



# **ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE**

## **The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy**



**June 2014**

## Introduction

1. This document sets out the Organised Crime Task Force's (OCTF) priorities for tackling organised crime. Organised crime is a significant issue for our community and this strategy will ensure that we focus our attention and efforts on those issues which will make the biggest difference in the ongoing fight.
2. Organised criminal groups 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.
3. Organised crime groups are growing in sophistication and becoming more and more innovative. The crime they commit is increasingly enabled by advances in technology and communications. These criminal groups often do not care what crime they commit and will readily change tack to higher profit or lower risk areas.

### **Illustration of the problem:**

- 63 organised crime groups have been frustrated, disrupted or dismantled in Northern Ireland during 2013/14
- 110 drug related deaths in Northern Ireland in 2012<sup>1</sup>
- During 2013/14: 38 potential victims of human trafficking were recovered
- Illicit diesel is estimated to make up approximately 12-13% of the market in Northern Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

4. The threat of organised crime is not confined by geographical boundaries and these criminals can also commit offences across the border into the Republic

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp30.htm>

<sup>2</sup> HMRC Measuring Tax Gaps 2013 edition

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. A significant number of groups here have a paramilitary connection.

5. Government and other agencies continue to fulfil their responsibilities to work together to tackle this serious crime type. Structures such as the OCTF and a range of sub groups<sup>3</sup> have, therefore, been established. The OCTF is a voluntary, multi-agency partnership, bringing together government, law enforcement, the Policing Board, Public Prosecution Service, the business community and others. Cross border partnership is an important element of the OCTF, therefore, we work closely with An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Justice and Equality and others.
6. The OCTF, however, cannot work in isolation and needs continued support and assistance, especially from individuals in the community and local businesses, in reporting suspicions and, indeed, in not supporting organised crime groups by buying illegal fuel or counterfeit goods. It is only by working together – agencies with public support - that we will have greatest effect in reducing organised crime and its impact on individuals and society.
7. A Strategy setting out a common vision is important as the OCTF partners have different roles, responsibilities, priorities and accountability structures. This Strategy is a statement of what the OCTF partners will collectively set out to achieve in the coming months. It focuses on strategic objectives in priority areas. It is a living document. In other words it will be revised and updated as necessary and updates will be posted on the OCTF website. In addition a report on the achievement against the Strategy will be included in the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment.

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<sup>3</sup>NI Annual Report and Threat Assessment  
[http://www.octf.gov.uk/Publications/Category-3-\(3\).aspx](http://www.octf.gov.uk/Publications/Category-3-(3).aspx)

**Successes:**

- During 2013/14 - 4,825 drug seizures were made with a value of almost £10 million
- During 2013/14 - 38 fuel laundering plants were closed – up from 22 in the previous year
- 2013 saw the addition of excise evasion on fuel and tobacco to those offences where sentences in the Crown Court can be referred to the Court of Appeal by the Director of Public Prosecutions where they are felt to be unduly lenient.

8. The strategic objectives are broken down into three main areas – the analysis of information which is necessary to inform our work; the action which needs to be taken to further our aims; and the raising of awareness of both organised crime and our work. Our Strategic aims and targets within each of these areas are set out below:

## ACTION

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

**Summary:** Law enforcement agencies, statutory and prosecution authorities to 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	General activity	Actions/targets	Primary responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reduce the harm caused by organised crime.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce the number of organised crime groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Report to the Strategy Group on the number of organised crime groups frustrated, disrupted and dismantled – <b>six monthly</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OCTF Partners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Effective collaboration to lead work against organised crime.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Effectiveness of PSNI-led Tactical Co-ordinating and Tasking Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of Group operation/function. <b>By October 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PSNI with operational partners</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review organised crime elements of cross border policing strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publication of cross border policing strategy. <b>By Autumn 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ with OCTF operational partners.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Human Trafficking Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To review the Human Trafficking Action Plan and to publish a revised version. <b>By June 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ Immigration and Human Trafficking sub group/Engagement Group</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Improve the effectiveness in seizing assets from criminals and confiscating their profits.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review approach to ensure asset recovery is considered and maximised in every case.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review current confiscation arrangements. <b>By October 2014.</b></li> <li>○ Based on the outcome of the review set a baseline and target level of recovery against confiscation orders. <b>By Dec 2014.</b></li> <li>○ Agree baseline and target for civil recovery. <b>By October 2014</b></li> <li>○ Identify and promote measures to maximise the use of Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) and improve the submission of same by accountants, solicitors and other professionals. <b>By December 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ led review group</li> <li>○ Review group</li> <li>○ NCA</li> <li>○ OCTF Criminal Finance Sub Group</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCA - to review operational implications of the NCA not having devolved powers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Report to OCTF Strategy Group. <b>By Oct 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCA/PSNI</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCA - to review approach to civil recovery in light of restricted powers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Report to OCTF Strategy Group. <b>By Oct 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCA.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Review Organised Crime legislation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement legislation dealing with human trafficking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lead work on behalf of the Justice Minister and OCTF interests in relation to Lord Morrow's Bill. <b>Ongoing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ and Immigration and Human Trafficking sub group</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make recommendations for extension of relevant elements of Modern Slavery Bill to Northern Ireland. <b>In September 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider legislative opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider applicability of Serious Crime Bill proposed clauses to Northern Ireland. <b>By June 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pursue Legislative Consent as appropriate. <b>By October 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Fuel fraud.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implementation of new fuel marker project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New fuel marker to be introduced, including communication plan. <b>By Aug 2015</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HMRC/Cross Border Fuel Sub Group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reduce harm from drugs.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of New Psychoactive Substances – looking at nature of market and effectiveness of UK’s current legislative and operational response</li> <li>○ Tackling the use of cyber and technological advances, the postal system, container shipping and air freight to import drugs into NI;</li> <li>○ Work with Border Policing Command and International Partners to interdict drugs importations and reduce the availability of drugs to Northern Ireland;</li> <li>○ Tackle the trafficking of drugs within the prison estate by organised criminals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shadow Home Office review and report to Strategy Group. <b>By Summer 2014</b></li> <li>○ Report to Strategy group – <b>six monthly (Sept/Mar)</b></li> <li>○ Report to Strategy group – <b>six monthly (Sept/Mar)</b></li> <li>○ Report to Strategy group – <b>six monthly (Sept/Mar)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DHSSPS; OCTF Drugs Expert Group.</li> <li>○ OCTF Drugs Expert Group and Cyber Crime sub group</li> <li>○ OCTF Drugs Expert Group</li> <li>○ OCTF Drugs Expert Group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Organised Crime Strategy.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OCTF Strategy Group to monitor the strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OCTF review <b>three times per year – Sept, Jan, May</b></li> <li>○ Comprehensive review of strategy in Annual Report and Threat Assessment. <b>Annually</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OCTF Strategy Group.</li> <li>○ OCTF Strategy Group.</li> </ul>

