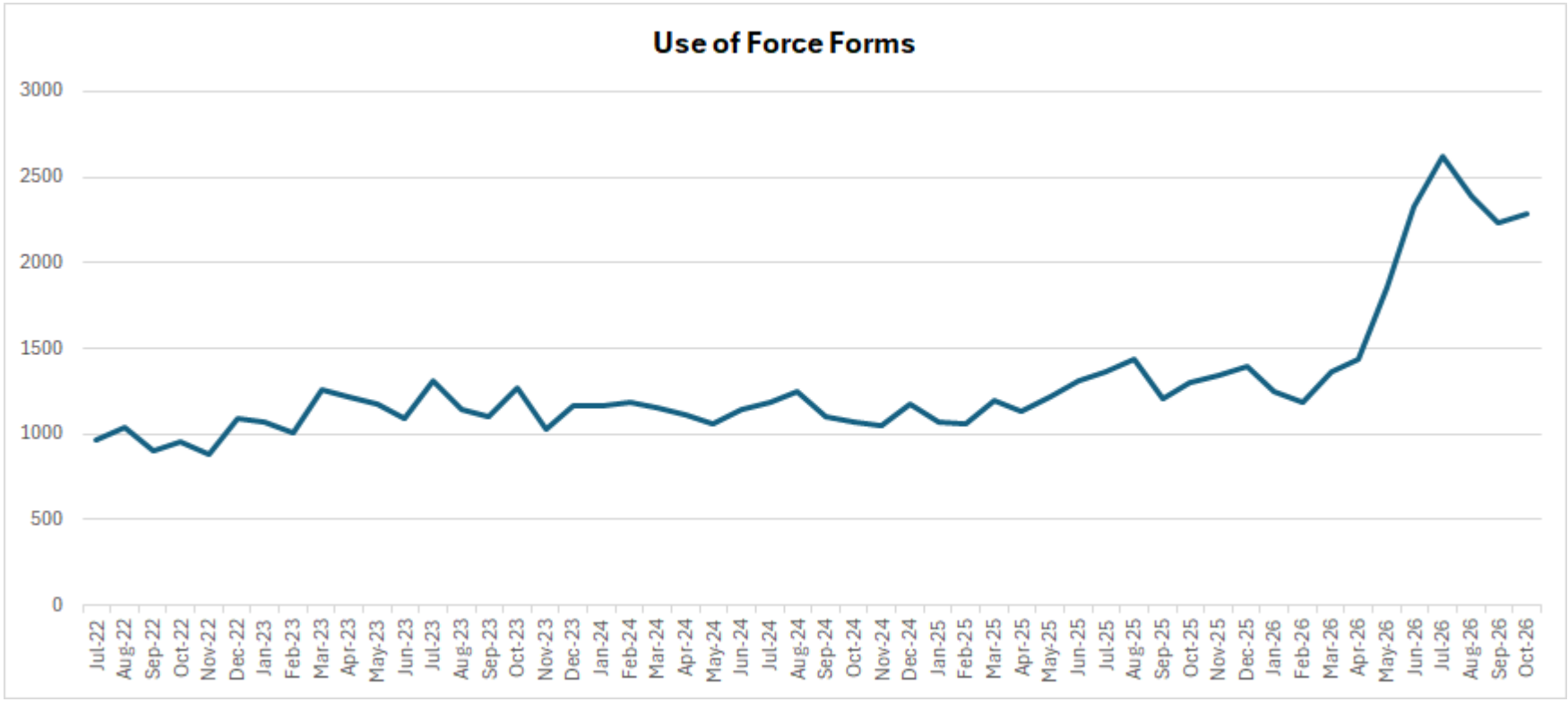
Stop & Search



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary carried out 13,331 Stop Searches which is a 1.5% increase on the previous year.

34% of Stop Searches in the last 12 months resulted in action taken (including 13% arrest) which is an increase on the previous year (31% action taken including 12% arrest).

Use of Force

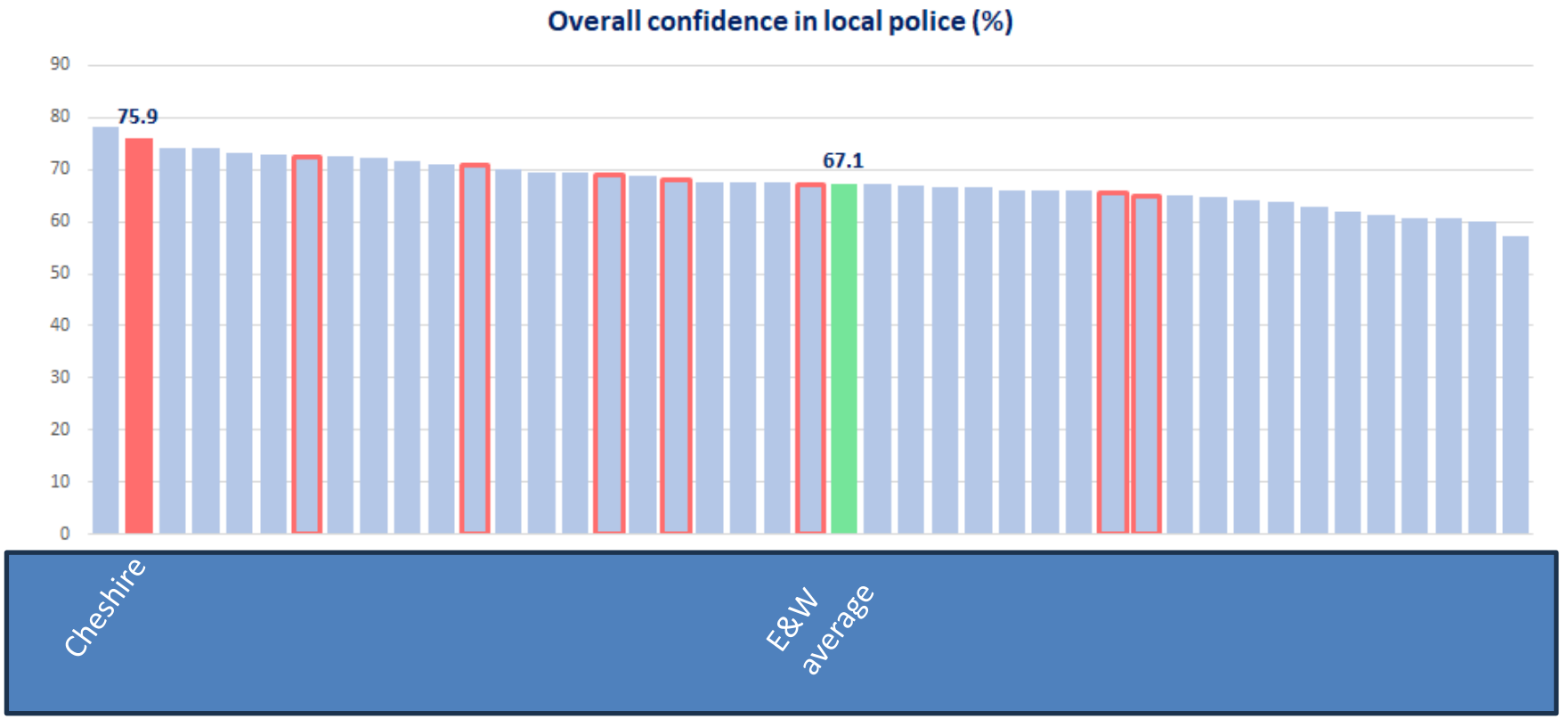


For the 12 months ending October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 21,695 Use of Force forms, which is a 49% increase on the previous 12 months (14,518).

It should be noted that each officer is required to complete a Use of Force form and therefore there can be multiple forms relating to a single incident.

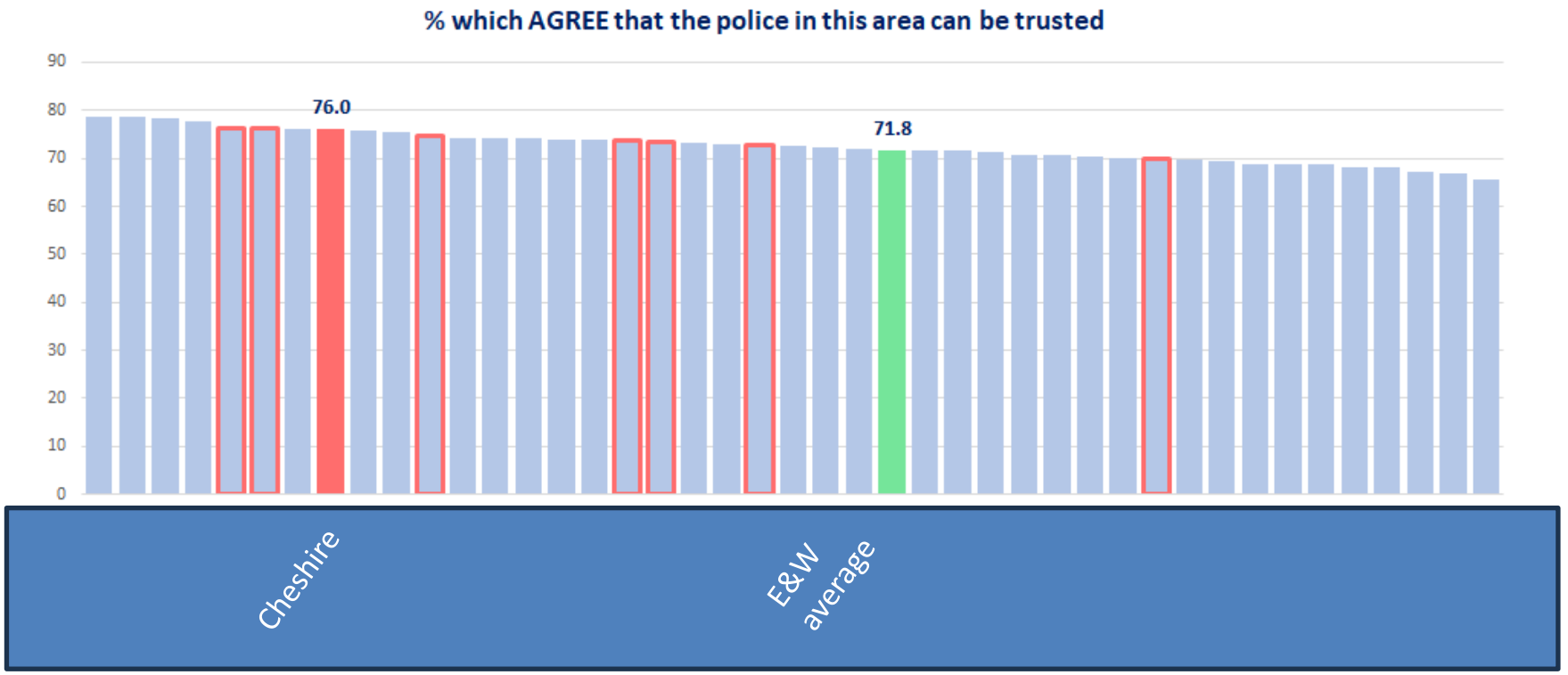
Work has been ongoing since the start of the 2026/27 financial year to ensure that use of force forms are completed in all circumstances required.

