



ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE

The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy



April 2016

Introduction

1. This document revises the priorities of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) for tackling organised crime from April 2016 onwards. The previous version is available online.¹ Organised crime is a significant issue for our community and this Strategy will help ensure that the Government and law enforcement focus our attention and efforts on those issues which will make the biggest difference in the ongoing fight.
2. What is organised crime? There are many definitions of "organised crime" but generally it involves a group of people involved in serious criminal activities with the aim of generating substantial profit. Violence or the threat of violence is used by organised criminals in some cases. In Northern Ireland there is the added dimension that organised crime groups can have paramilitary connections.
3. Organised crime groups, therefore, carry out their illegal activities for one reason - to make money with no concern for the distress and harm caused to their victims, whether individuals or businesses, to the economy or to the environment. Drug trafficking, human trafficking, counterfeiting, fuel laundering, tobacco smuggling, cyber crime and high value fraud are some of the better known organised crime types witnessed in Northern Ireland. More detail on organised crime, including on the threat areas can be found in the Organised Crime Task Force Annual Report and Threat Assessment.²
4. Organised crime groups continue to grow in sophistication and to become more and more innovative. The crimes they commit are increasingly enabled by advances in technology and communications. These criminal groups often do not care what crime they commit and can readily change to higher profit or lower risk areas.

¹<http://www.octf.gov.uk/OCTF/media/OCTF/images/publications/N.I.%20Organised%20Crime%20Strategy/OC-Crime-Strategy-document.pdf?ext=.pdf>

²<http://www.octf.gov.uk/OCTF/media/OCTF/documents/publications/OCTF-REPORT-2015-1.pdf?ext=.pdf>

5. The threat of organised crime is not confined by geographical boundaries. Offences are committed across the border into the Republic of Ireland, into the United Kingdom and further afield. International organised crime groups are known to target their activities in Northern Ireland both remotely, for instance via the internet, and through connections with associates here. Some organised crime groups operating in Northern Ireland have a mix of indigenous and foreign-national members.
6. The Fresh Start Agreement (November 2015)³ proposed a Joint Agency Task Force to enhance efforts to tackle cross-jurisdictional organised crime, including that linked to paramilitarism, and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of those involved in it. The Task Force is led by senior officers from the PSNI, An Garda Síochána, the Revenue Commissioners, HM Revenue and Customs and other law enforcement agencies. It consists of a Strategic Oversight Group to identify strategic priorities for combating cross-jurisdictional organised crime, and an Operations Co-ordination Group to coordinate joint operations and direct relevant resources in that context.

Organised Crime – Illustration of the problem in Northern Ireland:

- 14 organised crime groups dismantled in 2014/15, 80 frustrated or disrupted.
- 110 drug related deaths in 2014.⁴
- 45 potential victims of human trafficking recovered in 2014/15 and referred to the National Referral Mechanism.⁵
- While the picture is improving, illicit diesel is estimated to make up approximately 8% of the market in Northern Ireland.⁶
- Cyber crime is a major and growing problem for all sectors. In 2014/15 PSNI reported 826 incidents of recorded crime with cyber motivation.

³ <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/a-fresh-start-stormont-agreement.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp30.htm>

⁵ <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism>

⁶ HMRC Measuring Tax Gaps 2015 edition

7. Government and other agencies continue to fulfil their responsibilities to work together to tackle these serious crimes. The OCTF is a voluntary, multi-agency partnership, bringing together government, law enforcement, the Policing Board, Public Prosecution Service, the business community and others. It has a range of sub groups which continue to address the different crime types.⁷ Cross border partnership is also an important element of the OCTF. It works closely with An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Justice and Equality and others. The new Joint Agency Task Force will enhance that work.

8. The OCTF, however, cannot work in isolation and needs continued support and assistance, especially from the community and local businesses, for example, in reporting suspicions and in not supporting organised crime groups through the purchase of illegal fuel or counterfeit goods. It is only by working together, agencies backed by public support, that we will have greatest effect in reducing organised crime and its impact on individuals and society.

OCTF successes in 2014/15:

- 5,104 drug seizures and 2,831 arrests relating to drugs.
- 27 fuel laundering plants dismantled and 623,008 litres of illegal fuel seized.
- Tobacco seizures – 3,121,814 cigarettes, 860kg of hand rolling tobacco and 11 tonnes of raw, unprocessed tobacco.
- £2 million recovered through confiscation orders.
- More projects funded under the Assets Recovery Community Scheme - since 2011 nearly £3.5 million from recovered criminal assets has been distributed to good causes to prevent or reduce the fear of crime.
- In May 2015 the National Crime Agency was given full powers in Northern Ireland, with the use of constabulary powers subject to police agreement and to Policing Board scrutiny.

⁷ NI Annual Report and Threat Assessment 2015 – page 6
<http://www.octf.gov.uk/OCTF/media/OCTF/documents/publications/OCTF-REPORT-2015-1.pdf?ext=.pdf>

- 9. Why have a strategy? A strategy setting out a common vision is important as the OCTF partners have different roles, responsibilities, priorities and accountability structures. While the document is important for government and for agencies it is also a demonstration to the community of a joint commitment to tackle the issues.

