



**ORGANISED
CRIME**
TASK FORCE

Annual Report &
Threat Assessment
2018-19



Organised Crime in Northern Ireland

www.octf.gov.uk

CORRIGENDUM

In the 2017/18 OCTF Annual Report a figure of 183 was recorded as the number of OCGs frustrated, disrupted or dismantled. However this was the number of "successful interventions". The actual total in 2017/18 was 99 OCGs frustrated, disrupted or dismantled (35 frustrated, 49 disrupted and 15 dismantled).

Foreword

In the continued absence of a Minister for Justice, I am pleased to introduce the seventeenth edition of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) Annual Report and Threat Assessment which reports on the collective successes of the multi-agency partnership during 2018/2019.

I am very proud of the combined efforts of the OCTF partners and of the contribution the OCTF makes to the overall fight against organised crime. I want again to put on record my particular gratitude to operational colleagues for their ongoing efforts throughout the reporting year.

Over the last financial year the partner agencies have carried out operations which have helped to protect the public in Northern Ireland: 105 successful interventions which resulted in a total of 72 organised crime groups being frustrated, disrupted or dismantled; and 59 potential victims of modern slavery recovered from exploitation. Many dangerous commodities have been taken off the streets: 7,490 drug seizure incidents were recorded by the PSNI, an increase of 9% in incidents recorded in 2017/18; and illicit goods prevented from entering Northern Ireland included one million cigarettes, 9.2Kg of Class A drugs and 92 offensive weapons. The total value of criminal recovery receipts paid under Confiscation Orders was approximately £1.4million.

Organised crime is neither victimless nor discriminatory: the problems caused by organised crime can and do affect all of us, whether individually, through business or at societal and community levels. Of particular note has been the sustained period of attacks on ATMs that were experienced by communities across Northern Ireland during this financial year. These attacks were generally carried out using stolen plant machinery and often resulted in significant damage to the buildings that housed the cash machine. Not only did many businesses struggle to recover from the impact of these attacks, but also in the aftermath local communities - particularly in rural areas - suffered the loss of a banking facility and the associated convenience of a local grocery store; some had to travel a considerable distance to visit the closest bank facility. I am pleased to be able to report that PSNI's concerted efforts in responding to these attacks has resulted in the successful disruption of a number of organised crime groups. Complementing the operational response from PSNI, the OCTF's Armed Robbery and Extortion sub group published advice

to communities that has highlighted the practical, preventative steps that owners of farm vehicles and plant machinery can take to protect their property and help frustrate potential attacks. This is just one example of how the collaborative efforts of the OCTF can support operational law enforcement in responding to organised crime.

Looking forward to the year ahead, the UK's decision to leave the EU will affect work on organised crime as it will all areas. A key challenge with any change which affects the ease of trade or the tariffs associated with trade is that opportunities are created for illegal trade. In respect of law enforcement, criminals will seek to exploit any such new opportunities.

The successful combatting of organised crime requires strong international co-operation. Some aspects of that cooperation are specifically enabled by EU membership and it will be important, whether the UK leaves with or without a deal, to find ways either to replicate these measures or to put in place replacement approaches which minimise the impact on operational efficiency, speed and cost.

Most fundamentally, however, the fight against organised crime can only be fully effective when it has the support of the whole community for a culture of lawfulness throughout Northern Ireland. This means saying "No" to counterfeit, illicit goods and refusing to tolerate other criminal activity, such as drug dealing, intellectual property crime or extortion.

I would like to thank the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the National Crime Agency, Border Force, the Home Office, the Northern Ireland Departments and all who have contributed to this Report and the successes recorded in it.



PETER MAY
Permanent Secretary,
Department of Justice
September 2019



Everyone's help is
needed to combat
organised crime...

Don't support it,
report it!

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

PSNI	101
HMRC HOTLINE	0800 788 887
CRIMESTOPPERS	0800 555 111
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME	028 90 569453
ACTION FRAUD	0300 123 2040
CONSUMERLINE	0300 123 6262
MODERN SLAVERY	0800 0121 700

Contents

OCTF ANNUAL REPORT AND THREAT ASSESSMENT 2018/19

Chapter 1	Introduction – about the Organised Crime Task Force	5
Chapter 2	The Threat and OCTF Response in 2018/19	11
	• 2.1 Cyber crime	14
	• 2.2 Drugs	18
	• 2.3 Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking	24
	• 2.4 Organised Immigration Crime	33
	• 2.5 Border Crime	35
	• 2.6 Criminal Finance	39
	• 2.7 Intellectual Property Crime	42
	• 2.8 Armed Robbery and Extortion	47
	• 2.9 Excise Evasion and Tax Fraud	49
	• 2.10 Environmental Crime	54
	• 2.11 National Crime Agency	56
	• 2.12 Social Security Benefit Fraud	57
	• 2.13 Prosecution Decisions	59
Chapter 3	Raising Public Awareness	62
Chapter 4	Assets Recovery - ARIS & ARCS Funding	63
Appendix 1	OCTF Partner Organisations	72
Appendix 2	Paramilitary Crime Task Force - Executive Action Plan and Operational Results	73
Appendix 3	Other Useful Contacts	76



i CHAPTER 1

About the Organised Crime Task Force



Introduction & Strategic Context

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) has been providing a strategic multi-agency forum since 2000 in order to tackle organised crime and reduce the harm it causes to communities, individuals and businesses in Northern Ireland.

This Annual Report and Threat Assessment:

- sets out the current assessed threat from organised crime in Northern Ireland;
- outlines how the member agencies of the OCTF have been confronting the threat, both collectively and individually, including any results and successes that have been achieved;
- notes emerging threats and developments; and seeks to provide guidance to the public in Northern Ireland – whether individuals, families, communities

or businesses – about steps they can take both to protect themselves and others from the harm caused by organised crime, and to help secure a safe community in Northern Ireland, where organised criminals and their activities are not tolerated and where we respect the law and each other.

What is organised crime?

Organised crime generally involves a group of two or more people who are engaged in serious criminal activities, usually with the aim of generating material gain. It is usually profit-driven and may take many forms, including cyber crime, drug trafficking, modern slavery, counterfeiting, fuel laundering, tobacco smuggling, fraud or money laundering. In some cases organised crime may involve violence or the threat of violence and some organised crime groups in Northern Ireland also have paramilitary connections.

The harm caused by organised crime is wide reaching and again can take many forms. Individuals and businesses may suffer financial and reputational loss from fraud, cyber-attack, or from disputable traders offering lower prices by operating outside the law. The illegal sale of counterfeit goods may pose health and safety risks to consumers, or may help to fuel further harm to communities and individuals through other forms of organised crime, such as

drugs trafficking. Organised criminals also harm our environment and again jeopardise health and safety through fuel laundering or through illegal dumping of waste. The wider impacts of organised crime gangs and paramilitary groups may also be felt by communities affected by coercive control and fear; or through excise and tax fraud that robs the wider public of the money needed to deliver public services.

The OCTF was established in 2000 as a means to facilitate a strategic and collaborative response to the threat posed by organised crime in Northern Ireland. It provides strategic leadership and supports a collaborative, joined-up response to the threat posed by organised crime through multi-agency partnership working.

The OCTF is chaired by the Department of Justice. Its Strategy Group includes senior representation from statutory and law enforcement partners and provides oversight across a number of thematic subgroups that are tasked with delivery of strategic objectives. The current structure of the OCTF includes thematic subgroups on criminal finance, smuggling, drugs, cyber crime, immigration and modern slavery, intellectual property crime and armed robbery and extortion.

Member organisations include relevant Government departments, law enforcement agencies, the Public Prosecution Service, the Northern Ireland Policing Board and representatives from the business community (see Appendix 1); An Garda Síochána is also represented to ensure effective cross-border co-operation.

Throughout the reporting year the OCTF has continued to meet and has provided a space for information, intelligence and expertise to be shared, as well as supporting the development of operational partnerships. The OCTF also has an important communications role, including informing the public about emerging threats and about the steps they can take to protect themselves and their businesses from the harm of organised crime.

Collectively, OCTF agencies have been responsible for recovering criminal assets through the effective use of powers under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, with much of this funding being reinvested either into projects aimed at benefitting communities by tackling crime and reducing the fear of crime (through the Assets Recovery Community Scheme, or 'ARCS') or into reinforcing law enforcement's capability to disrupt criminal activity through the pursuit of further criminal assets (through the Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme, or 'ARIS').

Together the OCTF partner agencies are committed to the continued frustration, disruption and dismantling of organised crime groups in Northern Ireland. However, just as organised crime can affect individuals and business across the wider community, so we all can play a part in stopping it. Organised crime is driven by profit and so can only exist where there is a demand for its commodities, whether drugs, cheap counterfeit goods or services provided through human exploitation. Tackling organised crime effectively therefore requires a whole societal response. It needs us, both collectively and individually, to recognise the harm that is caused by organised crime, to promote a culture of lawfulness and to take the necessary steps to end the harm.

A changing strategic context

The work of the OCTF and its partner agencies is informed by the wider strategic context internationally and nationally, as well as taking account of emerging developments and inter-dependencies within Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland.

In order to ensure that our understanding of the organised crime threats facing Northern Ireland is as comprehensive and as informed as possible we work closely with counterparts in neighbouring jurisdictions and we are represented at a UK national level on

strategic groups in response to serious and organised crime, modern slavery and economic crime. The OCTF also complements and aligns with work being taken forward through the delivery of the **Executive Action Plan to Tackle Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime** (see Appendix 2), as well as with the operational focus of both the cross-jurisdictional **Joint Agency Task Force** and the **Paramilitary Crime Task Force**.

Impact of EU Exit

Clearly the UK's scheduled withdrawal from the European Union on 31 October 2019 poses significant challenges for Government, business and the wider public across the UK; the scale of these challenges is not yet fully known and the potential long term impacts will require analysis and an operational response.

The successful combatting of organised crime requires strong international co-operation. Some aspects of that cooperation are specifically enabled by EU membership and it will be important, whether the UK leaves with or without a deal, to find ways either to replicate these measures or to put in place replacement approaches which minimise the impact on operational efficiency, speed and cost.

We know that criminals will seek to exploit any new opportunities under any scenario. Northern Ireland's unique position, both geographically as the only part of the UK to share a land border with the EU and in terms of the proposed temporary tariff arrangements means that any changes to the terms of trade are likely to give rise to opportunity for increases in tariff evasion, smuggling, and VAT fraud by organised criminals. These opportunities are likely to extend to sectors not currently the subject of significant organised crime exploitation including agri-food. There may also be an increased level of non-compliance by previously compliant businesses due to the limited preparedness of micro and small businesses for changes to importing and exporting.

The Department for the Economy's report "Northern Ireland Trade and Investment Data Under No Deal"¹ sets out the range of direct and indirect impacts that Northern Ireland would face in a No Deal exit, including that No Deal could jeopardise jobs, lead to a sharp rise in unemployment and that it would have immediate and severe consequences for Northern Ireland's competitiveness in both the all-island economy and in the UK internal market. The impact of EU tariffs and non-tariff barriers would mean that many businesses could no longer export profitably to the EU. Separately Northern Ireland businesses would have increased vulnerability to low cost non-EU imports in both the GB and Northern Ireland market, with risks and pressures felt most acutely within the agri-food sector.