Public Confidence



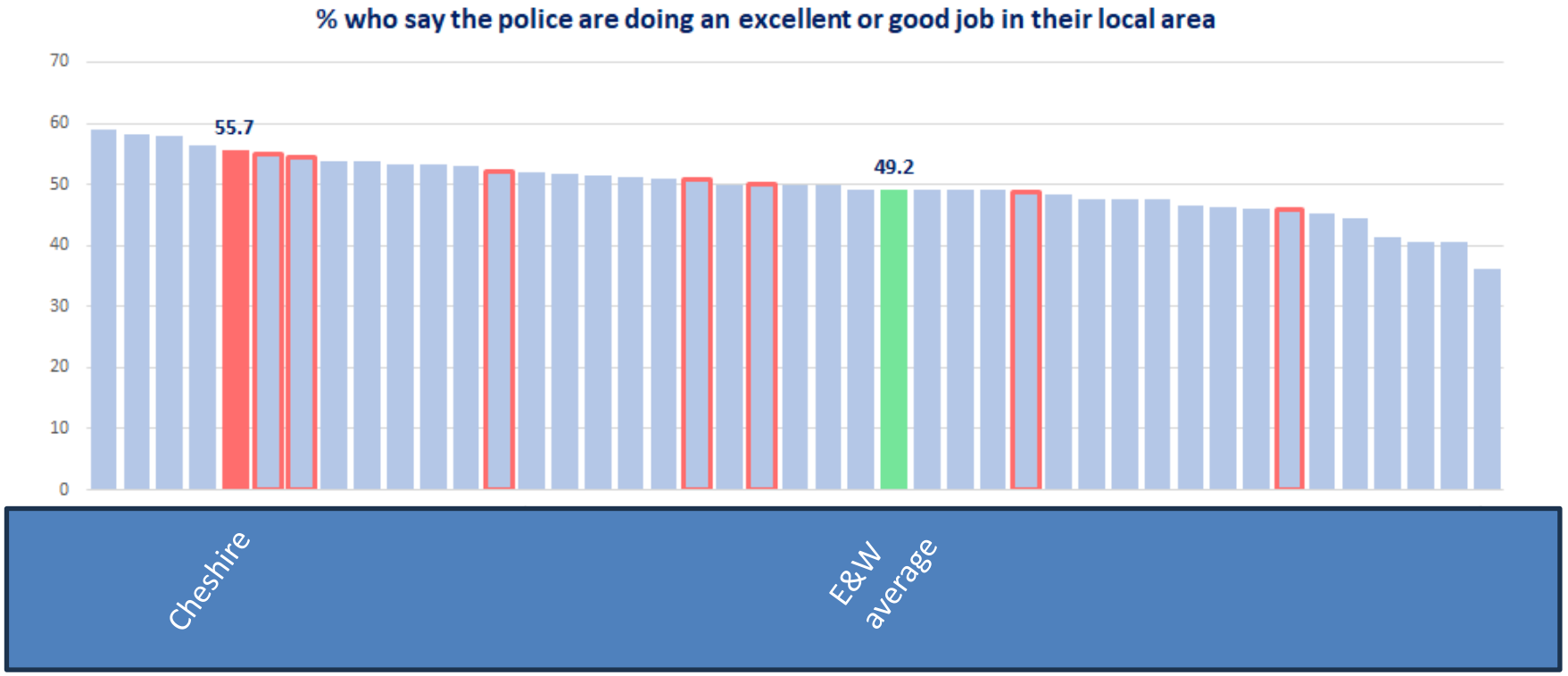
For the 12 months ending June 2026, 75.9% of respondents to the Crime Survey for England and Wales from Cheshire reported that they had overall confidence in local police. This is the 2nd highest proportion for any force in the country and above the England and Wales average of 67.1%

Public Confidence



For the 12 months ending June 2026, 76% of respondents to the Crime Survey for England and Wales from Cheshire reported that they agreed that the police in this area can be trusted. This is the 8th highest proportion for any force in the country and above the England and Wales average of 71.8%

Public Confidence

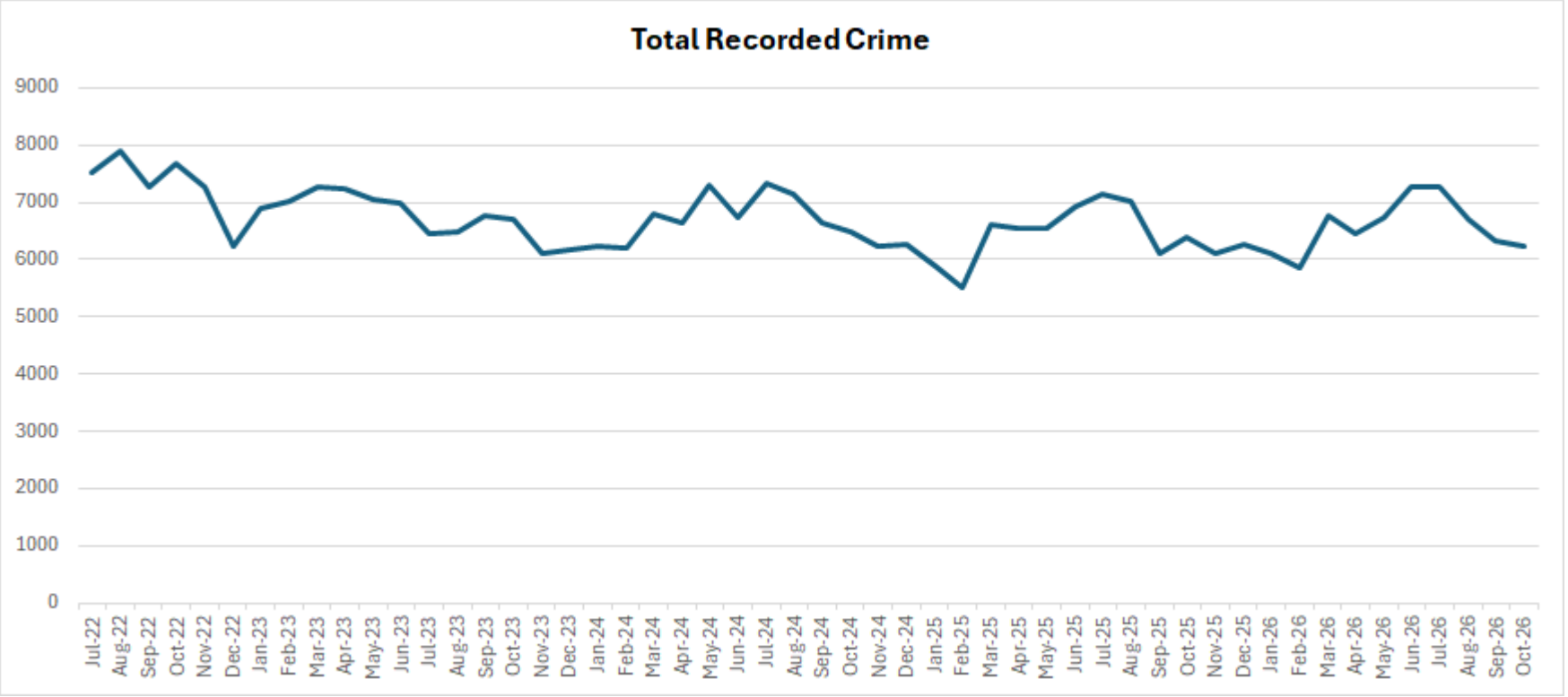


For the 12 months ending June 2026, 55.7% of respondents to the Crime Survey for England and Wales from Cheshire reported that the police are doing an excellent or good job in their local area. This is the 5th highest proportion for any force in the country and above the England and Wales average of 49.2%

Reduce Crime



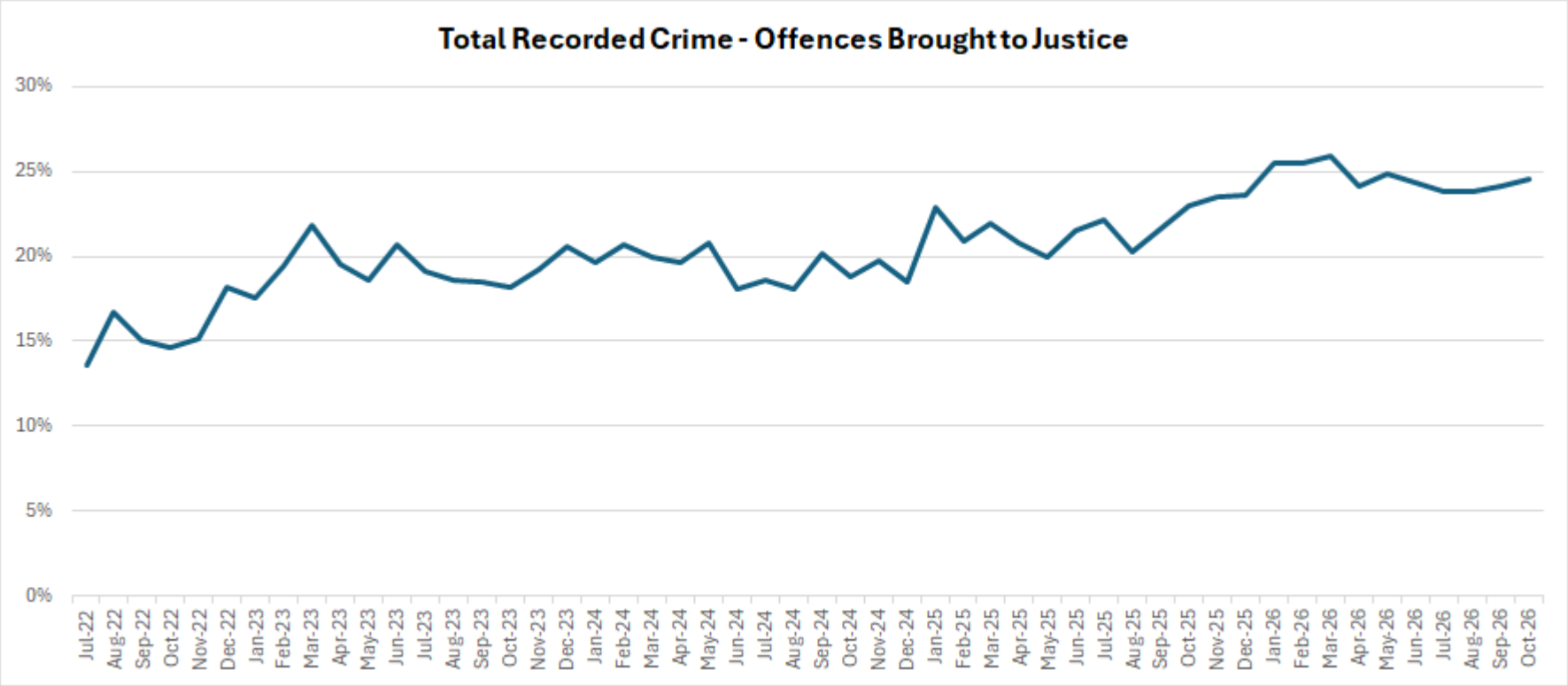
Total Recorded Crime



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 78,090 offences, which is in line with the previous 12 months (77,176).

For the 12 months ending August 2026 Cheshire had a crime rate per 1,000 population of 70 – the 13th lowest nationally and 2nd lowest compared to its 7 most similar forces.

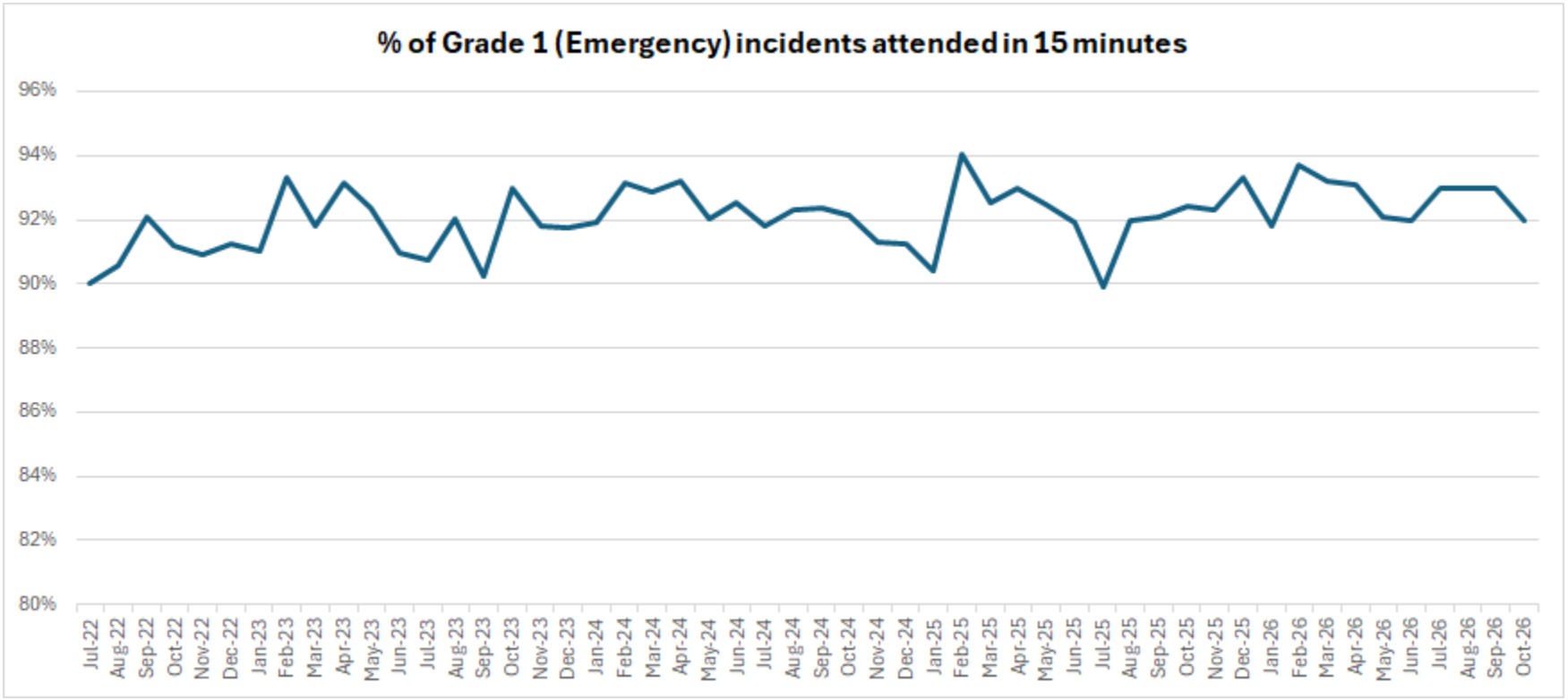
Recorded Crime - OBTJ



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 24.5% of offences to justice (16.9% charges, 6.6% community resolution, 1.0% other) compared to 21.1% in the previous 12 months (14.2% charges, 6.1% community resolution, 0.8% other).

