

**CHANGING THE MINDSET
ORGANISED CRIME
AWARENESS RAISING AND
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**



November 2013

Awareness raising and engagement Strategy

This document sets out a practical, multi-faceted strategy developed by the Organised Crime Taskforce for changing public mindsets on organised crime. It builds on the research undertaken on behalf of the Organised Crime Task Force¹ as well as the experience of members of the Task Force sub-group on this issue. The Strategy recognises that organised crime can be addressed more effectively by engagement with the community.

It is clear that there are a number of target audiences for messages on the need to combat organised crime and a number of different ways of communicating with the various audiences. There is benefit in securing support to help spread messages about the impact of organised crime; that includes seeking to harness funding and assistance from outside Government. This Strategy will be kept under review by the Organised Crime Taskforce Strategy Group which will periodically update the OCTF Stakeholder Group.

The Strategy:

Aim

- **To harness the support and involvement of the general public and opinion formers to reduce the demand for products and services supplied by organised crime groups and to report suspicions, thereby reducing harm and criminality.**

How

- **To highlight that organised crime exists to feed the demand for services and goods in Northern Ireland;**

¹ The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) was established in 2000 to provide a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland. The OCTF does not assume an operational role this remains with the individual law enforcement agencies. The OCTF provides strategic direction through a partnership which is supported by a number of subgroups each dealing with specific operational and policy issues. There is a Changing the Mindset Subgroup.

- **To highlight the prevalence and nature of organised crime;**
- **To increase awareness and understanding of the threat and harm from organised crime;**
- **To highlight personal responsibility; and**
- **To challenge audiences to make a difference.**

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Background

1. From a Governmental and law enforcement perspective there is no doubting the impact of organised crime here. That is not only in terms of revenue lost, but also the impact on victims, business, environment, public safety etc. That includes those subjected to human trafficking, drugs deaths, kidnapping and extortion, fuel laundering etc. Our view is that organised crime is a threat to our society and not an inconvenience. Our view is also that in certain respects the public can often unwittingly or unthinkingly, contribute to the problem through purchasing of illegal goods or services. That gives organised crime gangs a demand and an income. We have looked at the statistical evidence on the public perception of organised crime. The Spring 2012 Digest of Information on the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System² found 95% of those surveyed thought there was a problem with organised crime in Northern Ireland with 46% of respondents considering this to be 'very serious'. In addition 80% of respondents believed individual victims suffered as a result of organised crime and 71% felt organised crime had an impact on the general public. Almost three-quarters (71%) of those taking part in the survey thought organised crime could lead to fear in the community.

2. By contrast, however, the Views on Organised Crime: Findings from the January 2013 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey³ showed that, when asked if they had been personally affected by organised crime in the last three years, the vast majority of respondents (92%) claimed organised crime had had no impact on them personally. This proportion was similar to that in 2012 when it was 91%.

² <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/compendia-publications-stats-and-research/digest-of-information-on-the-ni-criminal-justice-system---spring-2012.htm>

³ http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/views-on-organised-crime_-findings-from-the-january-2013-ni-omnibus-survey-published.htm

3. 35% of respondents to the Northern Ireland Crime Survey in 2010/11⁴ perceived “fear in the community” as the main harm caused by organised crime in Northern Ireland. Respondents were least likely to consider “a market flooded with inferior goods”, “less money available for public services” or “loss of jobs” (all 4-5%) as predominant harms associated with organised crime.

4. Overall, therefore, existence of organised crime as a concept is recognised as are the impacts but it is seen as a general, not a local/ personal, issue ie. it is seen to affect “someone else” and not be a concern to individuals.

5. The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) identified that more work needed to be carried out to drill down into the public perception of organised crime as, for instance, there was clearly a demand for products and services such as fake goods and illegal fuel. Research was, therefore, commissioned into organised crime and how public attitudes to it might be assessed, and changed, to reduce demand.

The cost of organised crime

6. A Home Office report from October 2013 gives the **social and economic costs** of organised crime to the UK as many billions of pounds. Drugs supply - £10.7 billion, organised fraud -£8.9 billion and organised immigration crime types -£1.0 billion; other less visible crimes also cause substantial harm. HM Government’s Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, 2013 estimates a total cost of at least £24 billion per year. The costs in Northern Ireland which, of course, has a border to exploit are not inconsequential.

7. It is impossible to quantify the human cost of organised crime. Human trafficking ruins lives; the drugs trade causes death as well as misery both to

⁴ <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-s-r/nics-2010-11-policing-justice-and-organised-crime-bulletin.pdf>

users and to their families; violent crime can have long lasting physical and psychological effects on victims. Cyber crime, an emerging and growing area, brings an element of fear to what is an increasingly mainstream way of doing business and interacting with others.