While the arrangements which will pertain after the UK leaves the EU are not yet known, there is an increased risk that organised criminals will seek to exploit the incentives that would arise as a result of any tariff differentials or tariff barriers, through increased levels of tariff evasion, smuggling, VAT fraud and non-compliance and excise fraud. There may be incentives to smuggle goods from Ireland or through Northern

Ireland and into the GB market in order to evade UK tariffs and/or similar incentives for smuggling products from Northern Ireland (or from the UK via Northern Ireland) into the Republic of Ireland. Our assessment is that a No Deal scenario will lead to changes in criminal behaviours, with potential new criminal markets for previously legitimate commodities.

Given the potential for an economic shock to affect Northern Ireland on leaving the EU, and particularly in a No Deal scenario, there is a heightened risk that:

- organised criminal activity will expand into new sectors potentially fuelling and financing further criminality which will inflict harm on communities;
- the increased threat from organised criminality will be in the context of legitimate businesses being required to work within new arrangements including for tariffs and VAT.
- Organised crime groups will seek to undercut legitimate businesses, further heightening the financial pressures they will already be experiencing as a result of a No Deal exit.

Such behavioural changes present a wider risk to the culture of lawfulness.

The OCTF has a significant role to play in mapping, collating and analysing emerging on-the-ground information from agencies working across Northern Ireland about the type of behavioural changes that might indicate a rise in organised criminality in certain sectors, or other emerging trends. Key partners from across departments, regulators and law enforcement have been identified to meet on a regular basis to broaden the understanding of current legitimate markets in terms of values, volumes, tariffs and existing threats from organised criminality activity. The group will share information, intelligence and data sets on an ongoing basis. Arrangements will be put in place to share analysis and recommendations with the group, which can feed back into agencies, and with the OCTF Strategy Group, on both a regular reporting basis and with proactive "real time" information when necessary. By collectively getting ahead of the threat, the OCTF Strategy Group and its operational partners can guide and direct appropriate and effective operational responses.

¹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-trade-and-investment-data-under-no-deal>

A new strategic response

Against this strategic context of emerging pressures and challenges and of an increasing threat from organised criminality, it is clear, perhaps more than ever before, that for our response to be effective we need to work together collaboratively and efficiently, with partnerships across Government, law-enforcement, private sector and wider civic society.

OCTF partner agencies are currently working towards the publication of a new Organised Crime Strategy for Northern Ireland. Much good progress has already been made to set the new strategic direction and articulate the strategic framework that will underpin the new strategy. The new draft strategy aims to protect citizens, communities and business in Northern Ireland from organised criminals and to deliver the following strategic outcomes:

- Northern Ireland is a better place to live and do business;
- reduced levels of organised crime affecting Northern Ireland;
- reduction in harm caused by organised crime affecting Northern Ireland; and
- a sustainable, efficient and effective system for tackling organised crime.

The OCTF's Strategy Group has identified and agreed a number of objectives that will underpin delivery of these strategic outcomes and around which the draft strategy will be structured. These include:

- continuous pursuit of organised criminals;
- improved understanding of the emerging and existing threats;
- access to effective powers, tools and legislation to tackle organised crime affecting Northern Ireland;
- ensure citizens, communities and businesses are equipped to protect themselves against organised crime;
- effective joined-up working to deter people from being involved, or re-engaging in, organised crime; and
- an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

We hope to publish the refreshed Organised Crime Strategy for Northern Ireland in coming months.



 CHAPTER 2

The Threat and OCTF Response in 2018/19



The Threat and OCTF Response in 2018/19

Organised Crime has a daily impact on citizens, public services, businesses and institutions and the financial cost of organised crime does not, by itself, capture the harm caused to those affected.

It can have a devastating effect on individuals and communities as criminals target members of the public to defraud in new ways, exploit the vulnerable and use violence to dominate communities.

This chapter sets out the operational results achieved by the OCTF member agencies during 2018 /19 against the various organised crime trends. They represent examples of successes delivered by OCTF partners, either working independently or on a multi-agency basis, for example through the collective operational activity of the **Paramilitary Crime Task Force**. It also seeks to provide guidance about steps that individuals can take to protect themselves and others from the harm caused by organised crime.

Result Highlights in 2018/19



PSNI

Restraint Orders
£5.8 million

Cash Forfeitures
£1.5 million

Confiscation Orders
£602k

NIEA

4 Confiscation Orders
worth **£455,676**

4 Restraint Orders worth
£11.5 million

HMRC

Overall revenue
protected
<£1 billion

Approx
£1.4 million
recovered from
criminal assets



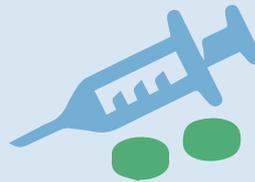
105 interventions

72 OCGs frustrated, disrupted or dismantled

SEIZURE OF ILLICIT GOODS BY BORDER FORCE



1 million
cigarettes



9.2 Kg
of Class A drugs



€206,800
seized under the Proceeds
of Crime Act 2002

36.5 Kg
cannabis



92 offensive
weapons



59 potential victims of
modern slavery recovered



1,975 cyber
crime-enabled crimes
reported to PSNI



7,490
PSNI drug seizures

2.1 CYBER CRIME

THE THREAT

Criminal activity facilitated by technology and globalisation continues to be a prominent feature of crime in Northern Ireland and is growing in sophistication and reach. As cyber-enabled crime continues to expand the use of digital and cyber environments in traditional crime is growing rapidly with almost every conventional crime type now having a digital footprint. In particular, cyber-enabled fraud is a major growth area in cyber offending with offenders developing ever more convincing ways to defraud members of the public.

A reluctance to report cyber crimes means that the true extent of the problem remains unknown and is the main challenge for law enforcement in tackling cyber crime.

In Northern Ireland the more common types of cyber crime includes organised crime group (OCG) activity such as ransomware attacks and Business Email Compromise (BEC) or Business Email Spoofing (BES).

Identity theft and fraud incidents via phishing/smishing also continue to feature prominently in the Northern Ireland profile. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks continue to be reported, although the attacks are being less successful due to advances in technology. There is an increasing trend in offenders targeting a single victim (usually a financial provider) through multiple attacks to achieve maximum impact, for example, malware and data theft attacks.

The trade in criminal commodities such as firearms, drugs and crime as-a-service via the Darkweb continues to feature and is likely to develop further. The ability to purchase capability in this way is an area of increasing concern as this negates the need for OCGs and offenders to develop their own technical expertise. The use of the Darkweb in general is becoming increasingly common as more people become familiar with how to use it.

The increasing dependence of society on technology, alongside advances in this field, will also have a significant impact on the profile of crime in the medium to long term. As technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), autonomous systems and encryption continue to evolve, use amongst offenders and the public will increase. Advancing technology also gives offenders new tools to commit and hide their crimes. Criminals are able to sell drugs and firearms, share indecent images of children or hack into national infrastructure from anywhere in the world, all while communicating covertly through encrypted services, making disruption and detection extremely difficult.

PSNI cyber crime officers continue to work in partnership with private businesses and local government agencies to run joint cyber awareness events for businesses. With the adoption of Area Cyber Liaison Officers, the Cyber Crime Centre continues to encourage local Districts and Crime Prevention Officers to be represented at cyber awareness events to ensure businesses receive advice and information on a wider range of topics.

INVESTIGATIONS AND EMERGING THREATS

The nature of cyber crime as a global issue complicates investigations and the ability to gather evidence and this will continue to create barriers to pursuing and detecting offenders going forward.

PSNI CYBER CRIME CENTRE

The Cyber Crime Centre spearheads the PSNI's capabilities to tackle the increasing threat that is Cyber Crime. The Cyber Crime Centre has a team of dedicated detectives that primarily investigate complex cyber offences, but also use their knowledge and skills in assisting more traditional crimes that have a cyber element.

Since the formation of the Cyber Crime Centre, this specialist unit has investigated a large number of complex incidents, often with multiple cross-jurisdictional issues. For example, a Darkweb firearms investigation, whereby a Northern Ireland based person attempted to purchase a firearm via the Darkweb, resulting in their arrest and subsequent sentencing.

PSNI has received a relatively large number of reports in relation to local businesses being compromised via various forms of ransomware, of note Dharmā and RyUK variants. These companies have been subject to total decryption of all computer systems and back-ups, resulting in a substantial impact upon their business. The impact on these companies has ranged from total data loss, resulting in substantial financial loss and impact to their business delivery, to the loss of a few days' data due to having backup servers that escaped encryption. These attacks are accompanied by blackmail demands requesting payment of Bitcoin to provide a decryption key. PSNI advice is not to pay such demands.

Where a ransomware attack includes blackmail demands – PSNI advice is NOT TO PAY such demands.

One local company paid the demand, but did not receive the decryption key for over a week which resulted in further economic loss. The PSNI proactively investigate such reports, and actively engage with national and international law enforcement partners to secure evidence and to identify offenders, often deploying innovative cost effective investigative methodologies.

Reports of insider threats have been noted where current and ex-employees have accessed company data unlawfully, using this for nefarious means. Examples include an ex-employee accessing databases containing pricing information to undercut their ex-employer's pricing structure, impacting their ability to compete in the market place; or employees accessing multiple email accounts and sensitive documentation contained within the company network.

Business email compromise continues to affect businesses within Northern Ireland. This is often as a result of poor password management, insufficient security on login (two factor authentications) and falling foul of phishing emails.

A lack of education and knowledge of the end user is a common theme amongst such report; this is a key area for the PSNI Protect Officer to target. Companies within Northern Ireland have had a substantial financial impact as a result of such compromises, with one business losing in excess of £250k.

Government, private and voluntary sectors have been subject to such attacks, with the attacks being indiscriminate and frequent. The PSNI Protect Officer manages a forum to update all participants of emerging threats, and to provide methods to mitigate these.

DDoS attacks can be devastating to the target and, often results in the company's web page or internal server being shut down for an extended period of time, which can potentially have a large financial impact. A DDoS attack is a malicious network attack where the perpetrator seeks to overload a machine or network resource with false traffic or requests and make it unavailable to its intended users, temporarily or indefinitely disrupting services of a host connected to the Internet. Denial of service is typically accomplished by flooding or crashing the targeted machine or resource with superfluous requests in an attempt to

overload systems and prevent some or all legitimate requests from being fulfilled. A wide variety of important resources, from banks to news websites can be targeted and present a major challenge to making sure people can publish and access important information.

Business email compromise continues to affect businesses within Northern Ireland. This is often as a result of poor password management, insufficient security on login (two factor authentications) and falling foul of phishing emails.

The motivations behind attacking a website or service vary: it may be a political statement against an organisation or government; a commercial website held hostage until they receive a ransom is paid; or an unscrupulous competitor against a rival company.

One victim, a small firm whose web page was targeted, lost approximately £70,000. Working with partner agencies the PSNI identified the owner of this service, arrested them, seized a large number of devices and shut the service down, preventing other individuals/companies becoming the victim of attacks.

The PSNI has dedicated officers to aid in the prevention of persons/businesses falling victim to such crimes, and to prevent persons becoming involved in such criminality.

PREVENT

The PSNI Cyber Crime Centre has one full time officer dedicated to delivering the national Prevent Programme. As part of the UK Cyber Prevent team, co-ordinated by the National Crime Agency, the aim of the Cyber Prevent Officer is to prevent young people from committing cyber crime and/or re-offending and to provide guidance around pathways which can divert them towards a legitimate career or learning path. PSNI engage internally with colleagues, the private and public sectors, voluntary organisations and with youth groups.