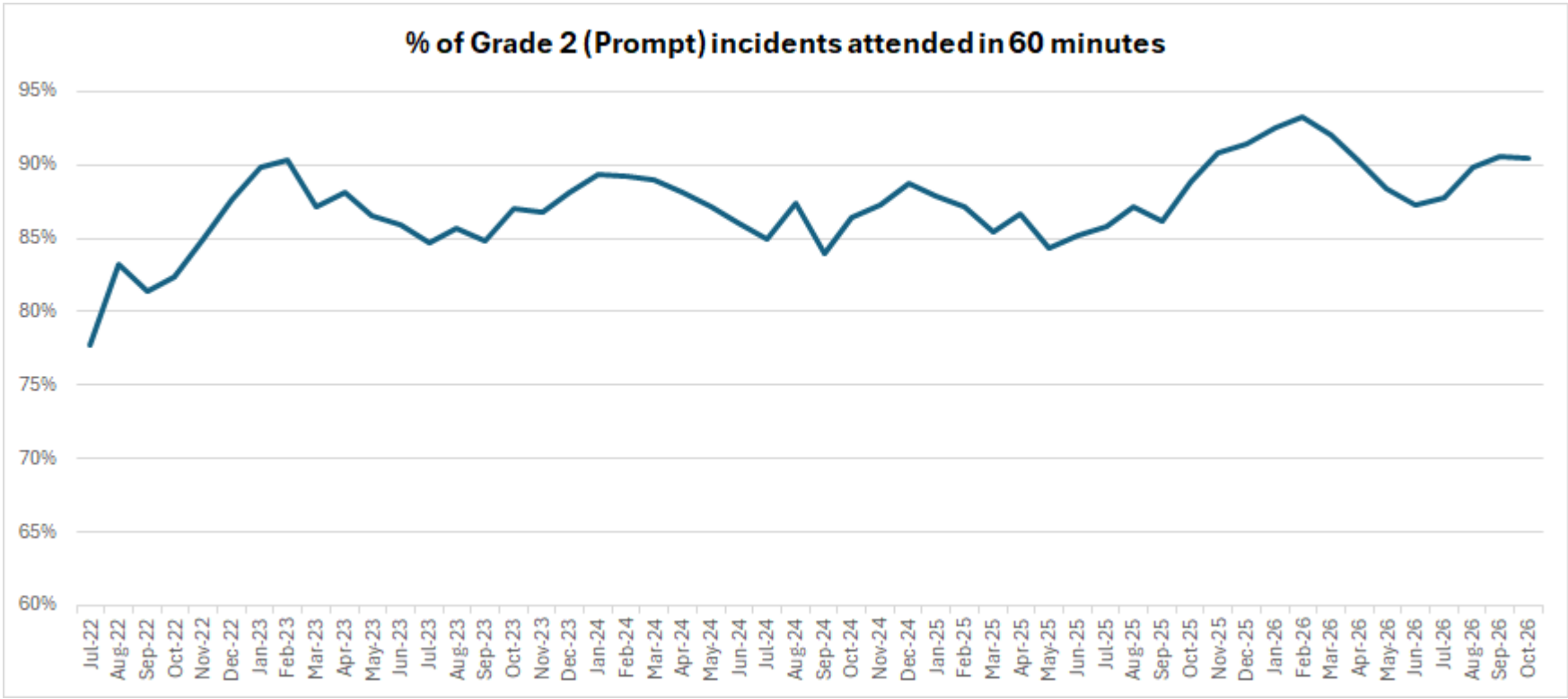
For the 12 months to the end of August 2026 Cheshire had the highest charge rate nationally (16.7%) and the highest of its most similar forces.

Grade 1 (Emergency) Incident Response



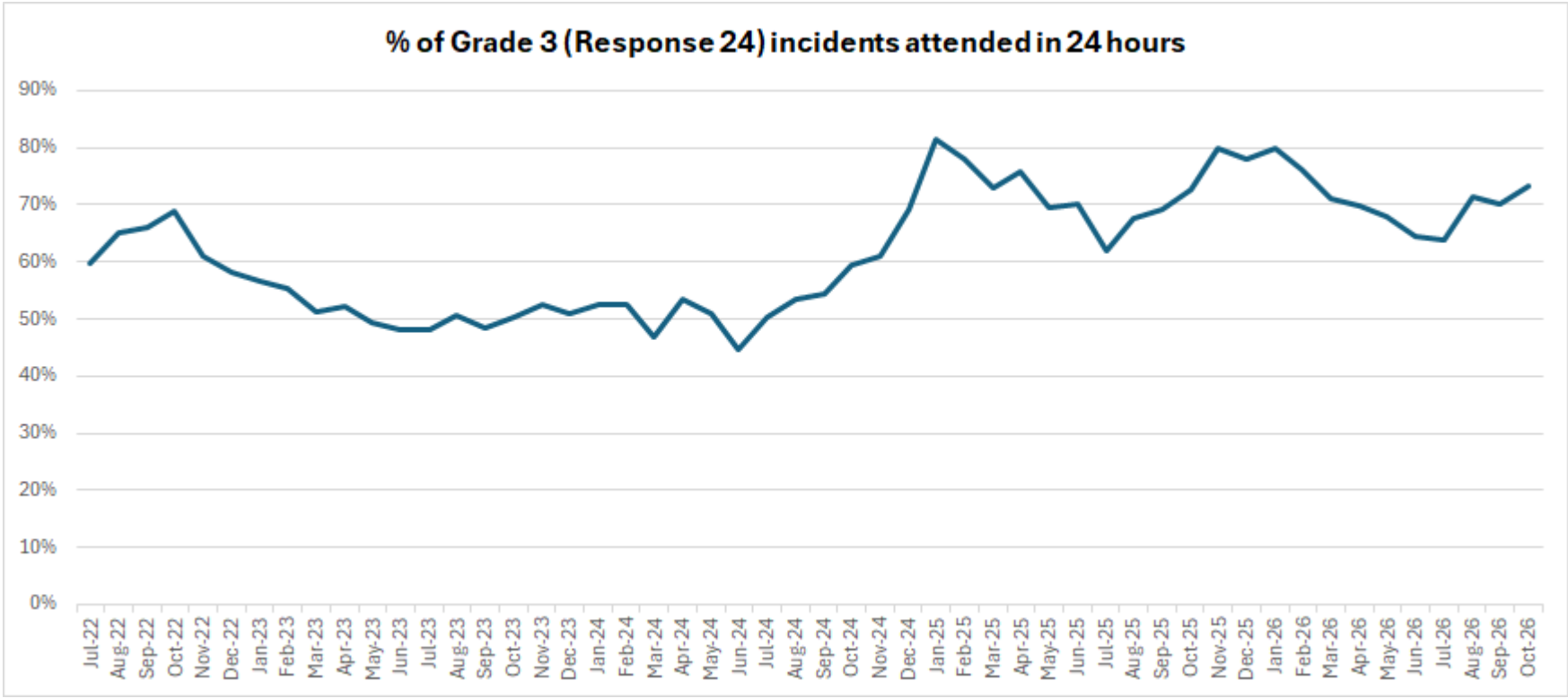
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary attended 92.6% of Grade 1 (Emergency) incidents within 15 minutes with an average attendance time of 7.9 minutes, which is in line with the previous 12 months (91.7%; 8.1 minutes).

Grade 2 (Prompt) Incident Response



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary attended 90.1% of Grade 2 (Prompt) incidents within 60 minutes with an average attendance time of 30 minutes, which is an improvement on the previous 12 months (85.8%; 39 minutes).

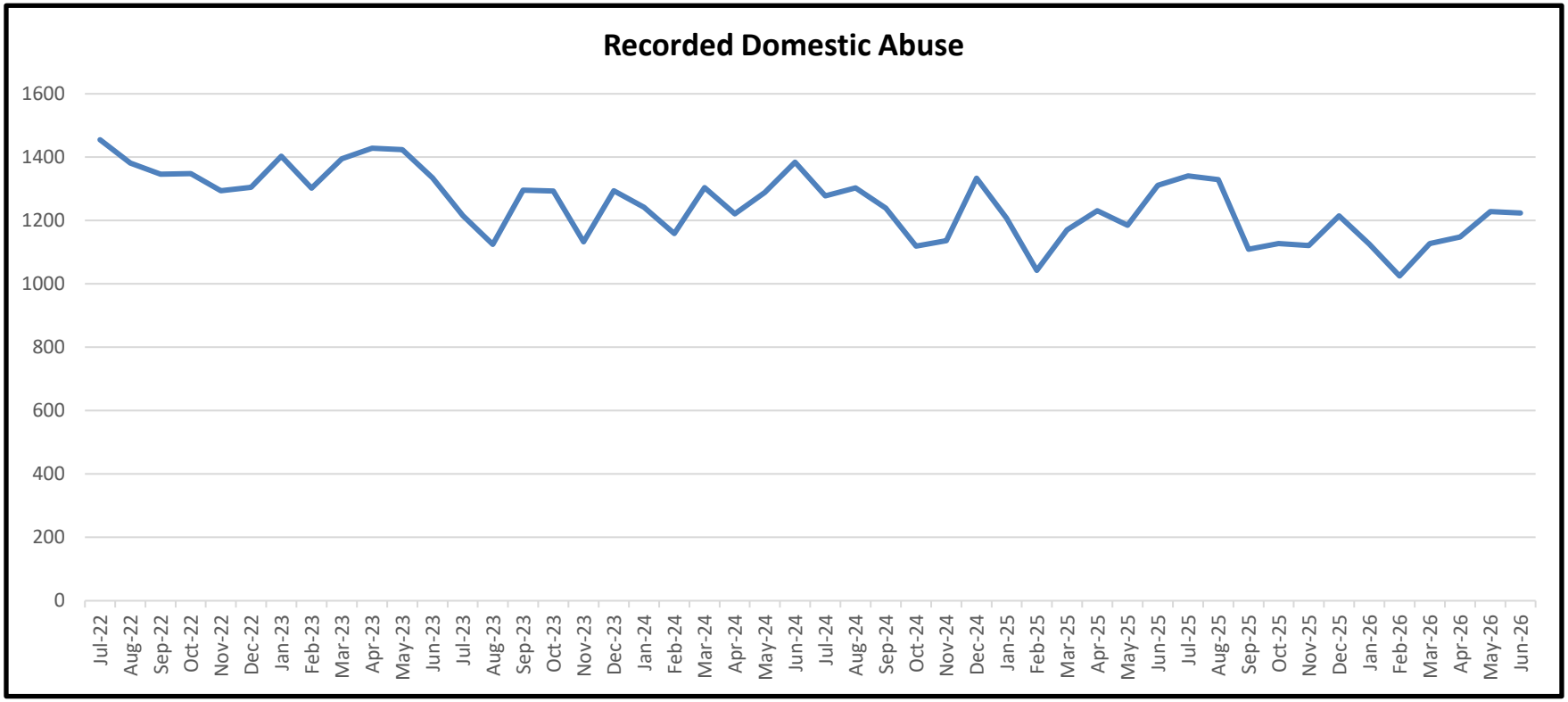
Grade 3 (Response 24) Incident Response



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary attended 71.8% of Grade 3 (Response 24) incidents within 24 hours, which is in line with the previous 12 months (70.4%).