○ <b>Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland – An Inspection of Serious and Organised Crime</b>	○ Respond as appropriate to CJINI report	○ Target date TBC when report received – <b>expected Summer 2014</b>	○ DOJ and OCTF partners
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## ANALYSIS

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

**Summary:** To conduct research and analysis of current and emerging threats from organised crime groups to enable the direction of the collective resources of OCTF partners and to assist in the raising of awareness.

Strategic Aim	General activity	Actions/targets	Responsibility
○ <b>Understand organised crime threats and emerging trends.</b>	○ Collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of information regarding organised crime and organised crime groups.	○ OCTF Analyst to report to OCTF Strategy Group <b>once every two months.</b>	○ OCTF Analyst
		○ Annual assessment of threats and trends for OCTF Annual Report in <b>April/May.</b>	○ OCTF Strategy Group.
		○ Production of analytical profiles of individual crime types on emerging threats or by request. <b>Ongoing.</b>	○ OCTF Analyst; OCTF partners.
	○ Keep up to date with emerging threats in specific areas	○ Produce reports on the emerging risks/threats from the production and supply of new and synthetic drugs – <b>six monthly</b>	○ Drugs sub group



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce reports on developments in the technology sector to address potential vulnerabilities for law enforcement from e-money, pre-paid cards and emerging virtual payment systems – <b>six monthly</b></li> <li>○ Analyse the scale and impact of cyber crime on business community. <b>By Dec 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Criminal Finance sub group and Cyber Crime sub group</li> <li>○ Cyber crime sub group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Ensure organised crime legislation is relevant to current threats.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep pace with developments in UK, Irish, EU and international legislation and consider relevance to Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of legislative gaps and identify any new proposals. <b>By March 2015</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ, with Legal Sub-Group.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monitor sentencing patterns in Northern Ireland in strategic areas compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of sentencing on armed robbery in Northern Ireland versus the rest of the United Kingdom. <b>By October 2014</b></li> <li>○ Review of sentencing in relation to supply of drugs in Northern Ireland versus the rest of the United Kingdom. <b>By October 2014</b></li> <li>○ Review of sentencing in relation to money laundering offences in Northern Ireland versus the rest of the United Kingdom. <b>By October 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Armed Robbery sub-group to commission</li> <li>○ Drugs Expert Group to commission</li> <li>○ Criminal Finance sub group to commission</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Analysis of impact of Unduly Lenient Sentencing legislation on fuel fraud.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Report on number of cases referred and outcome. <b>By December 2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HMRC, PPS, DOJ.</li> </ul>

## 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 thereby providing assurance to the wider public.

Strategic Aim	General activity	Actions/targets	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Raise public awareness of organised crime.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement the Changing the Mindset (CTM) strategy <sup>4</sup>– the organised crime awareness raising and engagement strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement CTM Action Plan. <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>○ <b>Quarterly</b> reports to Strategy Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DOJ and OCTF partners.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Provide public with advice on crime prevention measures for specific threats.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Change the public’s awareness of the risks of crime both to themselves and others and how to avoid either becoming a victim or unwittingly supporting criminal activity.</li> <li>○ Engage and expand upon established education and community awareness programmes to deter involvement in criminal activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Report to Strategy group – <b>six monthly (Sept/Mar)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All sub groups</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> [Corporate Site - Changing the Mindset Strategy 2013](#)