The role includes:

- engaging with Youth Diversion Officers who deal directly with criminal justice disposals relating to youths, to integrate the cyber prevent message into these disposals and with school officers to deliver this message when engaging directly with school pupils;
- engaging with the private sector and working collaboratively with external partners within the business community; drawing upon their expertise in cyber security and related issues to improve the effectiveness of the prevent programme, which has further allowed the harnessing of their influence to reach a much greater audience;
- engaging with the public sector, working directly with the Department for Economy, Department of Finance and NI Cyber Centre, the Youth Justice Agency, the Department of Education, the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment, and the Health Service. Each partnership has furthered the PSNI Prevent programme expanding its reach, and scope of the message delivery;
- engaging with voluntary organisations. This engagement is recent, having engaged directly with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, an umbrella organisation for the voluntary/ community sector in Northern Ireland; and
- engaging with youth groups and working directly with Code Club, Girl Guides, Boys Brigade, Scouts and the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Northern Ireland.

PROTECT

The PSNI has one full time officer dedicated to delivering the national Cyber Protect Programme. As part of the UK Cyber Protect team co-ordinated on behalf of the NPCC by the City of London Police, the Cyber Protect Officer plays an active role in the national cyber protect team and its aim of safeguarding the public and businesses from cyber crime. This role also encompasses elements of the 'Prepare' strand of work engagement with the local business community to ensure they are in a position to mitigate the impact of any cyber incident.

The Protect officer has developed close working relationships with external partners such as NHS Trusts, local government, the Law Society of Northern Ireland and local banks using the contacts to promote

guidance and programs offered by the National Cyber Security Centre to their respective membership. Examples of this partnership working include:

- Carrying out cyber awareness sessions with HSBC (NI) corporate customers;
- Assisting the Law Society of Northern Ireland with cyber awareness sessions delivered to local Solicitors and the development of advice for clients;
- Working with NHS Trusts and local Councils to increase reporting and the identification of 3rd party suppliers who may have been subject to a cyber incident; and
- Working with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action to increase the assistance available to the local 3rd sector with the aim of raising awareness of cyber threats and minimising the risk posed to this vulnerable sector.

The Protect role also encompasses working with victims of cyber crime to raise their awareness of current threats to reduce the risk of them becoming a repeat victim. This work is carried out both on a one to one basis with victims and through offering guidance to front line officers.

OCTF Cyber Crime Engagement Sub Group

The OCTF Cyber Crime Engagement Sub Group provides a forum for engagement between the PSNI, DOJ and the private and NGO sectors, academia and the cyber security industry. These sectors work together to enhance and promote reporting mechanisms and provide a forum for sharing concerns and information on attacks or incidents of cyber crime and to add to the PSNI's understanding of and response to the threats. Raising public awareness is also part of the Group's role and representatives attend the OCTF stand at the Balmoral Show to promote communications and key resources and practices to educate to mitigate against vulnerabilities. Further information can be found on Page 62.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

During 2018/19 a total of 1,973 crimes were reported to the PSNI where a cyber-enabled motivation was recorded. This is compared to 1,312 during the 2017/18 financial year and represents an increase of 50.4%, due, at least in part, to an increase in reporting.

In the same period, 328 cyber-dependent crimes, resulting in losses of £621k were reported from Northern Ireland to Action Fraud.

Nationally, 86% of fraud reported was cyber-enabled, an increase of 2% on the previous financial year.

FORWARD LOOK New Developments

The Cyber Crime Centre has increased the number of dedicated forensic officers to 22 – thereby increasing the PSNI's ability to investigate cyber crime and deal with emerging technologies.

Cyber crime forensic officers have assisted their PSNI colleagues to investigate all forms of traditional crime types, for example murder, terrorist offences and child abuse investigations. They have also effectively assisted partner law enforcement agencies resulting in Cease and Desist interventions with offenders; thus easing pressure on the criminal justice system, and preventing these identified persons from further offending. These "Cease and Desist" interventions were conducted as part of a national operation, and illustrates the PSNI's ability to work closely and effectively with national law enforcement partners, but also to surge to meet demand. Cyber Support Units who work cohesively with the Cyber Crime Centre have had a significant uplift in staffing levels, circa 60 new officers, to increase the PSNI's ability to effectively tackle all forms of cyber crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO.....

There is a wealth of information available to help you take action to protect your data. Taking some simple steps which cost little to implement can prevent a high percentage of attempts.

Sites which offer up to date advice and tools to help manage the threats include:

- ❖ **GetSafeOnline** - www.getsafeonline.org/northernireland
- ❖ **Cyber Essentials (advice specifically for small businesses)** - www.cyberessentials.ncsc.gov.uk
- ❖ **National Cyber Security Centre** - www.ncsc.gov.uk
- ❖ www.haveibeenpwned.com
- ❖ **Action Fraud** - www.actionfraud.police.uk

If you have been a victim of actual or attempted cyber crime, please report it to:

- ❖ **Action Fraud** - www.actionfraud.police.uk
- ❖ **PSNI Tel 101**
- ❖ **Via the PSNI website**
- ❖ **Crimestoppers Tel 0800 555 111 (anonymously)**
- ❖ **Via Crimestoppers-uk.org website (anonymously)**

Case Study – Threatening Messages on Facebook

In October 2018 a report was made via a Northern Ireland political party press officer that a member of their party had received multiple threatening messages to their Facebook profile.

These messages urged the recipient to kill themselves and made many derogatory remarks regarding various communities within our society. PSNI's Cyber Crime Centre conducted a thorough investigation and identified a likely offender; this was verified by telecoms enquiries.

The suspect in this case was believed to reside within the jurisdiction of Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The Cyber Crime Centre engaged with GMP who successfully brought the offender before the courts resulting in a 22 month custodial sentence.

2.2 DRUGS

THE THREAT

It is difficult to ascertain the number of people in Northern Ireland using illicit drugs or misusing prescription drugs. However, there appears to be an upward trend in risk-taking behaviour, as evidenced by increased seizures, increased arrests and an increase in drug-related deaths, as recorded in the most recent statistics published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Particularly concerning is the practice of poly-drug use, ie misusing more than one substance at the same time. This is also often in conjunction with alcohol consumption and this combination can have fatal consequences. The harm caused by drug misuse is cross cutting and impacts people’s lives at every level in Northern Ireland. It includes crime committed to fuel drug dependence, organised criminality, the violence and exploitation that goes hand in hand with production and supply, paramilitary style attacks, and irreparable damage and loss to the families and individuals whose lives it destroys.

Poly-drug use, often in conjunction with alcohol consumption, can have fatal consequences.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

Drug Seizure Incidents

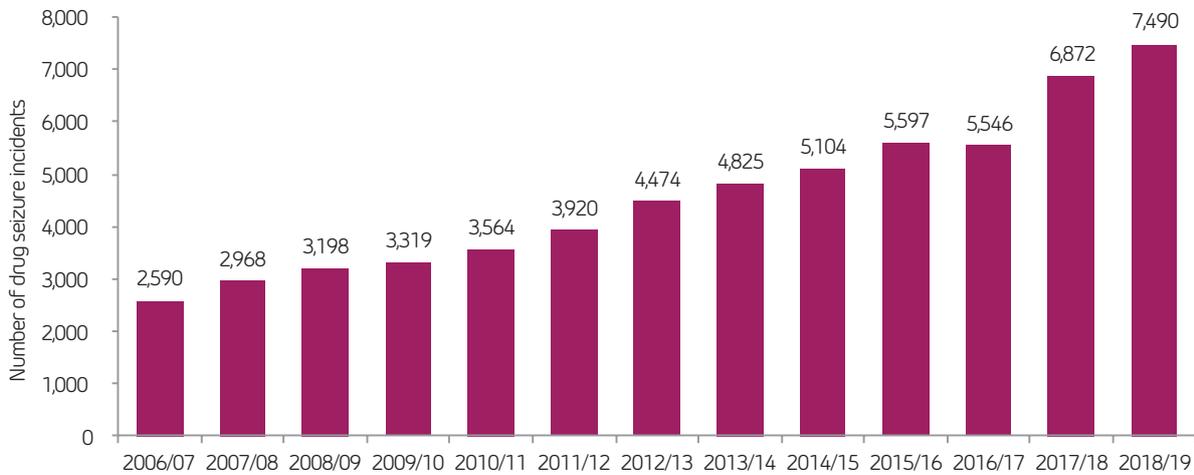
PSNI Drugs seizure incidents and drug-related arrests, 2018/19 financial year compared with 2017/18:

	Drug Seizure Incidents	Drug-related Arrests
April 17-March 18	6,872	3,121
April 18-March 19	7,490	3,306
change between years	+ 618	+ 185
% change between years	+9	+ 5.9

NB. These figures represent seizures made by the PSNI. Drugs seized by Border Force are reported on Page 35.

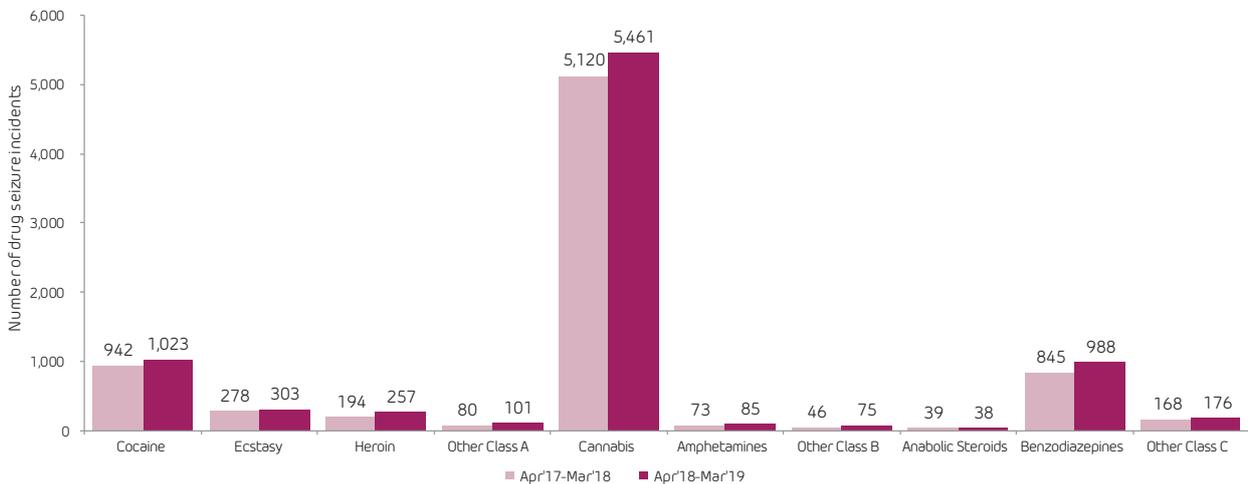
- There were 7,490 drug seizure incidents recorded by the PSNI during 2018/19. This represents an increase of 9% on the 6,872 seizure incidents recorded in 2017/18. There were increases seen in total seizure incidents across Class A, B and C drug types.
- During the 2018/19 financial year there were a total of 3,306 drug-related arrests. This is compared to 3,121 drug-related arrests during 2017/18, an increase of 5.9%.
- For the second successive year, both categories of possession of drugs offences and trafficking of drugs offences increased. During 2018/19 there were 6,200 possession of drugs recorded crimes compared to 5,602 during 2017/18, an increase of 10.7%. During 2018/19 there were 902 trafficking of drugs recorded crimes compared to 842 during 2017/18, an increase of 7.6%.