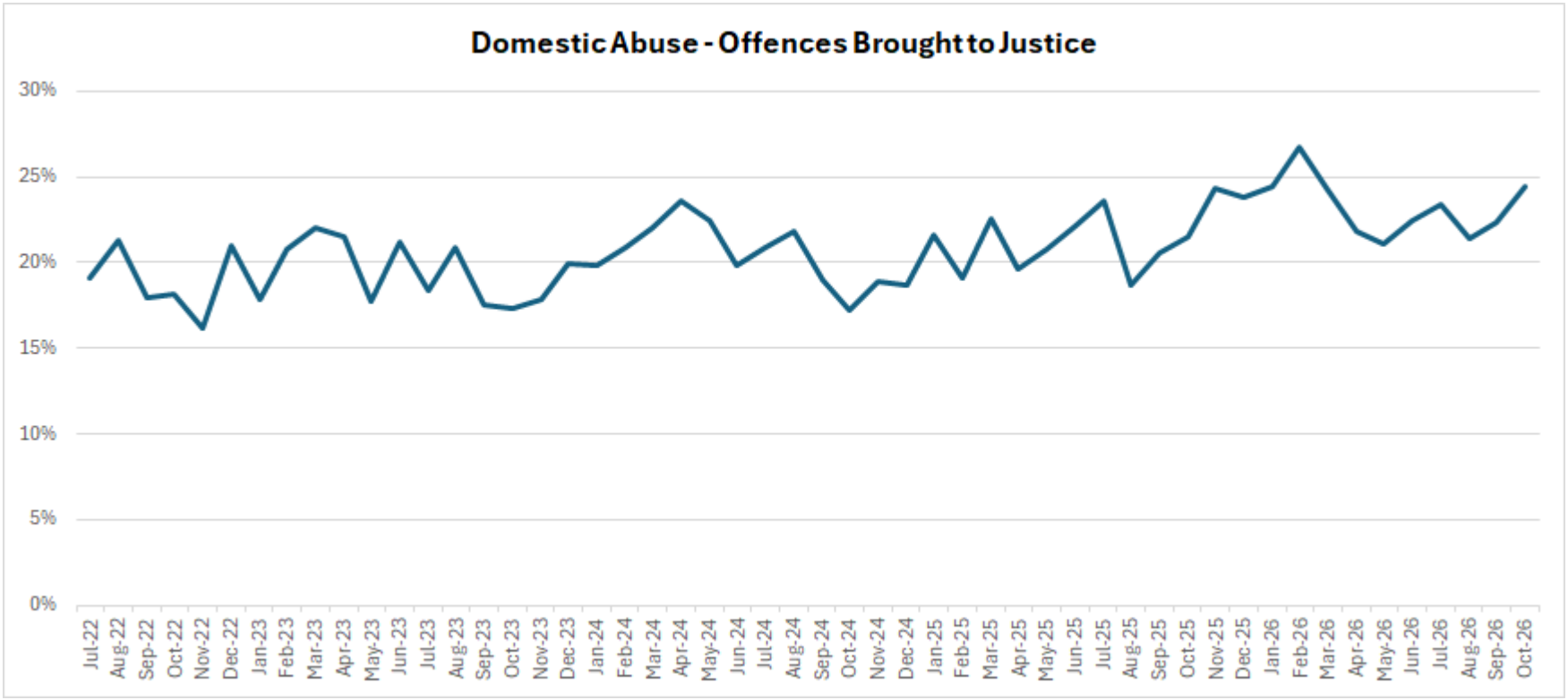
It should be noted that prior to December 2024 the Force did not have a target time for attending Grade 3 incidents.

Recorded Domestic Abuse



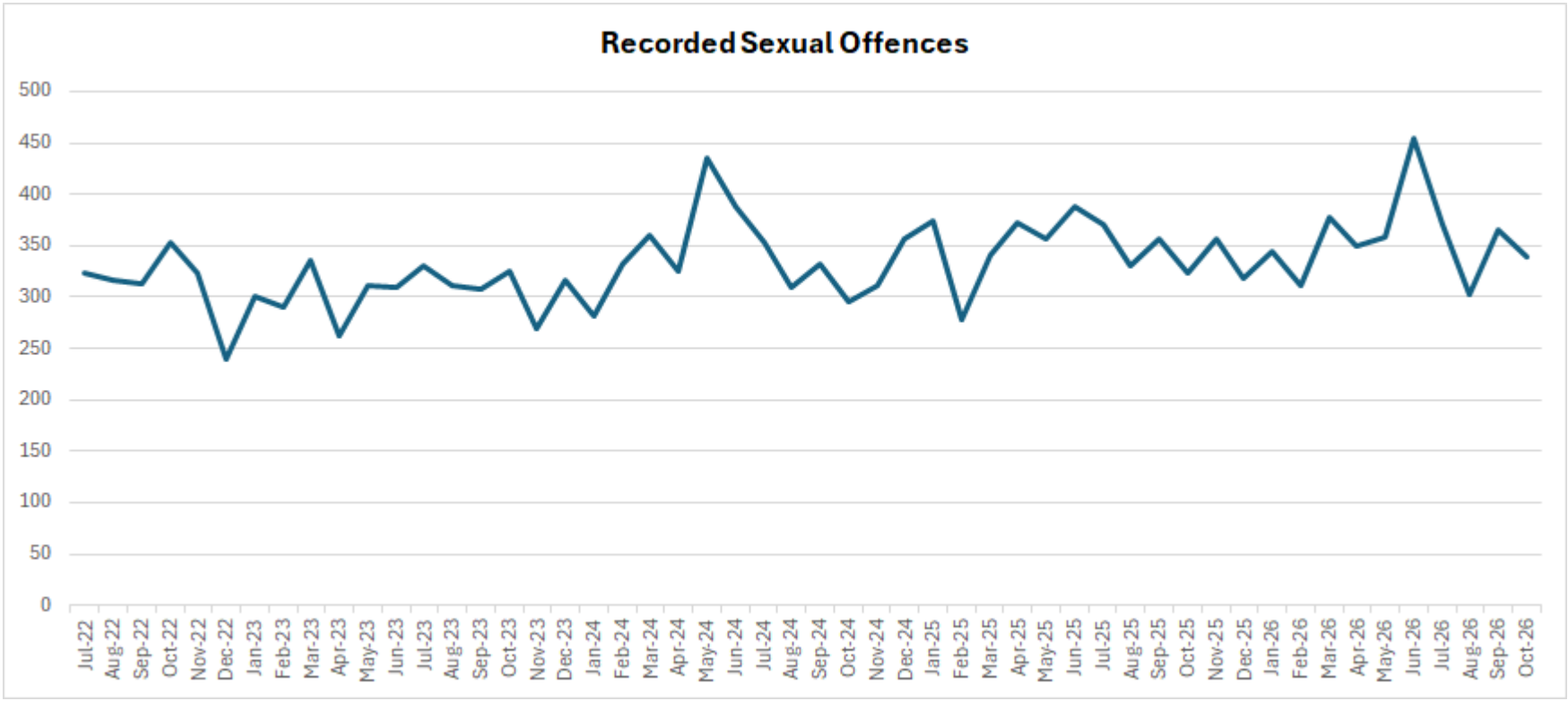
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 14,060 Domestic Abuse flagged offences, a 3.5% reduction on the previous 12 months.

Domestic Abuse - OBTJ



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 23.4% of Domestic Abuse offences to justice (18.9% charges, 3.8% community resolution, 0.7% other) compared to 20.7% in the previous 12 months (16.9% charges, 3.3% community resolution, 0.5% other).

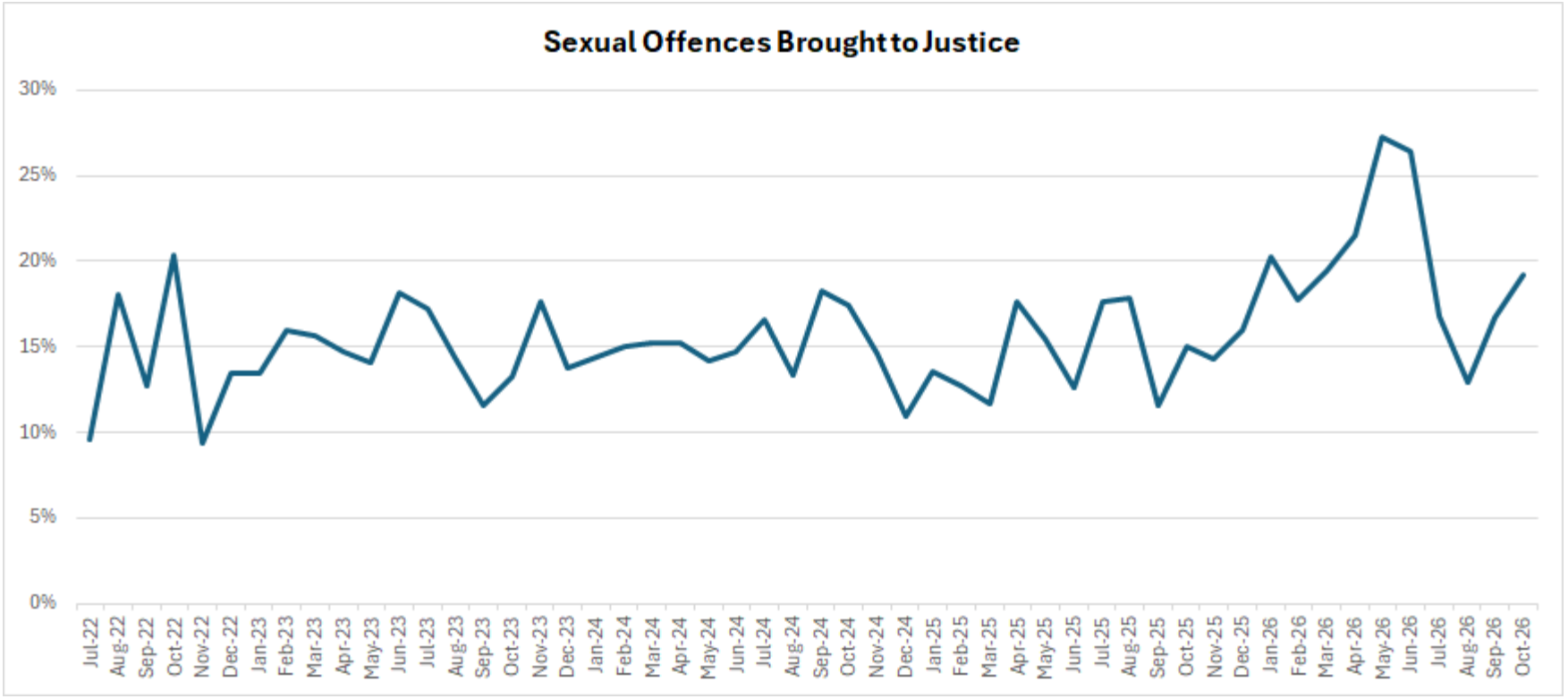
Recorded Sexual Offences



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 4,249 Sexual Offences, a 2% increase on the previous 12 months.

For the 12 months ending August 2026 the Constabulary had the 17th highest rate of Sexual Offences nationally (3.76) and the 6th highest in its most similar group of forces.