8. There are of course the associated costs to law enforcement, health services and social services. Legitimate businesses also bear significant costs in attempting to protect themselves against attacks, dealing with the consequences of crime and also in dealing with unfair competition from those operating outside the system.

Research report

9. The research established that there is a significant lack of knowledge of the scale or level of harm of such crime. It also found a perception that some organised crime is victimless. The report highlights the lack of appreciation of the personal role in preventing organised crime. Individuals were not “really” doing anything wrong or anything worse than anyone else – Government included.

10. A ‘Degrees of Criminality’ analysis demonstrated the differing significance which the public attributes to various types of criminal behaviour. A “not criminal” category included purchasing designer copies of goods and fake medicines. Avoiding tax on cigarettes and alcohol is considered “bordering on criminal”. Fuel fraud is recognised as “criminal”. Drugs supply and human trafficking is deemed “very criminal”.

11. The report found that the Government needed to understand the negative perceptions that exist and which are acting as a blockage to progress – i.e. “why should the public change their ways if Government are still the biggest criminal?”

Report - conclusions

12. The report concluded that:

- The public cannot make connections from their actions to organised criminality.
- Public ambivalence towards counterfeit goods, smuggled and laundered goods can only be transformed by making people see how the linkages across organised crime are personally relevant and harmful to them as individuals. To bring the risks home we need to show how they affect them and their children and neighbourhood.
- Encouragingly there is a hunger for awareness, education and explanation.
- Change can be made by hard hitting messages of personal relevance (not of impact on funding for services - but how crime hits people and local areas).
- The implementation of this strategy requires interlocking awareness campaigns and community engagement programmes, integrated together under a single social awareness brand with “aura and authority”.
- An effective campaign requires significant investment in marketing communications.

Research

13. The report suggested a multi-faceted approach to communications and provided a specific plan in relation to media advertising. It advised:

- Continuous interventions;
- Interlocking engagement and awareness programmes as well as ongoing enforcement;
- Stakeholder/ community engagement and
- A sustained investment to change mindsets.

The Way forward

14. This Strategy seeks to raise awareness and to change attitudes across the whole of society. The long term aim is to ensure that society is aware of how organised crime can impact on daily lives and how the public can lessen the effect and potential damage by changing their behaviour. It is recognised that this sort of shift in consciousness is a long term aspiration which will require a sustained campaign. We need to effect a change in the mindset of the public as to how organised crime is viewed.

15. The following approach has been identified for taking this important work forward:

- Identification of main messages for general use and specific messages for different organised crime areas;
- Identification of the wide array of target audiences and to identify those methods/ people best placed to interact with them as well as a priority order for tackling those audiences;
- To seek not only to inform, but where possible, co-opt audiences to work with us;
- To identify resource options (recognising that a lot can be done for little and that external resources may be required);
- To consider the case for advertising (bearing in mind the high cost and the need for a detailed business case and approvals); and
- To build the approach over time and to recognise the need for flexibility and review.

Main messages

16. The overarching messages which should be adopted by OCTF are:

- The nature and extent of organised crime.

- To show links between behaviour and victims of organised crime,
- Show how the linkages across organised crime are personally relevant and harmful to people as individuals/the society they live in, and
- Show that we are all responsible for making a difference.

17. The messages need to educate, highlight personal responsibility, challenge the audience and highlight consequences. They also need to be sustained to have greatest impact.

18. Looking at this the following themes were identified as those that should be adopted by OCTF members and their Press Officers when communicating on organised crime. Obviously the precise message will need to be tailored to the occasion, audience and medium and may need to be revised over time.

(A) General:

- Explain in clear terms what organised crime is and to set out the various forms.
- Organised Crime is about making money and the laws of supply and demand apply.
- Organised Crime affects all of our society.
- Organised Crime causes harm. We need to dispel the mythology (Pretty Woman v Human Trafficking; cheap DVDs v Child Labour).
- Highlight the links from one type of organised crime to another - revenue raised in one area can be spent on drugs sold to vulnerable/ young/ or on human trafficking.

- Money from organised crime keeps groups in business, preying on our society.
- Highlight successes/ custodial sentences.
- All forms of organised crime raise revenue.
- Organised crime makes perpetrators wealthy and victims suffer.
- Perpetrators will be pursued.
- Legitimate business is suffering.
- It is all crime.
- There are victims.
- Report suspicious activity to the police or Crimestoppers.