PSNI Drug seizure incidents since 2006/07



- With the exception of 2016/17, the number of drug seizure incidents has increased year on year, with the number recorded in 2018/19 approaching three times the level seen in 2006/07.
- Levels of drug seizures can be influenced by policing activities and priorities in response to community concerns about drugs. Changing levels of drug seizures may also be reflective of a change in the nature of the drugs market, including increased accessibility from sources such as Darkweb purchases and postal delivery.

PSNI Seizure Incidents by Drug Type



Cannabis was the most commonly seized drug in Northern Ireland during 2018/19, with 5,461 seizures. This is 341 more seizure incidents than in 2017/18, representing an increase of 6.7%. The second most frequently seized drug during 2018/19 was cocaine with 1,023 incidents during 2018/19 compared to 942 in 2017/18, an increase of 8.6%.

Benzodiazepine seizures accounted for the third largest number of seizures incidents during 2018/19 with an increase of 16.9% from 2017/18. Belfast City Policing District was the main hotspot location for drugs seizures with just under one third (2,407) of all seizures in 2018/19 occurring there. Increases were seen in all four local policing teams within Belfast City compared to 2017/18.

Quantities of Drugs Seized

In addition to increased numbers of seizure incidents across most drug types, there were also notable increases in the quantities of drugs seized during 2018/19. This is in contrast to last year's trend which saw increased seizure incidents combined with a reduction in the quantity of drugs seized.

All of these factors further corroborate the belief that there is an upward trend in overall drug use within Northern Ireland.

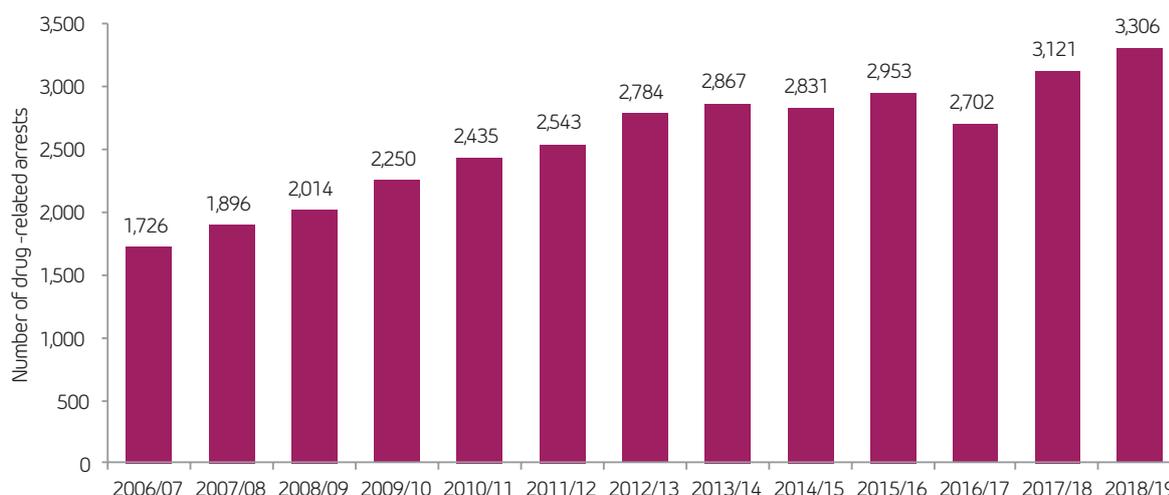
Class A

Total Class A seizure incidents increased by 192 from 1,444 in 2017/18 to 1,636 in 2018/19 – an increase of 13.3%. In general, increased quantities of drugs seized were seen across the main drug types and their various forms. In particular, notable increases were recorded in cocaine powder (from 30.8 Kg to 35.9 Kg), ecstasy tablets (from 5,632 to 7,479), ecstasy wraps (from 2 to 39), heroin liquid (from 11mls to 61mls), heroin wraps (from 394 to 429) and LSD tablets (from 23 to 82).

The use of heroin in town and city centres in Northern Ireland is an ever growing public health concern. Reports of users abusing drugs in public spaces and of collapses and overdoses as a result of heroin use are frequent and increasing in Belfast City Centre.

Drug-Related Arrests

Drug-related arrests since 2006/07:



NB. A drug-related arrest is counted when a person is arrested and processed through custody for one or more drug-related offence(s). This is a count of custody records and not persons; a person may have been arrested on more than one occasion during the time periods presented in this section.

Class B

Total Class B seizure incidents increased by 363, from 5,215 during 2017/18 to 5,578 in 2018/19 – an increase of 6.9%. There were notable increases in the quantities seized of herbal cannabis (from 252.2 Kg to 517.5 Kg), cannabis joints (from 635 to 676), cannabis oil (from 1.3 Kg to 3 Kg) and capsules (from 30 to 134). However, there was a notable reduction in the number of cannabis plants seized, from 3,980 in 2017/18 to 1,433 in 2018/19.

The quantity of amphetamine powder increased (from 6.9 Kg to 17.8 Kg) as well as wraps (from 9 to 283), while at the same time there was a reduction in the number of tablets seized (from 63 to 0).

Class C

Total Class C seizure incidents increased by 148, from 994 during 2017/18 to 1,142 in 2018/19 – an increase of 14.9%. The number of anabolic steroids seized fell in respect of all formats during 2018/19, except for capsules of which there have been no seizures in the past 24 months. The quantities of benzodiazepine seizures for all formats also increased during 2018/19 with the most notable increase seen in the form of tablets (from 129,348 to 141,646).

- There were 3,306 drug-related arrests during 2018/19. This represents an increase of 185 (5.9%) compared to 2017/18 which saw 3,125.
- The number of arrests for drug offences has increased in most of the years since 2006/07. The level of 3,306 in the 12 months to 31 March 2019 is the highest recorded since 2006/07.

Operation Tariana

This was a proactive operation targeting a Mid-Ulster Organised Crime Group (OCG) who were suspected of importing large quantities of cocaine from a Republic of Ireland based OCG and distributing the drugs within the Mid-Ulster area. The focus of the operation revolved around the supply of Class A drugs and consequent money laundering offences.

Over a six month period between October 2018 and March 2019, police conducted 19 searches which resulted in 28 separate seizures of cocaine with a total weight of 21.5 Kg. The value of these seizures is estimated to be £1.1 million. Other seizures during this time included a 0.5 Kg of herbal cannabis, £12,210 cash and other assets valued at £50,000. Three suspects were arrested and charged with drugs offences and the extensive money laundering investigation is ongoing.

Operation Highflying

In April 2018, police charged three people with the importation of Class B drugs after a joint PSNI, An Garda Síochána (AGS) and Irish Revenue Commissioners operation resulted in the seizure of herbal cannabis valued at £500,000 from a vehicle at premises in Dromore, County Down.

Enquiries established that the cannabis had been imported from Spain via the Republic of Ireland. Three further searches of properties were conducted in County Down and a further six arrests were made. A money laundering investigation was commenced linking a number of suspects to a criminal lifestyle. Confiscation proceedings are ongoing which seek to deprive these OCG members of the proceeds of their criminality.

Operation Bazzite

This was a proactive police operation focussed on an OCG supplying Class A controlled drugs in West Belfast. In October 2018 police conducted premises searches and seized 1 Kg of cocaine, £50,000 cash and three

vehicles which were suspected of being the proceeds of criminality. During linked searches police recovered a further 1.2 Kg of cocaine and seized a further 0.5 Kg of Benzocaine.

The cocaine seized during this operation had much higher levels of purity than is normally seen in Northern Ireland. The total value of drugs seized in this operation was £110,000.

Four people were subsequently charged with drug supply and money laundering offences.

Operation Busine

An international OCG was identified as sending multiple kilos of herbal cannabis by post to addresses across the UK. These parcels originated in Europe and North America. In May 2018 police identified a male involved in the rental of postal drop addresses and supply of herbal cannabis. In November 2018 this male and two others were arrested at a house in South Belfast. Approximately 75 Kg of herbal cannabis were recovered from that location. Further searches were conducted and approximately 20 Kg of herbal cannabis was located and two people arrested. The seizures on that day have a potential street value of almost £2 million.

Research was conducted on the OCG and a further house under their control in North Belfast was identified. In January a search/arrest operation was conducted. Four people were arrested and approximately 45 Kg of herbal cannabis recovered.

In the financial year 2018-2019 a total of approximately 290 Kg of herbal cannabis has been recovered by police during searches in Operation Busine. Approximately 340 Kg has been seized from the postal system. This equates to a potential street value of almost £6 million. 17 people have been arrested and are currently in prison or have been deported from the UK.

The National Crime Agency (NCA)² collaborates with PSNI to ensure that associated intelligence and investigative opportunities are developed and exploited where the importations are identified as being destined for Northern Ireland.

The OCTF Drugs Sub Group continues to provide a forum for engagement between PSNI, Government, Local Government and stakeholders in response to the misuse of drugs and related developments, issues and threats. The membership liaises together to reduce drug misuse and drug-related crime.

The Group has taken a number of opportunities to work together to promote key messages to the public to educate, raise awareness and to mitigate the harm caused by drug misuse in the community.

² Further information on the NCA can be found on Page 56.

Operation Italic

ITALICI is an international investigation into the illegal importation and manufacture of anabolic steroids into the UK. The operation began as a referral from Border Force who intercepted a shipment of 632 Kg of Class C anabolic steroids at Heathrow that were destined for Belfast.



The NCA in Belfast uncovered further contraband and more than two tonnes of steroids were seized overall. The investigation identified an overseas criminal group with a global supply network that had been operating for ten years and had trafficked at least 100 tonnes of the product. Investigators also identified one of the UK's most sophisticated illicit laboratories, producing commercial quantities of Class C steroids.



Linked seizures have taken place in three European countries and an international money laundering network has been identified for further investigation. The drugs are valued in excess of £80 million.

The network is believed to be one of the most prolific ever identified in the illegal importation and manufacture of anabolic steroids. Five men await sentencing for their roles in the two separate conspiracies.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Operation Pangea

In October 2018 the PSNI and OCTF Drugs Sub Group partner agencies took part in the Interpol co-ordinated international operation "Op Pangea". The operation aimed to disrupt the illicit online supply of medicines as well as raising awareness of the significant health risks associated with buying medicines from illegal websites and social media platforms. During the operation multiple packages containing some 60,000 tablets were intercepted. They included diazepam, pregablin, zopiclone and xanax destined for addresses throughout Northern Ireland, showing that no community is safe from the dangers presented by drugs like these.

Drug supply and misuse facilitated by technology is ever increasing. Purchases made via the Darkweb continue to feature, with encrypted communications making exchanges easier. Other advances including growing use of cryptocurrencies and drone technology may have an impact going forward.

A significant proportion of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) are involved in drug supply with a number having additional links to paramilitary groups.