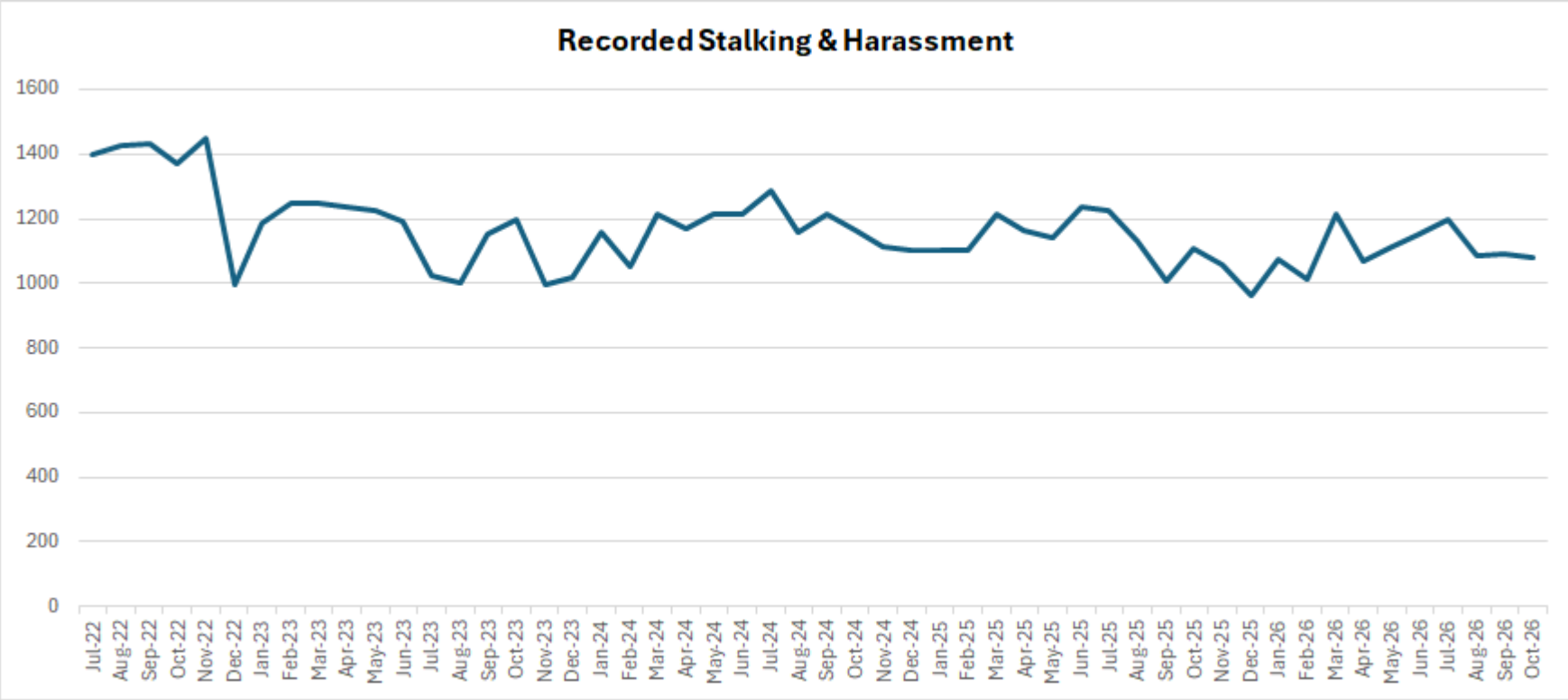
Sexual Offences - OBTJ



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 19.2% of Sexual Offences to justice (16.3% charges, 0.7% community resolution, 2.2% other) compared to 14.3% in the previous 12 months (12.3% charges, 0.8% community resolution, 1.2% other).

For the 12 months ending August 2026 Cheshire had the highest charge rate nationally (16.1%) and the highest of its most similar group of forces.

Recorded Stalking & Harassment

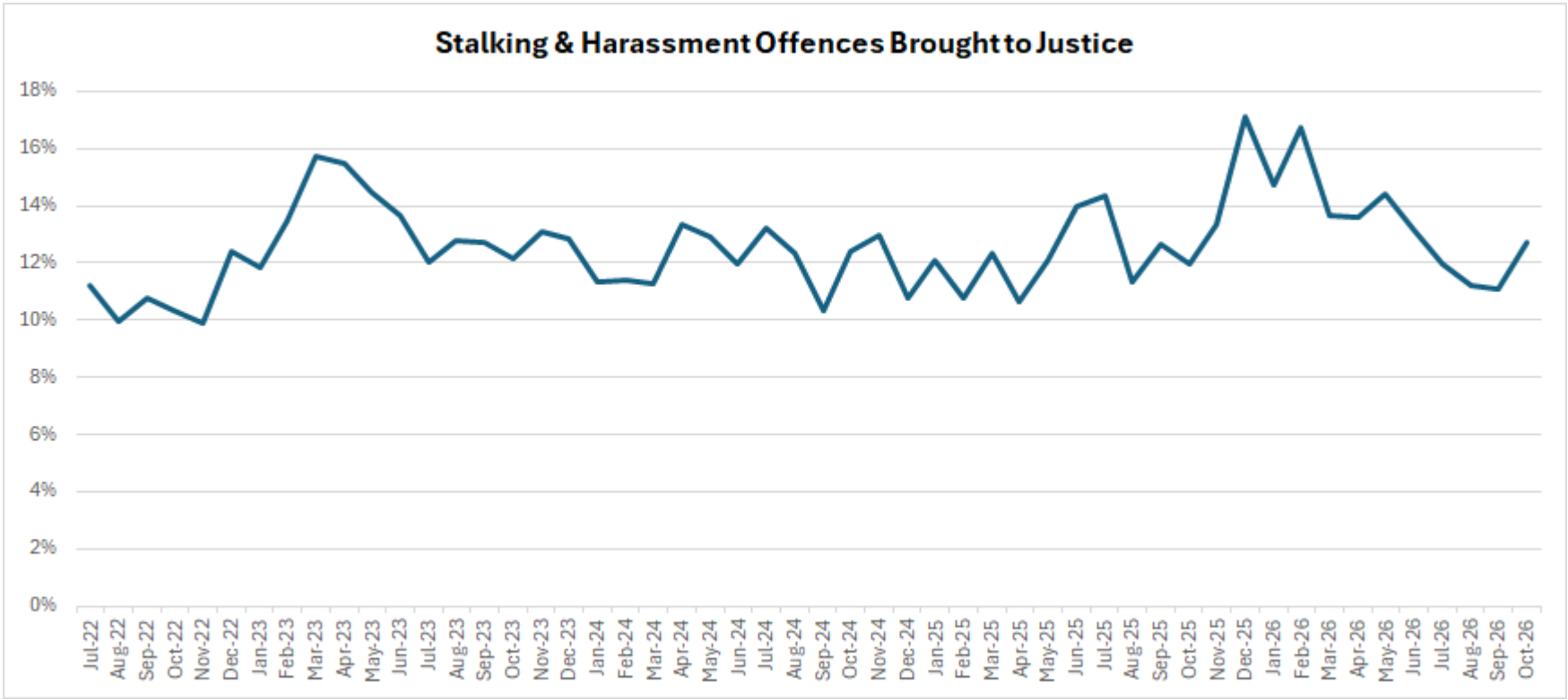


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 13,111 Stalking and Harassment offences, a 3.9% decrease on the previous 12 months.

For the 12 months ending August 2026 the Constabulary had the 16th highest rate of Stalking and Harassment offences nationally and the 2nd highest in its most similar group of forces.

The Stalking and Harassment group is made up of Harassment, Racially or Religiously Aggravated Harassment, Stalking, Malicious Communications and Controlling or Coercive Behaviour offences.

Stalking & Harassment - OBTJ



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 13.6% of Stalking & Harassment offences to justice (10.1% charges, 2.9% community resolution, 0.6% other) compared to 12.2% in the previous 12 months (9.3% charges, 2.5% community resolution, 0.4% other).

For the 12 months ending August 2026 Cheshire had the highest charge rate nationally and the highest of its most similar group of forces.

The Stalking and Harassment group is made up of Harassment, Racially or Religiously Aggravated Harassment, Stalking, Malicious Communications and Controlling or Coercive Behaviour offences.

Homicide

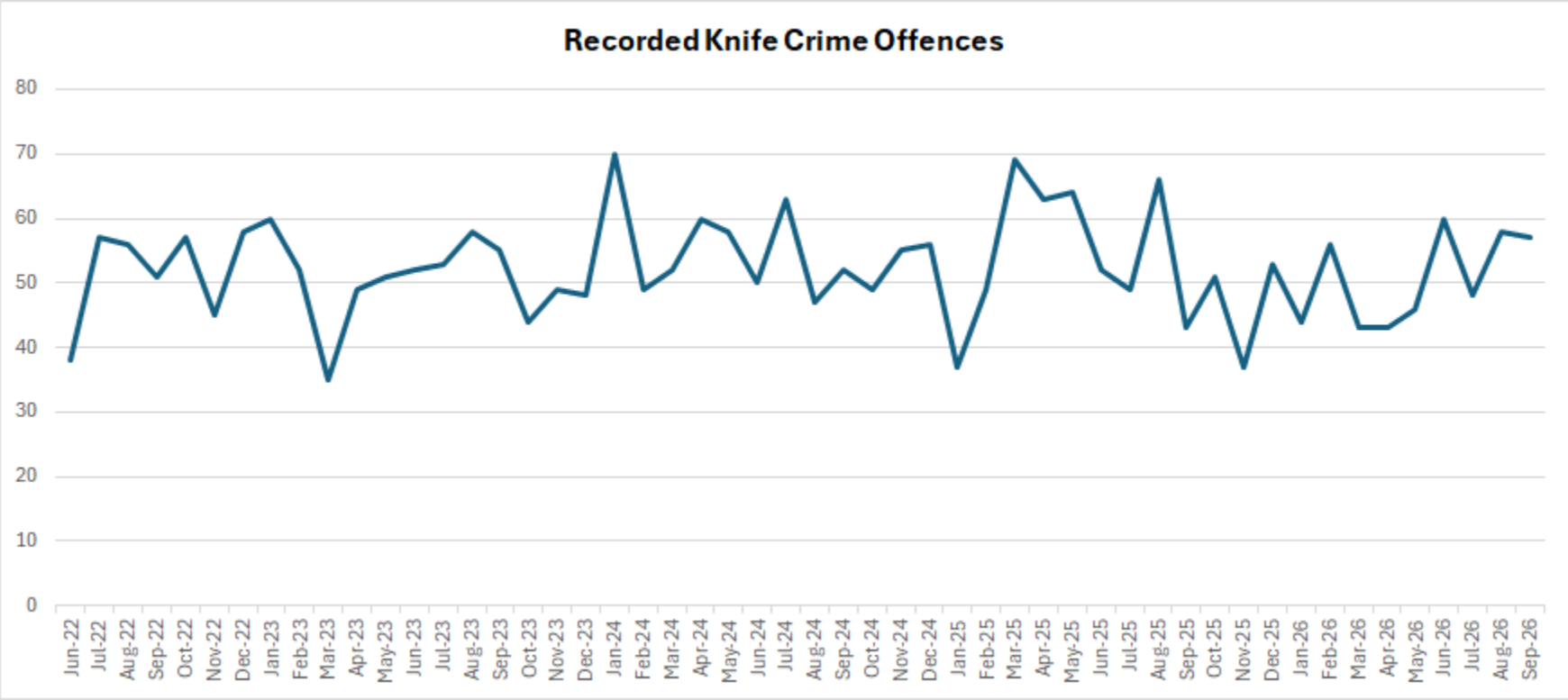
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary reported 3 homicides compared to 5 in the previous 12 months.

For the 12 months to the end of August 2026 Cheshire had the lowest Homicide rate nationally and the lowest of its most similar group of forces.

For the 12 months to the end of October 2026, 3 homicides were charged (100%).

For the 12 months to the end of August 2026 Cheshire had the joint highest charge rate nationally for Homicide offences (100%) and the joint highest of its most similar group of forces.

Knife & Firearm Offences



For the 12 months to the end of September 2026 the Constabulary recorded 596 Knife Crime offences, an 8.5% decrease on the previous year (652).