- 10. The Strategy is a statement of what the OCTF partners will collectively set out to achieve. It focuses on strategic objectives in priority areas and it will be revised and updated as necessary. A report on achievement against the Strategy will be included in the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment.

- 11. The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy was first published in 2010 and was updated and republished in June 2014. The documents can be downloaded from the OCTF website.⁸ This document is a revision of the 2014 version.

- 12. The strategic objectives of the Strategy are broken down into three main areas:
 - the action which needs to be taken to further our aims;
 - the analysis of information which is necessary to inform our work;
 - and the raising of awareness of both organised crime and our work.

Action:
To make Northern Ireland a hostile environment for organised criminals.
Analysis:
To understand the threats and emerging organised crime trends in order to predict actions required and facilitate proactive responses.
Awareness:
To inform the public about organised crime trends and impacts and the work of the Organised Crime Task Force.

⁸ <http://www.octf.gov.uk/Publications/N-I-Organised-Crime-Strategy>

13. The strategic aims and targets within each of these areas are set out in the tables that follow.

ACTION

KEY OBJECTIVE: To make Northern Ireland a hostile environment for organised criminals.

Summary: Law enforcement agencies, statutory and prosecution authorities will take action against crime groups with a view to frustrating, disrupting and dismantling them, bringing them before the courts, prosecuting them, removing their assets and supporting those affected by organised crime.

Strategic Aim	Specific area	Actions/targets	Primary responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce the harm caused by organised crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor and intervene against organised crime groups in operation in Northern Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to the OCTF Strategy Group on the number of organised crime groups frustrated, disrupted and dismantled. Once every quarter. ○ To increase the number of organised crime groups whose activities have been frustrated, disrupted and/or dismantled by 3% compared to the number recorded in 2015/16. (Policing Board target). By March 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Analyst; OCTF Strategy Group. ○ PSNI and other OCTF partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance the response to organised crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective collaboration to tackle organised crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share information and learning about joint/multi operational activity. Report to the OCTF Strategy Group. Once every quarter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF partners; OCTF Strategy Group.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective liaison with UK, European and International agencies including Europol and Interpol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF partners to report to the OCTF Strategy Group on key initiatives/investigations. As appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF partners; OCTF Strategy Group; OCTF Sub Groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target resources at areas of greatest threat/ risk/ harm including crime groups linked to paramilitarism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint Agency Task Force to report to Intergovernmental Conference and OCTF Strategy Group. Twice yearly. ○ Ongoing meetings of Tactical Co-ordinating and Tasking Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint Agency Task Force; DOJ. ○ PSNI; OCTF partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Referrals for prosecution monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comparison of prosecution statistics against 2014/2015 baseline. Regular reports to OCTF Strategy Group. ○ Review effectiveness of Unduly Lenient Sentencing provision for fuel and tobacco excise evasion. Twice yearly – June and December. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PPS; ○ PSNI – on drugs and human trafficking; ○ NIEA; ○ HMRC – on money laundering. ○ HMRC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve the effectiveness of removing assets from criminals and confiscating their profits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure asset recovery is considered in appropriate circumstances and maximised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publish NI codes of practice under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA). By March 2016. ○ Implement amendments to POCA to bring the NI regime in line with the rest of the UK. Ongoing. ○ PSNI/HMRC/NCA to report to Strategy Group on civil recovery – number of referral/investigation cases, successes, barriers etc. Six monthly (April/Oct). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DOJ. ○ DOJ. ○ PSNI/HMRC/NCA.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow progress of the Home Office-led UK review of the Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Input to the UK SARs review. Take forward recommendations. Report back to OCTF Strategy Group. By December 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Criminal Finance Sub Group.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve the effectiveness of organised crime legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure organised crime legislation is relevant to current threats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep pace with developments in UK, Irish, EU and international law and consider relevance to Northern Ireland. Ongoing. ○ Scope legislation dealing with organised crime offences and make proposals for Northern Ireland. By June 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DOJ, with OCTF Legal Sub Group. ○ DOJ, with OCTF Sub Groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement legislation dealing with human trafficking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of secondary legislation under the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act 2015. Ongoing. Quarterly updates to OCTF Strategy Group. ○ Implementation of secondary legislation under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to Northern Ireland. Ongoing. Quarterly updates to OCTF Strategy Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DOJ. ○ DOJ.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target specific organised crime threat areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote awareness of cyber crime and cyber threats to individuals and businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Produce a cyber-strategy for business, community groups and public. By December 2016. ○ Develop a cyber diversionary project targeting young people. By September 2016. ○ Report to the OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups on PSNI initiatives, interventions and outcomes in relation to cyber dependent, enabled and facilitated crime. (Policing Board target). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Cyber Crime Group; OCTF Cyber Industries Group. ○ OCTF Cyber Crime Group; PSNI. ○ PSNI via OCTF Cyber Crime Group.