Drug-Related Deaths³

Deaths due to drug misuse continue to be an issue of concern and garner considerable media attention. In March 2019, the OCTF Drugs Sub Group demonstrated the benefits of a collaborative approach when it took the lead to present a co-ordinated, partnership based response to the publication of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) publication of the most up-to-date official figures for drug-related deaths covering the 2017 calendar year.

As well as agreeing a joint press release, partners from PSNI, HSCB, PHA and the Coroner, Joe McCrisken, provided a joint briefing to media on the morning of the launch of the latest statistics. This partnership approach helped to deliver a consistent and shared response to the harms posed by the misuse of drugs and to bring important messages to the public's attention.

There were a total of 136 drug-related deaths in 2017. This compares to 126 for the 2016 calendar year meaning the number of deaths rose by 7% compared to the previous year. The figure is however still lower than the record high of 144 deaths in 2015. Drug-related deaths continue to account for less than one per cent of total deaths registered in Northern Ireland each year.

The NISRA statistics also revealed that the number of males dying from drug-related causes in Northern Ireland has increased by 98% in the last 10 years. 74% (101) of the 136 drug-related deaths in 2017 were male. This is compared to 51 a decade ago. In contrast, female drug-related deaths in 2017 remained unchanged when compared to the 2007 total with 35 deaths in each year.

Worryingly, 46% (62) of deaths during 2017 had three or more drugs listed on the death certificate further evidencing the upward trend in poly-drug misuse. The number of deaths involving pregabalin and diazepam have increased sharply over recent years. 2017 saw four times more deaths where pregabalin was listed on the death certificate, with numbers increasing from 8 in 2016 to 33 in 2017.

One positive is that Northern Ireland is still not experiencing the levels of seizures or drug-related deaths linked to the extremely high risk, high harm opioid fentanyl compared to the rest of the United Kingdom.

Commenting on the release of the NISRA drugs related death statistics, the then PSNI Chair of the OCTF Drugs Sub Group said that "the publication of these official statistics provides evidence that demonstrates our shared concern that Northern Ireland has a growing problem with potentially fatal drug misuse. When we talk about drug misuse and related deaths people often assume that we must mean illicit drugs like heroin, cocaine and ecstasy. Whilst these drugs cause serious harm and can be fatal, the majority of deaths in Northern Ireland are due to the misuse of a variety of prescription medicines, often with alcohol and illicit drugs."

The causes, complexity and pervasiveness of drug misuse and the harm it causes means that no one agency can tackle it alone.

FORWARD LOOK

From 1 April 2019, prescription drugs pregabalin and gabapentin were re-classified as Class C controlled substances. This change means it is illegal to possess pregabalin and gabapentin without a prescription and it is illegal to supply or sell them to others. This change will likely affect overall drug seizure levels across Northern Ireland which may be represented in figures going forward.

³ All statistics relating to deaths - from NISRA "Drug-related and Drug Misuse Deaths 2007 - 2017". (Date published 4 March 2019).

2.3 MODERN SLAVERY / HUMAN TRAFFICKING (MS/HT)

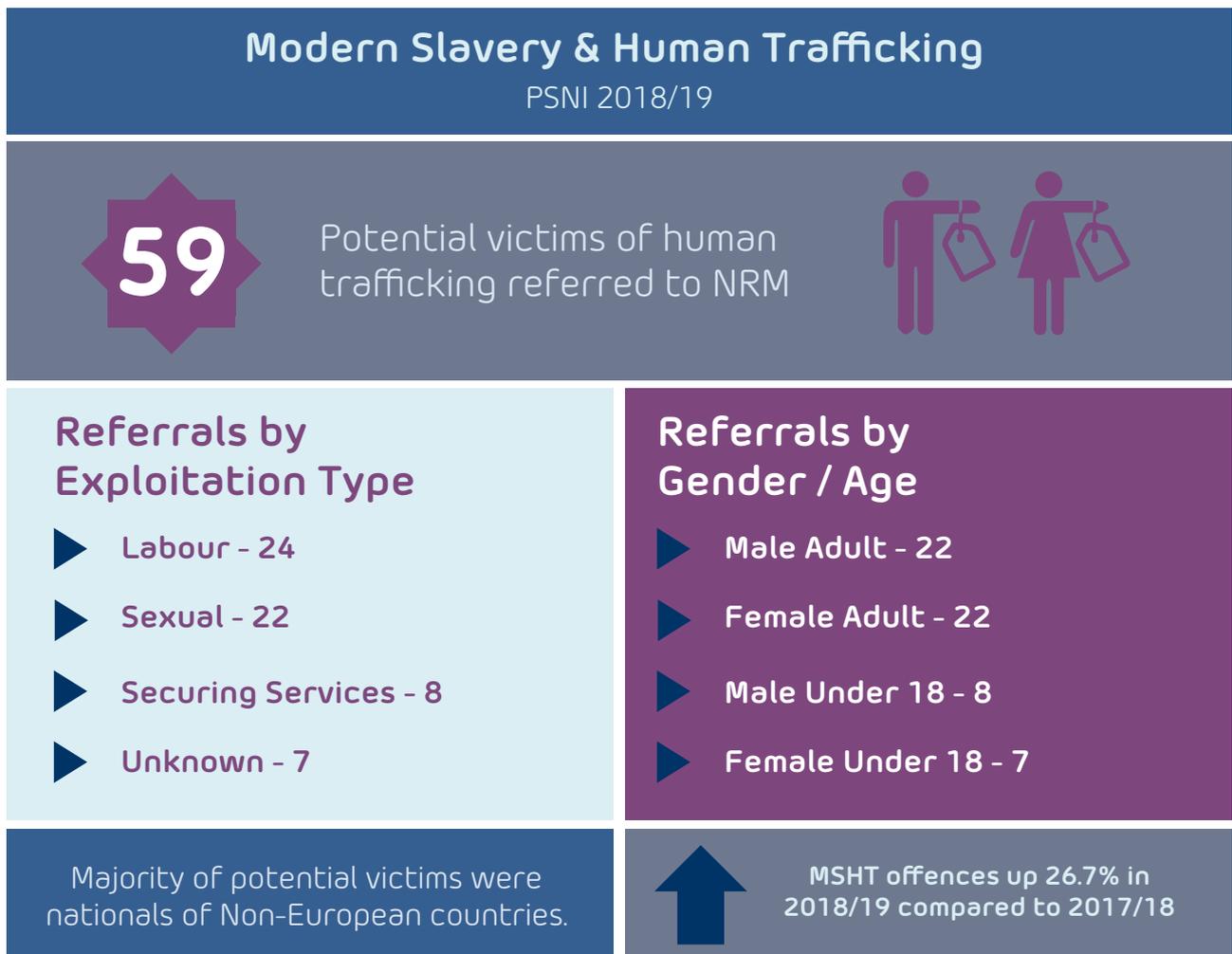
THE THREAT

Modern slavery (MS) is an umbrella term that incorporates both the offence of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and the offence of human trafficking (HT). MSHT is an extremely lucrative criminal activity. It is often described as a hidden crime and therefore it is difficult to understand or quantify the true scale of MSHT within Northern Ireland. Victims are often afraid, or unable to report their ordeal, due to language barriers or because they are held captive.

The number of MSHT offences and the number of potential victims identified through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased during 2018/19. Modern slavery and human trafficking crimes recorded by PSNI rose by 26.7% during 2018/19, from 30 in 2017/18 to 38 in 2018/19.

The main driver of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) offending is the pursuit of profit by coercing victims to provide a service.

Trends in exploitation type remained consistent with last year with slight variances within victim nationalities most affected. Labour exploitation was the most commonly referred exploitation type in Northern Ireland closely followed by sexual exploitation. Adult services websites remain a key enabler for sexual exploitation, again showing the scale of the digital footprint across most organised crime types in Northern Ireland.



CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

Demonstrating the priority given to tackling this high harm offence, the PSNI's Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) has increased its capacity to deal with the rising number of cases, their complexity, and the increasing number moving through the prosecution process.

Tackling Modern Slavery successfully is not something that can be achieved by law enforcement bodies only: the emphasis must be on partnership action co-ordinated across a wide range of statutory bodies. The MSHTU also has a full time member of the Home Office embedded within the team. It is an investigative role but one that gives an immigration insight into many areas of MSHTU work.

During 2018/19 the PSNI's MSHTU:

- Conducted 11 Warrant Searches and 74 safeguarding visits/non-warrant operations;
- Made 15 arrests for modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences;
- Charged two persons with modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences (one is on High Court Bail and one has since been released pending a report to the PPS);
- Reported three persons to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for modern slavery/human trafficking and/or related offences; and
- Had around 30 investigations ongoing at any one time, reflecting the continuing trends of sexual and labour exploitation.

The MSHTU also conducted 148 screening assessments (a process to safeguard victims through early recognition and subsequent intervention). The number of screenings reduced from 173 in 2017/18, a reflection of a more targeted approach and an increase in NRM referrals received.

In addition, the MSHTU referred 59⁴ potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking recovered in Northern Ireland to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)⁵. This reflected an increase of 63.9% on the 2017/18 referral figures. However, the 2018/19 referral figure matched that in 2015/16.

Caution needs to be applied when considering fluctuations in NRM referral numbers. Whilst an increase in the number of NRM referrals could be interpreted as indicating an increase in the scale of modern slavery, it might instead be due to higher levels of awareness leading to increased identification of victims and reporting of suspected cases. Equally, since Northern Ireland is a small jurisdiction in terms of both geography and population (and represent less than 1% of all NRM referrals in the UK), the relatively low numbers of victim referrals means that the nature of an individual case in Northern Ireland can have a significant impact on yearly figures, for example, where multiple victims are recovered in a single, large operation.

The break-down of first responders referrals of potential victims to NRM were:

- 25 Home Office Immigration
- 21 PSNI (1 Harbour Police)
- 12 Social Services
- 1 Border Force

A total of 24 potential victims were referred to the NRM in relation to labour exploitation. They were predominantly male and the majority were from African countries, which is a change from last year when the majority of victims of labour exploitation were from European countries.

A total of 22 potential victims were referred to the NRM in relation to sexual exploitation. The vast majority of potential victims were female. Asian and European countries made up the largest cohort of victims with an equal number of victims from each continent.

A further nine were referred in connection with "securing services" (where the person has been subjected to force, threats, abduction, coercion, fraud or deception), and four were recorded as "unknown" (immigration issues).

The nationalities of the 59 referrals were as follows:

14 Chinese	8 Somalian
6 British	4 Albanian
4 Romanian	3 Portuguese
3 Ghanaian	3 Lithuanian
2 Sudanese	2 Afghan
2 Bulgarian	2 Eritrian
1 Zimbabwean	1 South African
1 Iraqi	1 Kuwaiti
1 Ethiopian	1 Vietnamese

⁴ A figure of 52 has been recorded by Home Office under revised counting rules.

⁵ The National Referral Mechanism is the UK-wide framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

Sexual Exploitation Investigations included:

Operation Fog

As reported last year, in February 2018 at Belfast Crown Court, two members of a Romanian Organised Crime Group (OCG) were convicted of Conspiracy to Human Trafficking five victims for Sexual Exploitation, Controlling Prostitution for Gain of six victims and Acquiring and Converting Criminal Property totalling over £165,000.

The sentencing Judge highlighted this as a significant and complex investigation. One of the males convicted was sentenced to four years in custody and issued with a Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order (STPO) for 10 years. A second male convicted was sentenced to three years in custody and an STPO for seven years.