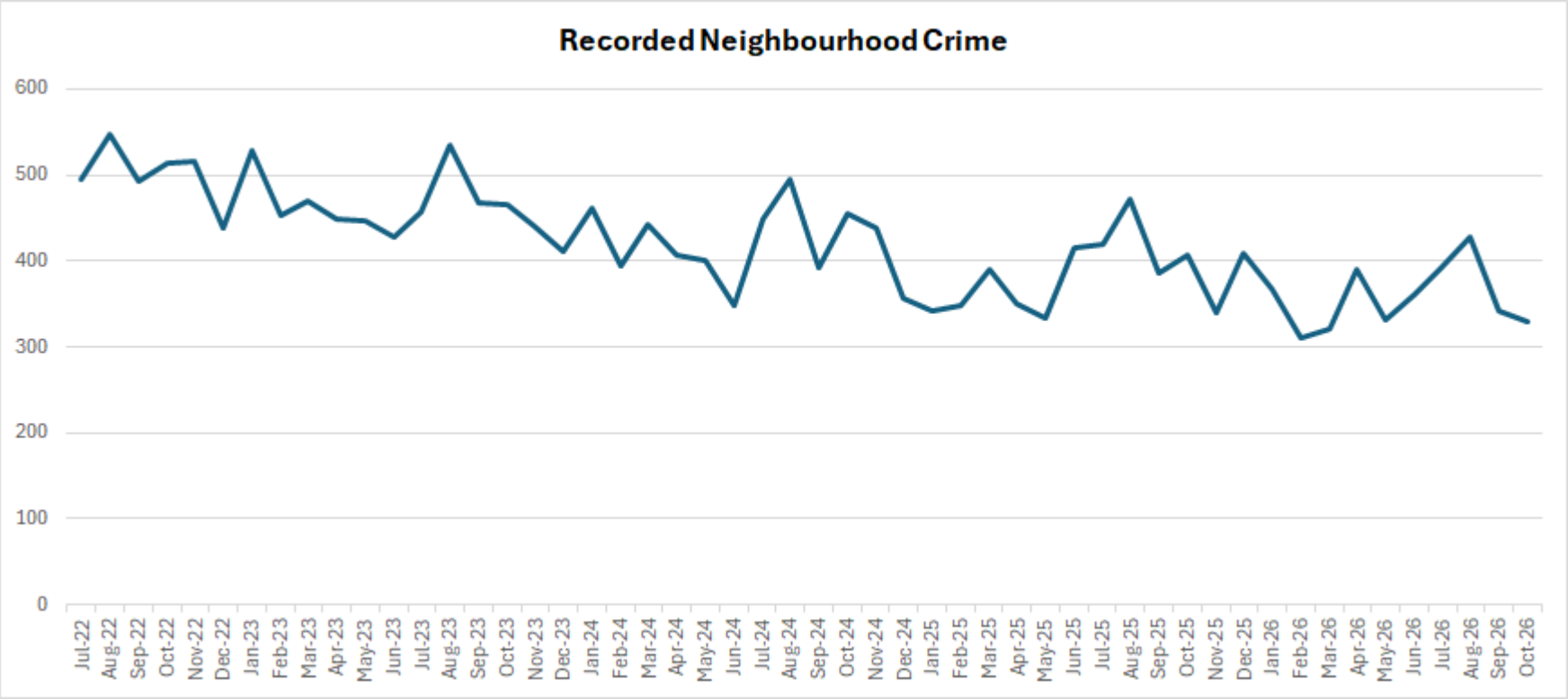
For the 12 months to the end of June 2026 Cheshire had the 7th lowest Knife Crime rate nationally.

For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 24.3% of Knife offences to justice compared to 24.9% for the previous 12 months.

For the 12 months to the end of September 2026 the Constabulary recorded 14 'serious firearms offences' (involving a handgun, rifle or shotgun) compared to 21 in the previous 12 months.

Knife crime is the use or threat of use of a knife, blade or sharp instrument in a selection of violence offences.

Neighbourhood Crime

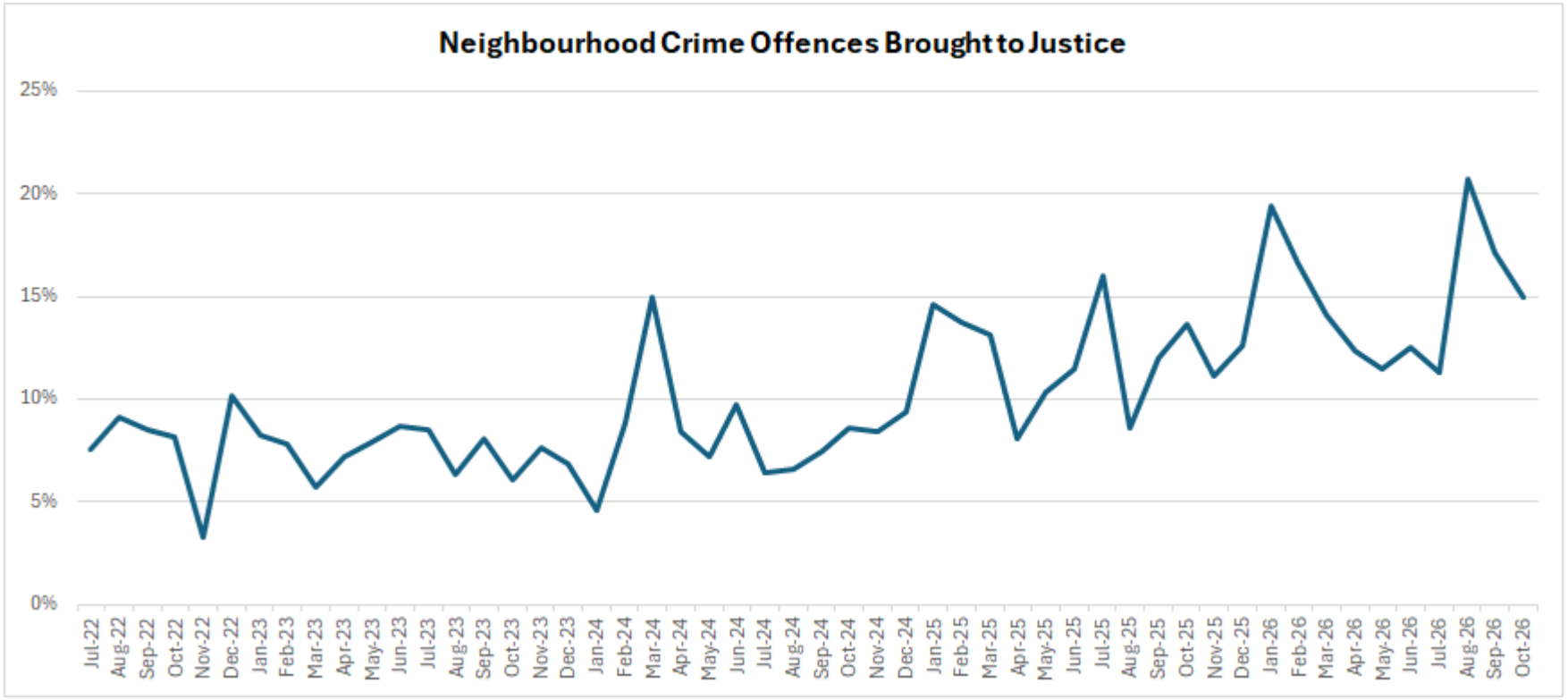


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 4,324 'neighbourhood crimes', a 7.3% decrease on the previous 12 months.

For the 12 months ending August 2026 Cheshire had the 5th lowest rate of overall Burglary nationally (lowest in its most similar group), 7th lowest rate of Vehicle Offences nationally (lowest in its most similar group) and 6th lowest rate of overall Robbery nationally (lowest in its most similar group)

Neighbourhood Crime includes Burglary Home, Vehicle Offences, Personal Robbery and Theft from the Person offences.

Neighbourhood Crime - OBTJ

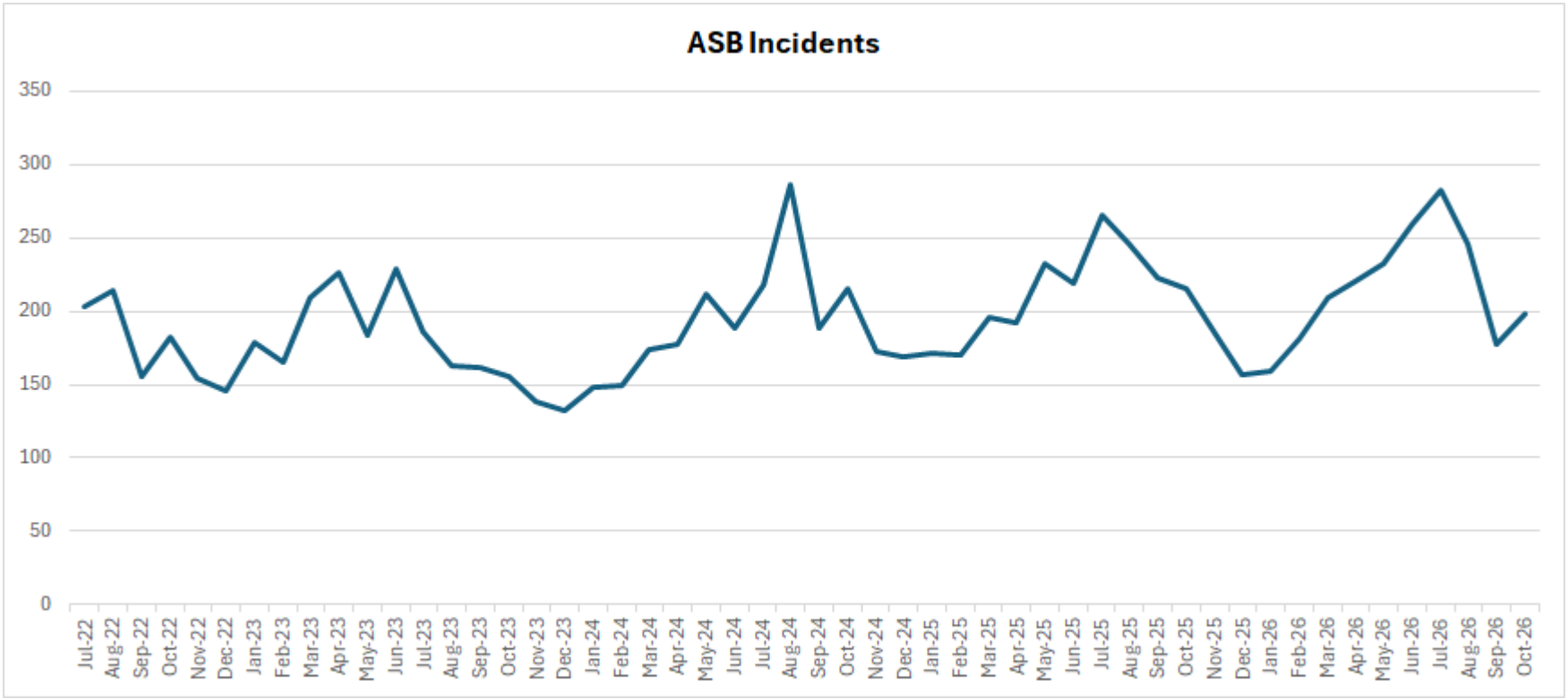


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 14.8% of Neighbourhood Crime offences to justice compared to 11.5% in the previous year.

For the 12 months ending August 2026 Cheshire had the highest charge rate nationally for overall Burglary (highest in most similar group), 2nd highest charge rate nationally for Vehicle crime (highest in most similar group) and the 4th highest charge rate nationally for overall Robbery (highest in most similar group).