		Twice yearly following reports to the Policing Board.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prevent the passage of illicit people and goods including high value criminal assets – trafficked people, cash, drugs, and weapons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to the OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups. Once every quarter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Border Force and OCTF partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tackle human trafficking, slavery and forced labour and protect and support victims. ○ Effective arrangements in place to identify potential victims of human trafficking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluate the Human Trafficking Strategy and publish updated version. By September 2016. ○ Report to the OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups on PSNI initiatives, interventions and outcomes in the areas of human exploitation and trafficking (Policing Board target). Twice yearly following reports to the Policing Board. ○ Review arrangements for the National Referral Mechanism in Northern Ireland. By December 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DOJ; OCTF Immigration and Human Trafficking Sub Group. ○ PSNI via OCTF Immigration and Human Trafficking Sub Group. ○ DOJ.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduction in fuel fraud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review effectiveness of fuel marker. Report to OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups. June 2016 and December 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HMRC/OCTF Cross Border Fuel Sub Group.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduction in tobacco/cigarette crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups on trends, initiatives, interventions. June 2016 and December 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HMRC/Cross Border Tobacco Sub Group.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce harm from drugs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to the OCTF Stakeholder and Strategy Groups on initiatives, interventions and outcomes in relation to drugs. (Policing Board target). Twice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSNI with other OCTF partners.

		<p>yearly following reports to the Policing Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase by 3% the number of drugs seizures compared to the number recorded for 2015/2016 (Policing Board target). Twice yearly following reports to the Policing Board. ○ Monitor the implementation of the New Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. Report to OCTF Strategy Group at least twice yearly – August, February. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSNI and other partners via the OCTF Drugs Expert Group. ○ PSNI and other partners via the OCTF Drugs Expert Group.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective response to armed robbery, Tiger Kidnap and ATM physical attack incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor emerging trends from other jurisdictions and devise preventative strategies. Ongoing. ○ Produce a Tiger Kidnapping Staff Training Film. By November 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Armed Robbery Group. ○ OCTF Armed Robbery Group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised Crime Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing monitoring of this Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor strategy. At least three times per year – June, October, February. ○ Review strategy in OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment – Annually by June. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Strategy Group. ○ DOJ; OCTF Strategy Group.

ANALYSIS

KEY OBJECTIVE: To understand the threats and emerging organised crime trends in order to predict actions required and facilitate proactive responses.

Summary: To conduct research and analysis of current and emerging threats from organised crime groups to guide the direction of the collective resources of OCTF partners and to raise awareness across the board.

Strategic Aim	Specific area	Actions/targets	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand organised crime threats and emerging trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of information regarding organised crime and organised crime groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Analyst to give an overview at OCTF Strategy Group. Ongoing. ○ Annual assessment of threats and trends carried out for OCTF Annual Report. By June each year. ○ Bi-Annual assessment of cross-border organised crime threats/trends for publication at Organised Crime Cross Border Conference. September 2016. ○ Production of analytical profiles of individual crime types by request. Ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Analyst. ○ OCTF Analyst; DOJ; OCTF Strategy Group. ○ OCTF Analyst. ○ OCTF Analyst; OCTF partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to date knowledge of emerging threats in specific areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Produce reports on the emerging risks/threats. Ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Analyst.

AWARENESS

KEY OBJECTIVE: To inform the public about organised crime trends and impacts and the work of the Organised Crime Task Force.

Summary: To raise awareness of organised crime within Northern Ireland in terms of its impact and how the public and others, such as business, can help agencies to combat and prevent it. To communicate success against organised crime to provide assurance to the wider public.

Strategic Aim	Specific area	Actions/targets	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raise public awareness of organised crime and prevent people engaging in organised crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement Changing the Mindset (CTM) strategy– “the organised crime awareness raising and engagement strategy”.⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement CTM Action Plan. By September 2016 with Quarterly reports to the OCTF Strategy Group. ○ Maintain an OCTF publicity planner. Update quarterly. ○ OCTF Sub Groups to pass news stories/updates to Publicity Sub group. Ongoing. ○ Publication of significant convictions and law enforcement successes/operations. Target of two stories per month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DOJ and OCTF partners. ○ OCTF Publicity Group. ○ OCTF Sub Groups. ○ OCTF Publicity Group; OCTF Sub Groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote awareness of cyber threats to businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased reporting of cyber threats, fraud etc. Report twice yearly – June and December. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Cyber Crime Group/Industries Group.

⁹ OCTF website - Changing the Mindset Strategy 2013: <http://www.octf.gov.uk/OCTF/media/OCTF/images/publications/Changing-the-Mindset-Strategy-2013.pdf?ext=.pdf>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raise awareness of the dangers of organised crime e.g. drugs, counterfeit goods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPS drug event. Early 2016. ○ IPC awareness initiative targeting young people. By December 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OCTF Drugs Expert Group. ○ OCTF IPC Group.
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