The UK Home Office Immigration also served one of the males with a Deportation Order (DO) thus preventing him from legally re-entering the UK at any point in the future.

These were the first convictions for any Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking offence under the new 2015 Northern Ireland Human Trafficking legislation. It was also the first proactive "victimless" prosecution for sexual exploitation in Northern Ireland where the victims did not have to provide any evidence as part of the investigation.

Further to this investigation, in July 2019, at Belfast Crown Court, a 31 year old female, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, suspended for two years, for the offences of conspiring to traffic a person for sexual exploitation and converting property in relation to almost £3,000 made as a result of her criminal activity between January and April 2017.

Operation Favet

European Joint Investigation Team operation

MSHTU participated in a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) with Police Scotland and Romanian Police in relation to a proactive investigation into suspected human trafficking of Romanian females for sexual exploitation by Romanian suspects in Belfast and Glasgow.

The aim was to combat the OCG operating across Europe. The JIT was facilitated by Eurojust and Europol.

In June 2018 PSNI, in partnership with Police Scotland, took part in a day of action against the OCG. PSNI conducted four searches throughout Belfast and made three arrests. As a result one male was charged and remanded for Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation. He is currently on High Court Bail.

PSNI's Cyber Crime Investigators were crucial in ensuring the evidence required for a charge was obtained in this case, showing how different teams within PSNI work collaboratively to ensure the best possible results.

The investigation and Court proceedings are continuing in all three jurisdictions.

Operation Pyritic

A second JIT was established with Romanian Police in early 2019. This is also a proactive European-wide investigation into suspected Human Trafficking for the Purposes of Sexual Exploitation.

The suspects are believed to be part of a Romanian OCG working with Irish criminals targeting vulnerable Foreign Nationals. An Garda Síochána and the PSNI are working together in this investigation.

The PSNI had been involved in investigations against this group throughout 2018 and now the JIT has been established the investigation is continuing into this group in all three jurisdictions.

Labour Exploitation Investigations included:

Operation Gynura

This is an ongoing investigation into labour exploitation and money laundering in relation to a European Organised Crime Group. Assistance is being received from NCA, Europol and Department for Communities. The investigation centred around suspected Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in a car wash in County Down. Detectives also investigated money laundering offences and the Department for Communities played a vital role in securing the evidence to support this operation.

MSHTU, along with partner agencies, conducted a search and safeguard operation in September 2018 and arrested a male and female. They were released on police bail to allow the investigators time to conduct other enquiries. A number of potential victims of human trafficking were spoken to – however, none wished to be entered into the NRM.

The business they were running has since closed down, and the two people have left Northern Ireland, failing to answer their bail. This OCG, although they still are being sought by PSNI, has been dismantled and the exploitation has been removed.

NORTHERN IRELAND SEA PORT OPERATIONS

In May 2018 MSHTU led a multi-agency operation at Portavogie Harbour. This operation was conducted with Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), Department for Communities (DFC) Fraud Unit and Border Force as well as the specialist PSNI Boats Unit. The crews from three boats were spoken to and screened. No MSHT issues were identified and Border Force and DFC's Fraud Unit checks showed no irregularities.

In October 2018 PSNI's MSHTU Detectives worked alongside colleagues in Border Force in an operation targeting Northern Ireland's small ports. The aim of this operation was to conduct safeguarding with persons working in the fishing industry and to ensure no exploitation was occurring on the fleets working out of Northern Ireland. This operation was led by Border Force, with PSNI assisting.

Throughout the reporting period MSHTU Detectives, alongside PSNI's Intelligence Branch colleagues, conducted four safeguarding visits at Belfast Sea Port, targeting visiting cargo ships. No signs of trafficking were encountered but this pro-active targeting reassures the visiting crews that Northern Ireland is a safe location should they wish to declare any wrongdoing.

Domestic Servitude Investigation

Operation Incisal

This has been the PSNI MSHTU's most significant Domestic Servitude investigation to date. A vulnerable female was safeguarded in December 2017 after being exploited for a number of years in Belfast. MSHTU conducted a lengthy investigation that included a number of international elements and in April 2019 made two arrests for Domestic Servitude Trafficking Offences. Two suspects, a 33 year old man and a 25 year old woman, remain in custody and an investigation file is being prepared for the PPS.

The victim in this case was extremely vulnerable. To ensure the interview process was handled sensitively officers in the MSHTU received a presentation on Nigerian culture. This information was also used when planning the search and arrest operation. This is an example of how working with partners and the public can contribute to delivering a better service – both to victims and suspects.

With the support of Women's Aid, the victim is continuing her rehabilitation and it is hoped she will go on to be able to support herself in the future.

The NCA's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit is actively involved with the Organised Crime Task Force; for example, in June PSNI conducted enforcement activity that saw the arrest of three suspects and led to the safeguarding of five potential victims. NCA's Vulnerable Persons Team has provided four specialist interviewers to PSNI to interview potential victims at a multi-agency reception centre.

Strategic Response

Significant work has been taken forward to reinforce the collaborative strategic response to modern slavery. The DOJ published the Modern Slavery Strategy⁶ on 18 April 2019 which builds on the work of the previous two Strategies.

The overarching strategic aim, agreed with OCTF and Engagement Group stakeholders is, "Equipping Northern Ireland to eradicate modern slavery". This is underpinned by three strategic priorities. They are:

- i. to detect, investigate, disrupt and prosecute modern slavery offenders;
- ii. to reduce the harm caused by modern slavery by improved victim identification and support; and
- iii. to reduce the threat of MS by reducing vulnerability and demand by raising awareness.

Although a one year Strategy, as required by legislation, it recognises that some objectives and workstreams will take longer than 12 months to implement. As such the Appendix to the Strategy provides a longer two-year overview of anticipated work.

Outcomes will be measured by way of a range of measures. Notably, the Strategy undertakes to implement the UK wide NRM reforms; to implement a training plan to deliver a programme of awareness-raising initiatives to equip the general public and frontline professionals to recognise suspicious signs and to respond safely and appropriately; and, to explore the possibility for support available to adult potential victims of modern slavery under the DOJ support contract to be provided for an extended recovery and reflection period, subject to available resources.

The programme of work in the Modern Slavery Strategy is challenging and ambitious, but the DOJ has sought to ensure that it remains realistic and achievable by prioritising its collective efforts and resources in those areas that will have the most impact in terms of improving criminal justice outcomes; supporting victims and survivors; and addressing factors that allow modern slavery to occur. Due to the number of statutory bodies with responsibilities for delivery, implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by the OCTF Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Sub Group.

In 2018, DOJ re-tendered the contract for statutory support for adult potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. The new contract is aligned to the revised Trafficking Survivor Care Standards from the Human Trafficking Foundation.

In November 2018, revised operational guidance⁷ was published on working arrangements for the welfare and protection of adult victims and potential victims of human trafficking and modern slavery. This guidance was produced by the DOJ, PSNI and the Health and Social Care Board and developed in discussion with the Department of Health.

The OCTF Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Sub Group draws together the efforts and expertise of relevant statutory partners involved in tackling this offence. This includes other enforcement bodies such as HMRC and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority; social care aspects via colleagues from the Health and Social Care Board; UK-wide bodies such as the NCA, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), UK Immigration Enforcement (UKIE) and UK Border Force; cross-Departmental working with the Department for Communities, Department for the Economy; and cross-border working with colleagues from An Garda Síochána (AGS). The DOJ also ensures that the NGOs which are focussed on tackling modern slavery and supporting victims in Northern Ireland also play a key role in partnership-working. The DOJ chairs an NGO Engagement Group which meets quarterly to share information and combine efforts to maximise reach and impact across Northern Ireland.

Strategic Data and Training Co-ordinator

DOJ created a new dedicated role focused on modern slavery training and data co-ordination.

The role reinforces partnership working between DOJ, PSNI and other partners, delivering a strategic response to MSHT training needs across frontline professionals, with a particular focus on the Health and Social Care sector in Northern Ireland. As a result of this work an updated specific modern slavery awareness section has been included within all mandatory safeguarding programmes in the nursing sector and a programme for delivery of presentations is planned. Similar work is ongoing with social work staff across Northern Ireland's five Health Trusts.

⁶ <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-modern-slavery-strategy-2019-2020>

⁷ <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-working-arrangements-2018>

The coordinator has delivered training to staff and frontline personnel at a range of events often in partnership with PSNI or NGOs, for example to the Belfast City Airport staff; the Police Ombudsman's Office; sixth form drama students planning to produce a modern slavery drama, and second year social work students; NGOs and victim support staff and First Responders have also benefitted from training events.

The work of the modern slavery training and data coordinator enables not only collaborative and consistent information to be shared but allows for more statistics to be recorded and used to establish a fuller picture of MSHT in Northern Ireland.

Transparency In Supply Chains (TISC)

In order to promote and embed good practice in public procurement, DOJ has been working to deliver training on TISC to public sector procurement practitioners. In January Welsh Government officials delivered training to public sector procurement leads across Northern Ireland, sharing best practice principles in public procurement that the Welsh Government has rolled out.

DOJ's Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) lead and policy colleagues are working to incorporate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking clauses in new and existing contracts. Work is ongoing to advise CPD Board Members of the potential benefits of implementing a code of practice.

PSNI has engaged with and will continue to work with local councils, together with DOJ, on the issue of transparency of the supply chain, raising awareness of MSHT.

PSNI TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking is sometimes described as a crime that is 'hidden in plain sight' and as such, it is vital that front line professionals, key sectors and the wider public are aware of the presence of MSHT in Northern Ireland and how to recognise it and report it.

One of the priorities in the PSNI's response to MSHT is to improve the capacity of PSNI officers to identify and support victims: it is essential that PSNI Officers in the MSHTU are well trained for the many difficult situations they encounter.

One of the major successes of this reporting period was the PSNI running their first training courses for Detectives on the subject of MSHT. The Modern Slavery Investigators Course is a nationally recognised course

and was attended by Detectives from PSNI, Harbour Police and AGS. The two week-long courses were run with support from the national Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit training team and now the PSNI has nationally trained Officers in all areas of Northern Ireland to assist the MSHTU.

The PSNI also delivered awareness training to Detectives from other areas of the PSNI including Public Protection Branch and District CIDs and MSHTU continued to provide awareness raising and educational presentations to various internal and external groups. Internally this included training for:

- New to role detectives
- Detectives from Public Protection Branch
- PSNI Student Officers
- Detectives from Intelligence Branch – Ports
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- Tactical Support Groups
- Newly appointed Call Management staff

Detectives from MSHTU have also delivered training to a number of public and private sector groups over this reporting period including:

- Business Leaders at George Best Belfast City Airport
- Northern Ireland Street Pastors
- Students at Southern Regional College
- Various departments within the Department of Health

These training events and engagements strengthen links with partner agencies, NGOs and private sector businesses which in turn increases the overall level of skills, knowledge and contacts in areas that can be very relevant in investigating MSHT offences.