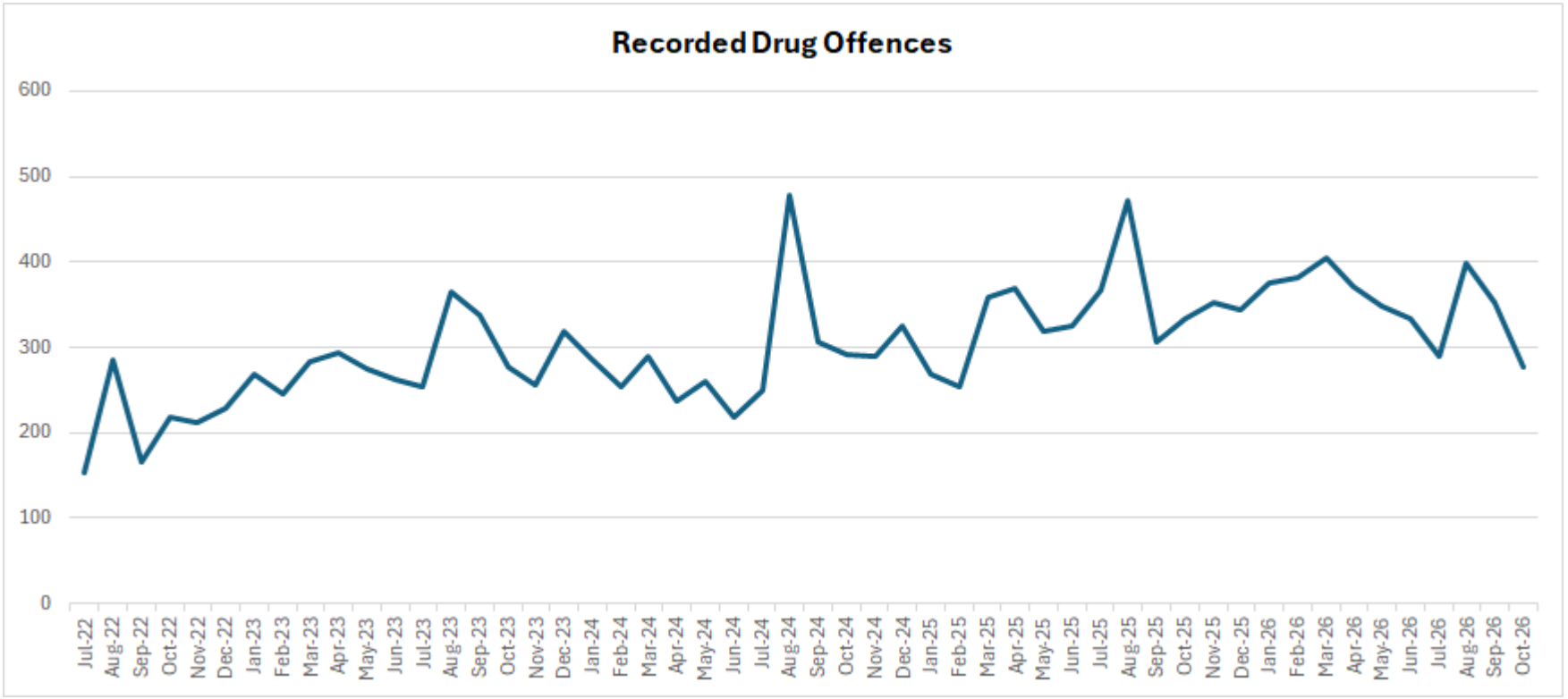
Neighbourhood Crime includes Burglary Home, Vehicle Offences, Personal Robbery and Theft from the Person offences.

Anti-social behaviour



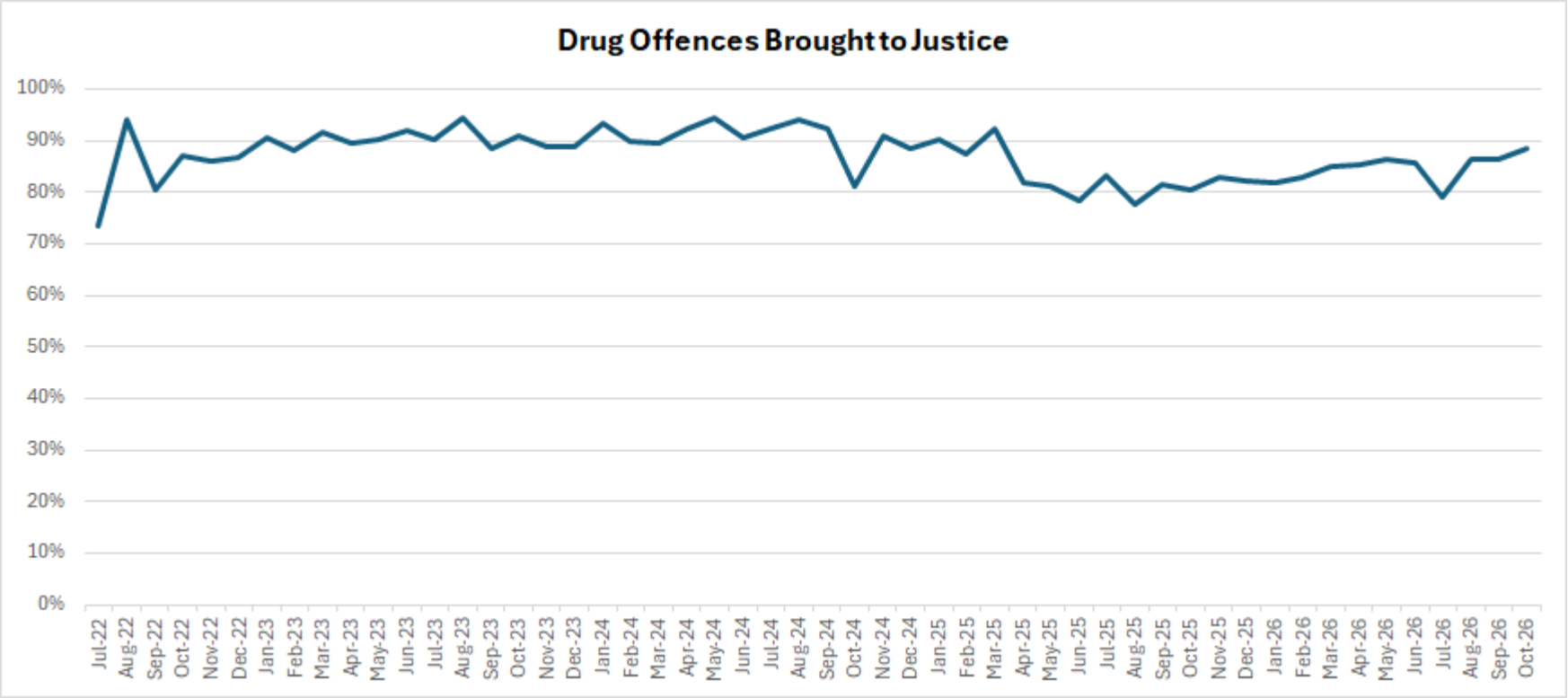
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 2,507 anti-social behaviour incidents compared to 2,473 in the previous year.

Drug Offences

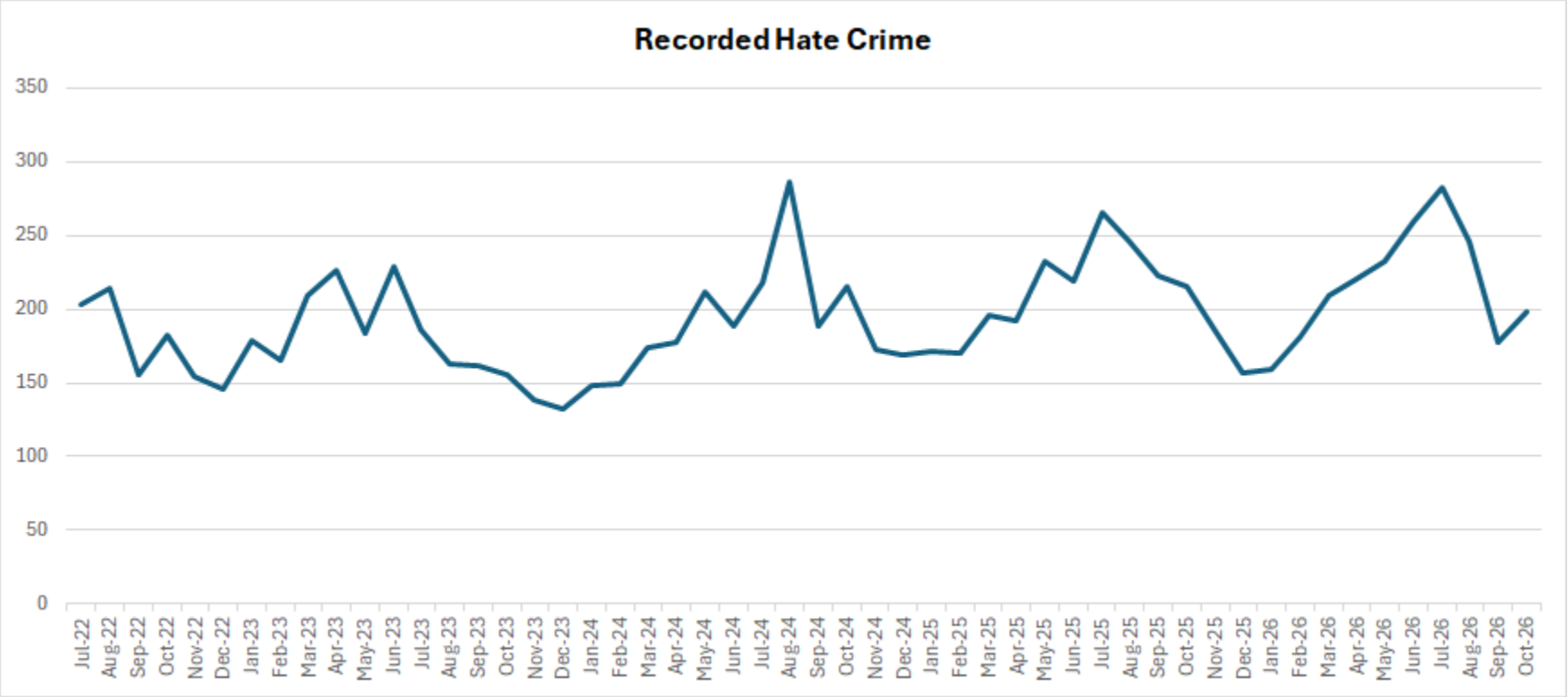


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 4,228 Drug Offences, a 6% increase on the previous 12 months (3,989).

Drug Offences - OBTJ

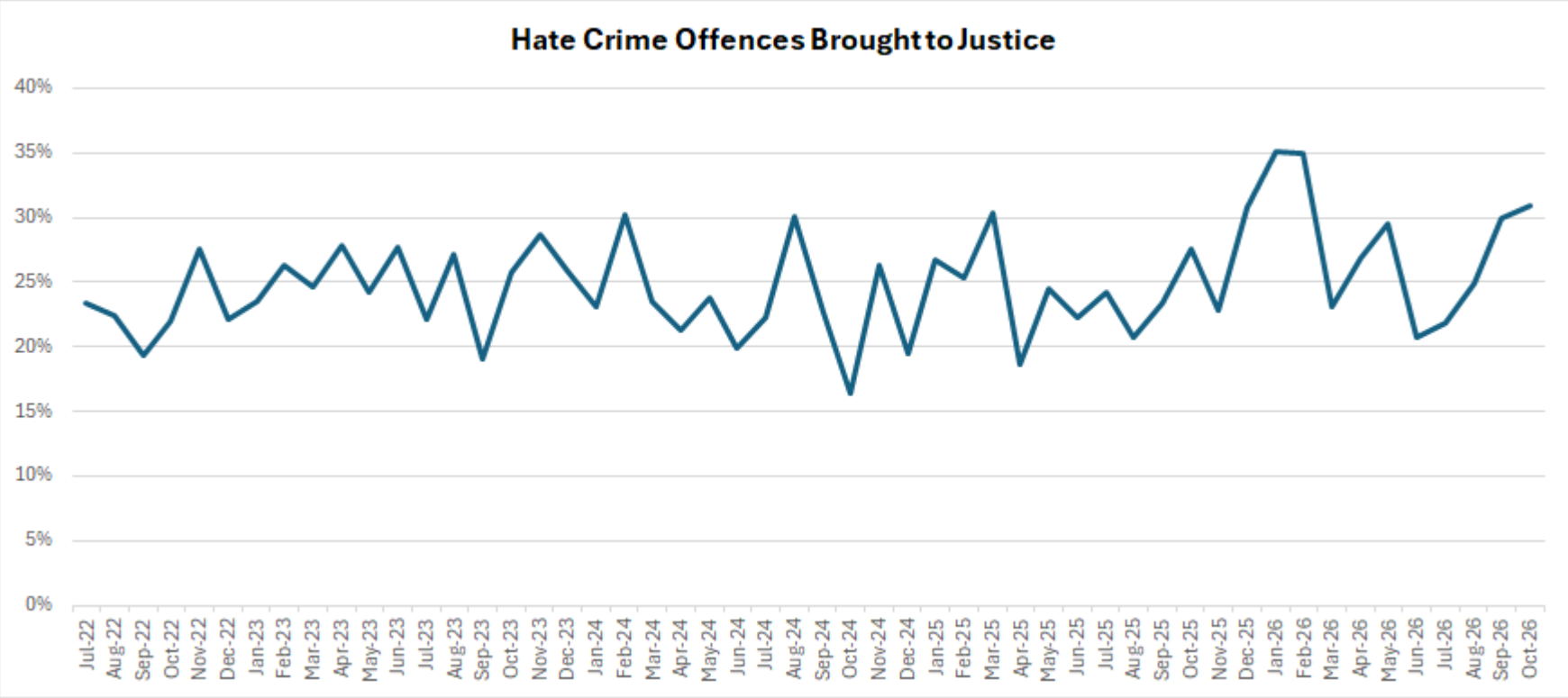


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 84.4% of Drug Offences to justice (42.6% charges, 40% community resolution, 1.8% other) compared to 84.2% in the previous 12 months (36.7% charges, 46% community resolution, 1.5% other).