(B) Specific points for certain organised crime threats:

- Drugs – dangers to health, including death/ addiction/ vulnerable groups/ victims and crime
- Human Trafficking – demand exists/ creates misery/ prisoners/ coercion
- Laundered fuel – waste/ harm to your vehicle/ money used for other organised crime/damaging legitimate business
- Tobacco / alcohol – dangers to health
- Intellectual Property Crime (fake goods) – (the report shows the need to target age and income groups) – poor quality/ dangerous/ supports other organised crime/purchasing on the internet may expose bank details.

Target Groups

19. In terms of target audiences, these are numerous.

20. A set of priority target audiences has been identified. There will be others and therefore the list will be amended over time. We have also developed high level messages. Some audiences, once briefed, will be encouraged to help pass on the messages while others are recipients. It is crucial to identify the priority for targeting the audiences given the limited resources. In other words, where would effort best be spent first? The groups considered include:

'GROUP' / BODY
Public
First Minister/ deputy First Minister
Executive Ministers
Departments
MLAs
Law Enforcement Agencies
All Party Group on Human Trafficking
Health Board/Trusts
Councils
PCSPs
Solicitors/ Barristers
Schools
Universities
Prisons
Judiciary
Churches
Community Groups
GPs/ hospitals
Chemists/ Pharmacies
Farmers
Taxi Drivers
Hauliers

Accountants/ financial advisers
Media
Estate agents
Restaurants
Other businesses
Student Teachers/ Nurses
Post Offices
Money Service Bureaux/Banks
Sports Groups
Community Groups
Women's Groups
Internet Providers
Non Governmental Organisations

Each of these groups has a part to play but we need to do more than merely inform. A number of these groups are influential and we want to seek their support and for them to be part of the programme of change. We want them to embrace the strategy in a number of ways by being:

- i. **A**sks to identify areas they can change in their sectors that would positively affect the environment and reduce risk from organised crime;
- ii. **B**riefed on the threat, risk and harm of organised crime in their sector;
- iii. **C**hallenged on where their sectors may be vulnerable and where changes in policy, practice, knowledge or understanding may positively change behaviour; and
- iv. **D**irected to take certain actions where there is a statutory ability or influence;

Formats:

21. Possible avenues of communication were also considered. These include:

- Speeches/ articles
- Internet generally
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Radio interviews/ articles
- Newspaper interviews
- TV interviews
- Advertising: TV/ radio / billboards / internet / cinema/ buses
- Direct mail
- Washrooms
- Conferences/ events (including publicity for these)
- Publicity for successes; seizures, charges and prosecutions.
- Promotional items

22. Formats need to be matched to the target audiences, and consideration given to which will provide the most effective outcomes.

Advertising

23. The final area considered was advertising. This is separated out in this document as it is a high cost, specialised area. The need for considerably

more work on a business case/ options appraisal etc is recognised, as well as the need to identify funding both internally and from private sources. Executive approval is ultimately required.

24. Possible sources of funding for advertising are:

- Department of Justice budget
- Recovered criminal assets (Assets Recovery Community Scheme/ARCS)
- Health (re human trafficking/ drugs)
- Law enforcement agencies (eg criminal confiscation money).
- Business (Private sector)
- Elsewhere

25. In respect of business it is clear that some would have an interest in a reduction in organised crime in their areas. To persuade them to contribute however, we will need to demonstrate a return for their investment, as well as pressing the message regarding public good. We will cost any plans and put in place, as far as possible, mechanisms for evaluation.

Evaluation

26. Given the potential investment involved it is important that we build in evaluation of activity from the start.

27. The aim of the project is to enhance the public's understanding of organised crime to help them realise how it can affect their community. We would also like to see more reporting of suspicions and less demand for illicit services.

28. The question is how to measure and evaluate progress. Our key baseline statistics include the perceptions of levels of organised crime and its effects which we detailed earlier. We will want to see a move in these figures in subsequent surveys to show an increasing understanding of the extent to which organised crime can impinge on the day to day life of all citizens.

29. We will also have quantitative measures such as the number of groups of crime gangs caught and disrupted etc. These, however, may not give a full picture. We will consider other options as the work rolls out.

30. One significant effect we are seeking from raising consciousness of organised crime activity is a reduction in behaviour which supports it. This reduction in demand should ultimately lead to a reduction in activity. We will therefore need to monitor activity within Northern Ireland in areas such as excise fraud and seizures of counterfeit goods.

31. Of course if a full scale advertising campaign is commissioned, monitoring of effectiveness would be built into the contract.

Conclusion

32. The OCTF, on the basis of research, has identified the core messages the OCTF should be employing to raise awareness and understanding of organised crime. This strategy document has been produced to take those messages from the research report and to identify how they can be put into practical effect. We have identified target audiences, high level messages, but still need to consider funding opportunities and evaluation of the success of approaches taken.

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