In addition, MSHTU detectives have attended the following conferences and seminars organised by a number of partner agencies:

- The NSPCC's UK National Conference
- GLAA Workshop
- Women's Aid – The Effects of Prostitution
- UK Police National MSHT Conference
- UK Foreign Law Enforcement Community Conference
- Modern Slavery training given by the Welsh Government
- An awareness session on Nigerian culture
- DOJ NI – Transparency in the Supply Chain
- MSHT training delivered by the FBI in Dublin

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Anti-Slavery Week

During Anti-Slavery Week the PSNI's MSHTU took part in a number of awareness raising events run by partner agencies and NGOs, such as Women's Aid. MSHTU's efforts centred on social media, where, for the first time, messages were published in different languages on Facebook. This will be developed and used more often

In addition to the awareness-raising which took place across Northern Ireland, this year the DOJ's action for Anti-Slavery Week focussed on labour abuse. A four-week advertising campaign was developed and publicised through the Newsletter's online farming supplement with reach into the agri-food sector. As part of this, the Modern Slavery Helpline was advertised and viewers were re-directed to modern slavery information sites as below:

Are you playing your part to tackle modern slavery?

Could you spot the signs?

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/human-trafficking>

Do you know about the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority? If you are an employment agency, labour provider or gangmaster who provides workers to the sectors listed below, you will need a GLAA licence:

Agriculture

Horticulture

Shellfish gathering

Any associated processing and packaging

<http://www.glaa.gov.uk/>

Need business advice on keeping your supply chains free of modern slavery?

<https://www.stronger2gether.org/>

Multi-Agency Awareness Raising Events

Throughout 2018/19, PSNI's MSHTU undertook a number of operations, events and campaigns to raise awareness of MSHT in Northern Ireland. These included:

- Women's Aid Awareness Events for Anti-Slavery Week
- No More Traffik screening of 'The Workers Cup' followed by a Q&A Session
- The OCTF Stand at the Balmoral Show
- George Best Belfast City Airport's Airport Safety Week

FORWARD LOOK

The new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Dame Sara Thornton, was appointed in May 2019. Her first visit to Northern Ireland to meet with modern slavery policy makers, law enforcement, and NGOs took place on 29 August 2019. Work will continue with the Commissioner to deliver better outcomes for victims of MSHT.

The Home Office is currently leading on major reform of the NRM, and DOJ's participation in this reform programme is reflected in the Strategy. The DOJ will continue to work in close partnership with PSNI and Health and Social Care representatives to ensure that Northern Ireland is fully prepared operationally for the implementation of the UK-wide digitised NRM process. This aims to ensure more accurate referral and improved decision-making and crucially to deliver better outcomes for victims.

It is intended that revised training will be provided in October to all first responders in Northern Ireland, following NRM reforms.

The Strategic and Data Training Co-ordinator will take forward plans to collaborate with local councils to raise awareness with frontline council workers. Planning with Government departments to raise staff awareness of MSHT is also underway.

The MSHTU is preparing for the various possible impacts of the UK leaving the EU with a view to being in a position to continue to protect the vulnerable victims.

MODERN SLAVERY

MODERN SLAVERY IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK IT IS HAPPENING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

SOME OF THE SIGNS

- ❖ Someone who is distrustful of authorities;
- ❖ Someone who appears to be under the control of others;
- ❖ An over-crowded house or flat;
- ❖ Someone who is unsure of their home address or the local area;
- ❖ Someone who may not have cash because they can't keep the money they earn; or
- ❖ Someone who can't produce their passport or personal documents.

These are just some of the signs that someone may have been trafficked or enslaved. More information can be found at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/human-trafficking>

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT SOMEONE IS A VICTIM – DON'T DELAY, RING:

- ❖ **999 IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY;**
- ❖ **101 ABOUT A GENERAL SITUATION; OR**
- ❖ **0800 0121 700 FOR THE MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE.**

2.4 ORGANISED IMMIGRATION CRIME

THE THREAT

Various OCTF partners are working to disrupt organised crime involving the movement of people, goods and money in and out of Northern Ireland. Immigration Enforcement, a Directorate of the Home Office, is responsible for protecting the public by removing immigration offenders, prosecuting the criminals who facilitate immigration crime and driving cross-sector action to increase compliance with immigration law.

Immigration Enforcement's mission is to reduce the illegal (migrant) population and the harm it causes. In Northern Ireland, Immigration Enforcement conducts enforcement operations against a range of immigration crime, including facilitation, document fraud, sham marriages, rogue employers and illegal workers. It also has an important role to play in preventing abuse of the Common Travel Area (CTA).

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

During 2018/2019 enforcement activities with OCTF partners has strengthened Northern Ireland's capacity to tackle immigration-related crime and resulted in 22 convictions and civil penalties being issued for illegal working amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Immigration Enforcement uses all available powers to intercept, arrest and/or prosecute immigration offenders, including foreign national criminals seeking to circumvent UK immigration controls. Criminal Investigators are embedded into the PSNI's Organised Crime and Modern Slavery teams to assist with joint investigations. Immigration Enforcement also works closely with Ireland's criminal investigators on cross border investigations into organised CTA abuse, facilitation and the production and supply of false documentation.

Case Studies

June 2018: A Romanian national who had entered the UK illegally across the land border was intercepted on route to Scotland. He was found to have previously served a 10 year prison sentence in Romania for human trafficking offences. He was arrested and removed to Romania.

July 2018: An Albanian national who had entered the UK illegally across the land border in breach of a UK Deportation Order was intercepted on route to Scotland. He was found to have previously served an eight year prison sentence in the UK for supplying drugs. He was arrested and deported to Albania.

August 2018: A Lithuanian national who had entered the UK illegally across the land border was intercepted on route to Scotland. He was found to have previously served prison sentences totalling 13 years for a large number of shoplifting offences in the UK and Lithuania. He was arrested and removed to Lithuania.

November 2018: A Romanian national who had entered the UK illegally across the land border in breach of a UK Deportation Order was intercepted on route to Scotland. He was found to have a prison sentence history in Romania, Germany and Sweden totalling 17 years for offences including sexual assault, possession of firearms and theft. He was arrested and deported to Romania.

December 2018: A Polish national who had entered the UK illegally across the land border in breach of a UK Deportation Order was intercepted on route to Scotland. He was found to have previously served a seven and a half year sentence in the UK for rape. He was arrested and deported to Poland.

March 2019: A Romanian national in breach of a UK Deportation Order referred by PSNI was prosecuted by Immigration Enforcement for the breach and received a five month prison sentence. He was deported to Romania on completion of his sentence.

FORWARD LOOK

In the coming year, Immigration Enforcement will continue to extend its reach, making it increasingly difficult for people to live or stay in Northern Ireland illegally and for criminals to commit immigration related crime.

Immigration Enforcement will continue to intervene upstream through its overseas networks to disrupt organised criminals abroad and provide intelligence to the visa issuing process to prevent inadmissible passengers from travelling to the UK. It will continue to strengthen its relationship with Ireland to ensure that individuals who would not be admissible to either jurisdiction are unable to travel to the CTA.

Immigration Enforcement will build on its work with Northern Ireland's OCTF partners and Ireland's law enforcement agencies to target foreign national offenders and organised immigration crime. Immigration Enforcement will continue to play its part in the cross border organised crime structures under the Fresh Start Agreement and continue its work with An Garda Síochána and UK Border Force in conducting intensification campaigns to tackle cross border and wider immigration crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

You have the information we need to improve our intelligence picture, and it couldn't be easier to tell us what you know... www.gov.uk/report-immigration-crime

2.5 BORDER CRIME

Border Force is a law enforcement command within the Home Office. Border Force secures the border and promotes national prosperity by facilitating the legitimate movement of individuals and goods, whilst preventing those that would cause harm from entering the UK. This is achieved through the immigration and customs checks carried out by our staff at ports and airports

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

2018/2019 Border Force NI results

- 9.2 Kg of Class A drugs
- 36.5 Kg of Cannabis
- 1 million cigarettes
- 667 Kg of Hand Rolling Tobacco
- 206,800 Euros seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
- 92 offensive weapons

NB – PSNI drugs seizures at page 18.

Working with OCTF partners

During the past year Border Force has worked alongside our partner agencies in a number of planned operations:

Operation Tession

A multi agency operation involving Border Force and the PSNI's Marine Unit. Joint sea patrols were conducted along the Northern Ireland coastline to target crime in the general maritime environment.

Project Kraken

Border Force and the PSNI's Marine Unit patrolled the Northern Ireland coastline speaking to harbour masters and the general public to raise awareness on reporting crime in the general maritime environment. Leaflets were distributed quoting the 101 number.

PROJECT KRAKEN

CRIME DOESN'T RESPECT OUR BORDERS

IF YOU SEE ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT **WHERE, WHEN OR HOW** A VESSEL AND CREW ARE OPERATING. REPORT IT.

Call the Police on **101**, quote **KRAKEN**

You can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111
In an emergency always dial 999

Border Force | NCA National Crime Agency | Crimestoppers is an independent charity

Operation Outrun/Aidant

Multiple operations involving partnership working between Border Force and the PSNI's MSHTU targets various flights where there is a potential for people exploitation and raising awareness about human trafficking/modern slavery with the travelling public.

Flights at Belfast International and Belfast City Airports were targeted for signs of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Information leaflets were distributed to passengers. A number of referrals were made to the PSNI for further investigation.

Operation Boxed

This was a multi-agency operation involving Border Force, NCA and PSNI targeting Class A drugs and cash movements at Belfast City Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast Central train station.

Trains from Dublin were targeted to coincide with the Belsonic music festival in Belfast to target Class A drugs and cash movements. Border Force and PSNI also provided detector dog support.

Case Study - Cocaine seizure at Belfast City Airport

A Brazilian national living in Northern Ireland arrived at Belfast City Airport from Sao Paulo via Heathrow. A search of his baggage revealed three professional concealments within his soft sided suitcase (pictured below). 4 Kg of Cocaine was detected and he was arrested for the illegal importation of a controlled drug. The case was adopted by NCA for further investigation. The cocaine was forensically tested and was found to be 90% pure which gave it a street value of £1.5 million. This is the equivalent of seizing 27 Kg of cocaine on the street.



Case Study - Cocaine seizure at Belfast Parcel Depot

In a joint operation, Border Force officers working alongside officers from the NCA, examined a package at a parcel depot in Belfast and seized 120 gms of cocaine.

The package had arrived from Dublin. Inside the parcel was a metal car part. When officers removed a metal plate held together by screws two brown taped packages were concealed inside. Both packages were field tested and gave a positive reaction to cocaine. The NCA adopted the seizure for further investigation

Case Study - Drug swallower detected at Belfast City Airport

A Portuguese national arrived from Faro at Belfast City Airport was intercepted in the Customs channels. After extensive searches and questioning he admitted to swallowing packages of cocaine. He was arrested and taken to hospital where he produced 35 packages of suspected cocaine. The seizure was adopted by the NCA for further investigation. The cocaine was forensically analysed and had a purity of 65-70% which gave a street value of approximately £80,000.

Case Study - Cash seizure at Belfast International Airport

€180,000 was detected from an Irish national who was travelling to Alicante from Belfast International Airport. The passenger refused to account for the cash. He was arrested by Border Force Officers on suspicion of money laundering. The cash was concealed within his hand baggage inside two files made up to look like Crown Prosecution Service paperwork (pictured below). The case was adopted by the NCA for further investigation and the case was detained under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002



Case Study - Cash seizure at Belfast International Airport

€22,800 was detected from an Irish national who was travelling to Alicante from Belfast International Airport. The passenger was arrested by Border Force Officers for money laundering and the NCA adopted the case for further investigation.