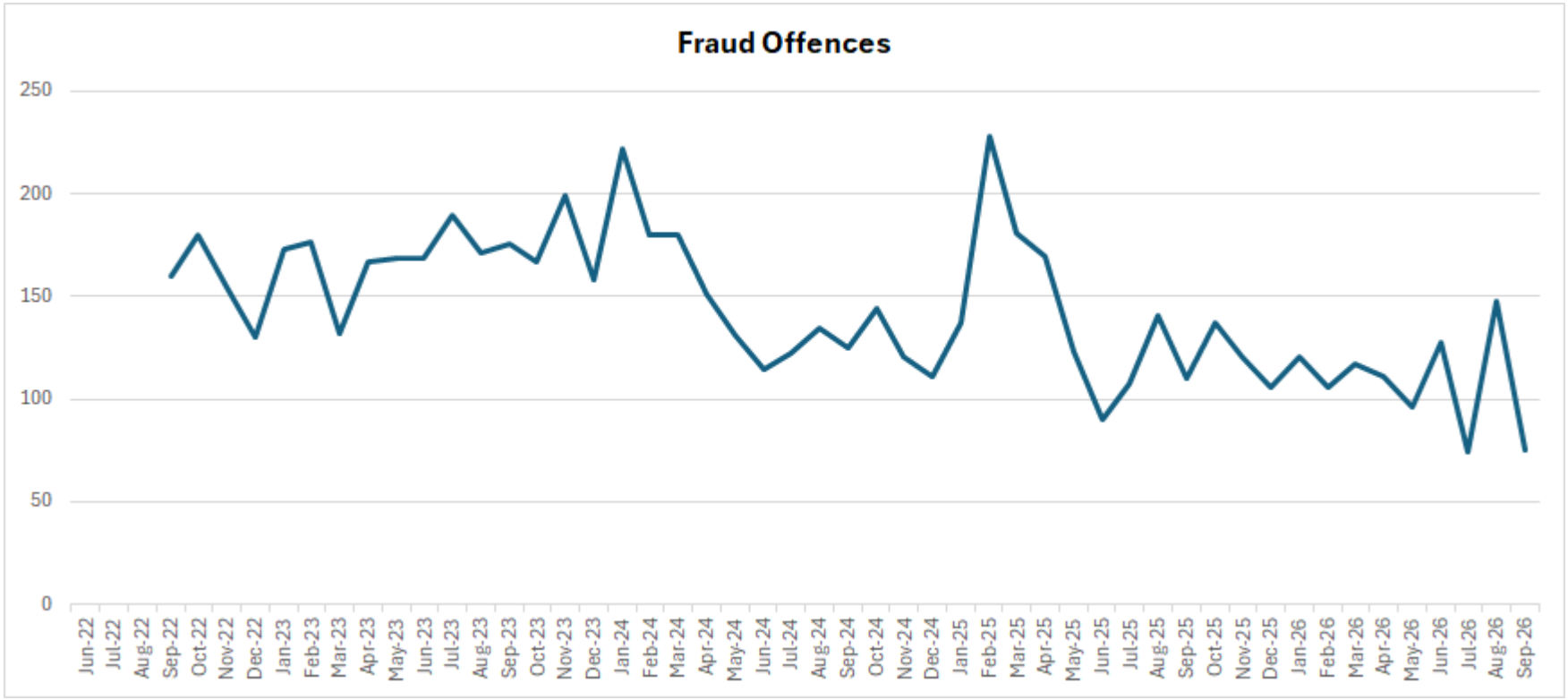


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 2,507 Hate Crimes, a 1.4 % increase on the previous 12 months.

Hate Crime - OBTJ

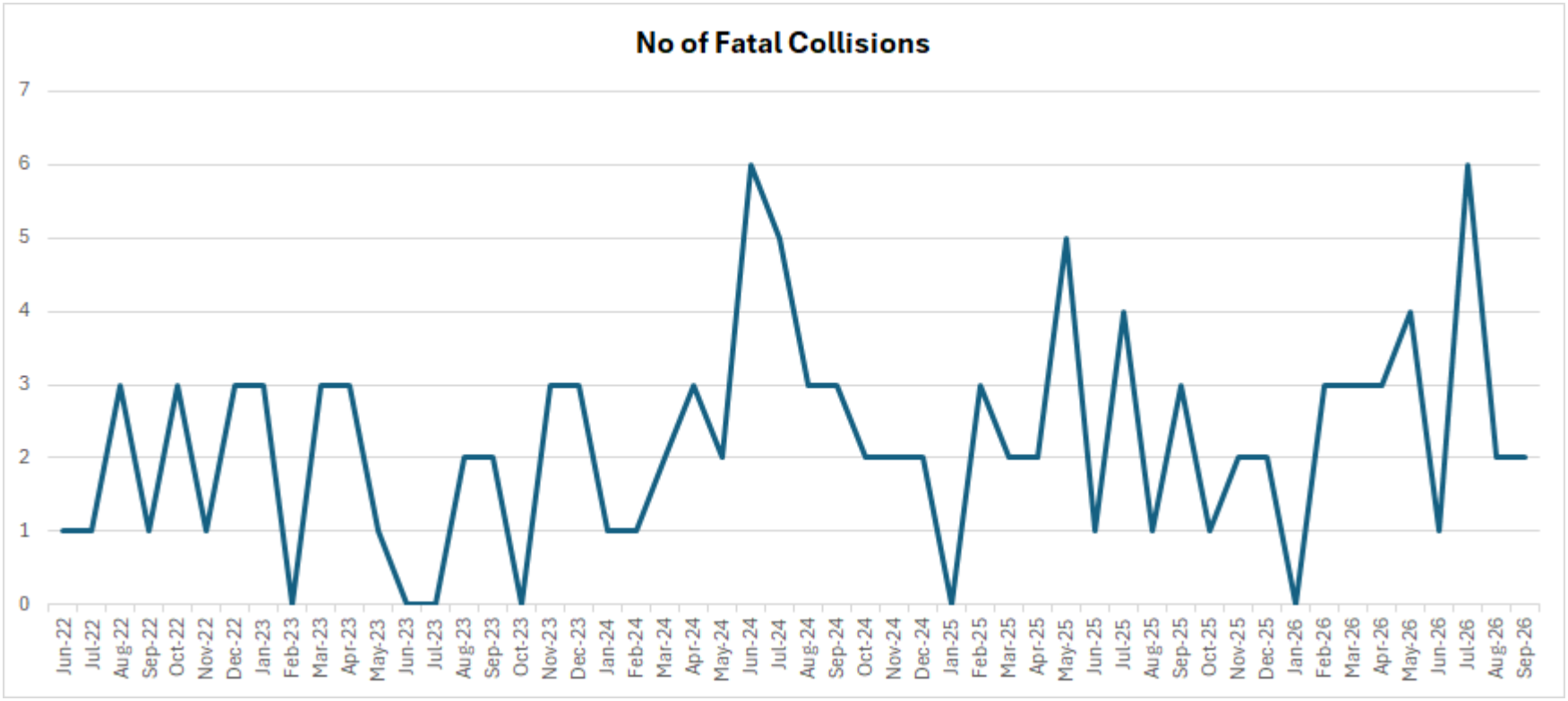


For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary brought 27.5% of Hate Crime offences to justice (18.8% charges, 7.5% community resolution, 1.2% other) compared to 24% in the previous 12 months (16% charges, 7% community resolution, 1% other).



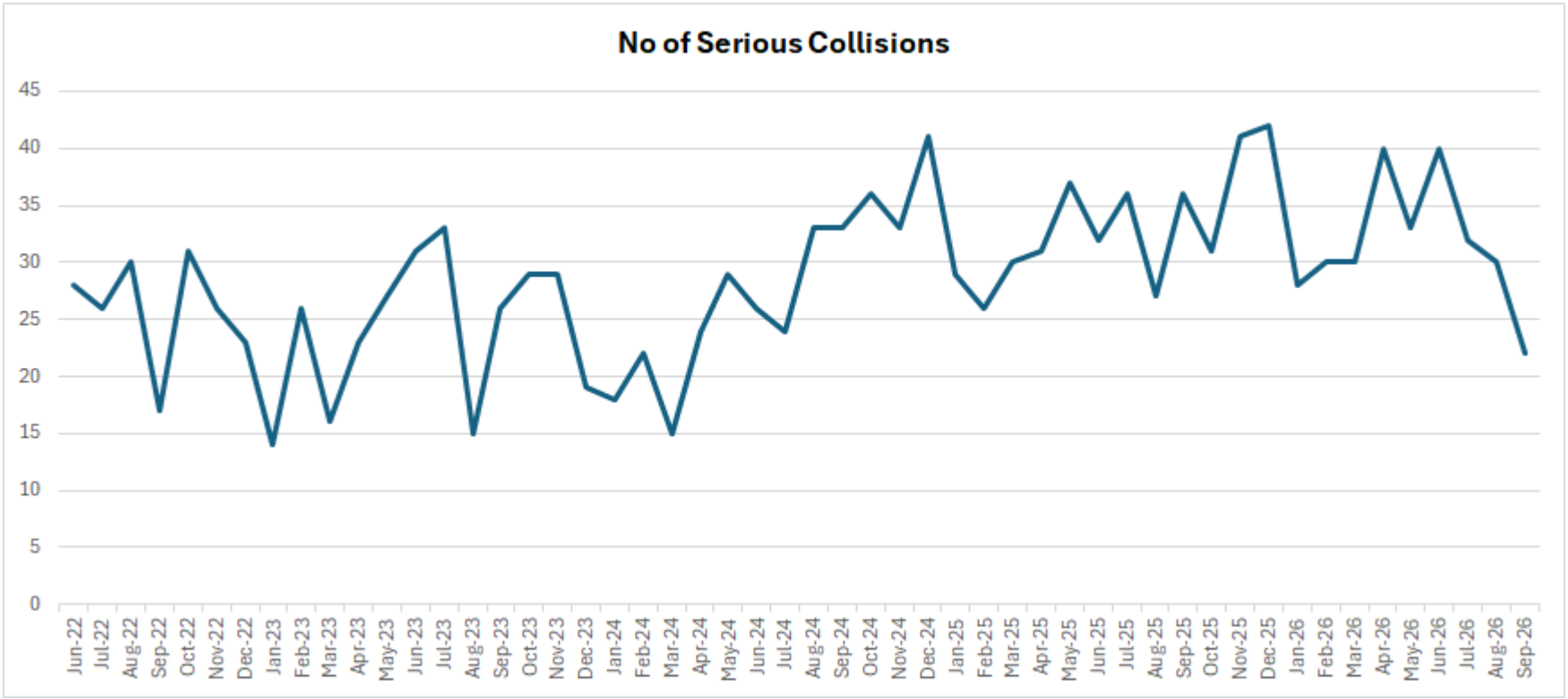
For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 1,302 fraud offences which is a 21% reduction on the same period last year.

Road Traffic Collisions - Fatal



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 29 collisions which resulted in a fatality compared to 26 in the previous year

Road Traffic Collisions – serious



For the 12 months to the end of October 2026 the Constabulary recorded 389 collisions which resulted in serious injury which is the same as the previous year.