He was charged with transferring criminal property under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

Case Study - Offensive Weapon seizures

An emerging threat has seen more violence on our local streets with offensive weapons being used in attacks. Border Force is committed to targeting the illegal importation of such items. Seizures have mainly come from Bulgaria as weapons are openly for sale in the popular holiday resorts. However, Poland, Spain and the USA have also featured. This has been very successful and work will continue to target these routes. 92 weapons have been seized this year. The NCA has adopted some seizures for prosecution.



Case Study - Cannabis seizures

A consignment of cranberries was examined at Belfast International Airport after arriving from Canada. 12 Kg of cannabis was concealed with the load. Similar consignments were also detected in Heathrow from the same exporter. The PSNI adopted the seizure for further investigation. A few days later in an unrelated examination, 480gms of cannabis was detected at a Belfast parcel depot after a package arrived from Canada and was examined by Border Force Officers.

Case Study - Cigarettes concealed within heaters

12,000 cigarettes were seized after two heaters were examined at a parcel depot in Belfast. The cigarettes were concealed within the heating units and had arrived from Macedonia. A referral was made to HMRC after the seizure.



Targeted flights

High risk flights from mainland Spain, Eastern Europe and the Canary Islands continue to be targeted by Border Force for the smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco where duty rates are lower than the UK.

Organised crime groups will organise 'couriers' to bring back a case full of cigarettes to sell on the black market in their local communities.

On occasions, Border Force see 'opportunistic' smugglers not affiliated to any organised group bring back large quantities of cigarettes and tobacco.

Safeguarding at the border

Frontline staff in Border Force are provided with training in identifying potential victims of modern slavery, and guidance issued to staff sets out indicators of modern slavery, including forced labour. In addition, Border Force also has a network of specially trained Safeguarding and Modern Slavery (SAMS) teams who receive classroom training focussed on the knowledge and skills needed for this area.

Romanian females safeguarded and signed the NRM

On separate occasions, two Romanian females were safeguarded by Border Force Officers and both signed the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) after being intercepted at Belfast International Airport. Trained Safeguarding Officers interviewed both females and contacted the PSNI's MSHTU who made the necessary arrangements to take them into care. Both were suspected of being involved in sexual exploitation and forced into prostitution.

Operation Limelight – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Awareness

This operation highlighted public awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Border Force officers distributed leaflets to the travelling public at Belfast International & Belfast City Airports on inbound and outbound flights during planned days of activity

Case Study - Evidence of FGM

Border Force Officers at Belfast International Airport examined luggage belonging to a 63-year-old Nigerian male who had arrived from Amsterdam.

The baggage examination revealed unidentified traditional cultural items, possibly connected to FGM. All items were seized, and a referral was made to the PSNI Child Protection Unit who arrested the Nigerian male on suspicion of FGM.

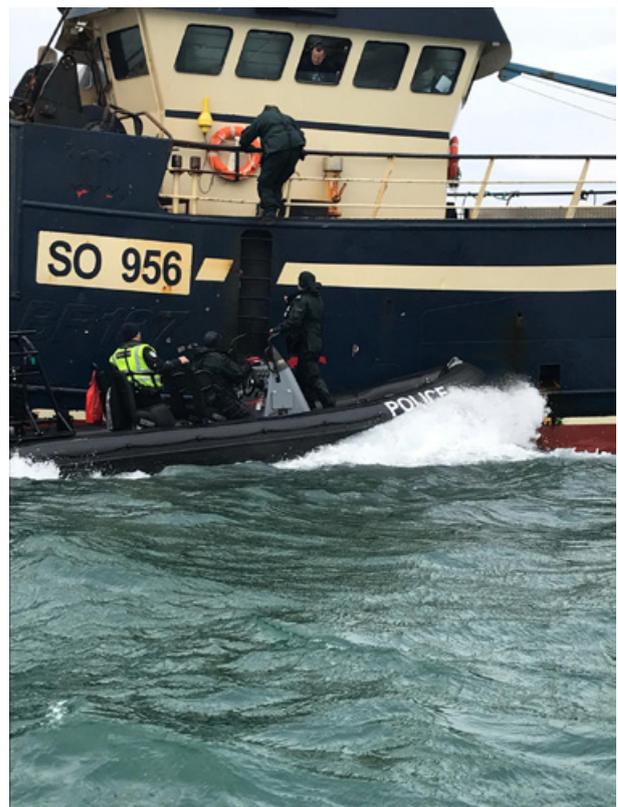
As there was insufficient evidence found to charge the passenger, he was returned to Border Force who revoked his 10 year UK Visa and removed him from the UK.

Operation Karetu

A national Border Force Modern Slavery and Protecting the Vulnerable operation that focused on the possible exploitation of young holiday makers in the Balearics to give them information about potential dangers when accepting 'summer work' and to advise them of the Modern Slavery helpline number to use if they find themselves in difficulty. Various flights were targeted at Belfast International Airport and leaflets were passed to passengers by our safeguarding Officers.

Non EU fishermen using false paperwork to join vessels in Northern Ireland

Border Force has seen an increase in non-EU nationals claiming to be fishermen using false paperwork to join fishing vessels in Northern Ireland. Some are claiming asylum when officers discover the paperwork is false. There are also concerns that fishermen are being exploited. Concerns are raised with the PSNI's MSHTU and joint operational activity is undertaken.



FORWARD LOOK

Challenges in the year ahead - EU Exit

Delivering a deal negotiated with the EU remains the government's top priority, however all possible outcomes including a No Deal must be planned for. Border Force NI will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to develop EU Exit contingency plans in line with the wider HM Government planning.

Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery

Border Force may see an increase in the movement of Potential Victims of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery through our borders as a greater variety of communities have grown with the addition of extra flights in recent years particularly from Eastern Europe. Border Force will continue to work with our partner agencies in tackling this through collaborative multi agency working.

2.6 CRIMINAL FINANCE

THE THREAT

The PSNI's Economic Crime Unit (ECU) leads investigations of fraud and money laundering within Northern Ireland. Fraud remains the most common crime type experienced in Northern Ireland and therefore poses a significant threat to individuals, business and the economy. Financial gain is very often, although not always, the driver behind organised criminal activities. There continues to be a rise in scam-type frauds utilising both modern technological methods as well as those that are more traditional.

Criminal finance also covers money laundering which is closely associated with organised crime. A range of Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) partners are engaged in responding to the risk posed. In addition, ECU investigations frequently have national and international linkages and require close and co-ordinated cross-jurisdictional working between PSNI and other law enforcement agencies and prosecuting authorities.

Fraud remains the single most experienced crime type in Northern Ireland and therefore poses a significant threat to individuals, business and the economy.

Financial Fraud

The financial fraud types below are some of those most commonly encountered:

- Email** – criminals are using information obtained as a result of data breaches, typically passwords, to trick individuals into believing that their computers have been hacked. Using social engineering they shame the victim into making payments via Bitcoin or other hard to trace methods. Although the emails may refer to the victim visiting pornographic websites, the methodology is no different to the more established email phishing frauds such as fake Apple payments or PayPal account compromises.
- Invoice Redirection** – this is a growing trend where the victim is contacted via email from a trusted source asking for payment to go to a new bank account. This is affecting all businesses, particularly solicitors and those who trade across borders. The email can either appear to be spoofed from a trusted source or may involve the trusted source having their email system compromised. The money is then dispersed via a series of mule accounts which are typically located in another force area to hinder investigation.
- Technology Service Fraud** – an offender purporting to be representing a broadband service provider contacts individuals and tells them there is a problem with their broadband service. They trick the victim into downloading software onto their device which allows the offender to take control of the device and empty the victim's bank account. These types of frauds typically target the elderly as they tend to be more trusting and unaware of how technology services work.
- Bank Security Department Frauds** – the victim is contacted by the criminal purporting to be from their bank. They may provide information about the account which tricks the victim into believing they are actually speaking to their bank. The victim is told that they are the victim of fraud and need to move their money to a "safe account" quickly, but this account is actually a mule account controlled by the offender. With both this type of fraud and computer software fraud, the bank is unlikely to reimburse the victim as the victim has initiated the payment.
- Telephone Fraud** – these are a perennial problem. In a similar way to email frauds the victim is frightened into believing that they owe HMRC or other government department money and unless they comply they will be subject to arrest. They normally pay the offender using iTunes vouchers, again relying on the lack of knowledge of the victim.

Case Study - Counterfeit Currency

At a Crown Court hearing in Northern Ireland in February, seven defendants were sentenced for conspiracy offences involving counterfeit currency. The NCA's UK National Central Office for Counterfeit Currency provided substantial assistance to PSNI including advice, coordination of expert evidence and analysis of counterfeits. The total loss was £560,900 plus €438,320 from the counterfeiting of Ulster Bank and Bank of Ireland £20 notes and €20 notes. Sentences totalling seven years and nine months' imprisonment (some suspended) were passed down.

Money Laundering

Money laundering remains a key enabler of organised crime and is currently a priority within the PSNI Economic Crime Unit.

To combat criminals benefiting from their crimes the PSNI's dedicated Asset Confiscation and Enforcement (ACE) Team, located within the ECU, provides a service throughout the organisation and to partner agencies with the objective of identifying criminal benefit and property and having it removed from the criminals.

In acknowledging the importance and the significance of the need to combat financial crime and specifically money laundering and the removal of criminal benefit PSNI's Crime Operations Department have made money laundering a priority.

The ECU has Area Hubs located throughout Northern Ireland that have financial investigators trained in restraint and confiscation. The Hubs provide a similar service to the ACE Team but on a more localised scale.

The ECU works closely with both internal and external partners, such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the banking sector and ScamwiseNI to tackle the growing number of fraud and money laundering crimes that are affecting Northern Ireland.

The amount of money restrained and confiscated in the last financial year continues to rise. Restraints have risen by £2.3m; confiscations granted by £140k and cash forfeitures by £1.2m. PSNI are currently rated 5th in UK policing for Asset Confiscation and Restraint.

PSNI is currently rated 5th in UK policing for Asset Confiscation and Restraint.

The PSNI's ACE Team also continues to work alongside partner agencies and internal policing teams to maximise seizure and restraint of criminal assets from suspects. A recent policing operation targeting the East Belfast UVF uncovered high value items that are currently being stored by the contractor Wilsons auctions. The ACE team has now progressed to visiting remand suspects in prison in order to seek early consent to sell. This will maximise the resale value of the seized assets and contribute towards the payment of any future Confiscation Order granted by the courts.

Partner agency work

Department for Communities

Legal Aid Services

National Crime Agency

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Trading Standards Service

Financial Institutions

Bookmakers

NI Housing Executive

Department of Health

ITN/BBC

Operation Shambala

Operation Shambala is a 'high end' money ongoing laundering investigation focussing on the money laundering typology of Trade Based Money Laundering (TBML). The investigation has identified the laundering of over £85.5 million in a five year period, over 50 companies connected to over 120 bank accounts. Over £12 million of the laundered monies has been laundered through the European Union and officers are now liaising with both Europol and Eurojust to establish Joint Investigation Teams with Latvia, Belgium, France, Spain and Germany. Monies have also been laundered through the United Arab Emirates and China.

The Economic Crime Unit is working in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies to investigate other aspects of the investigation.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

The following are the Asset Confiscation and Enforcement Team figures for April 2018 – March 2019.

	April 17 – Mar 18	April 18 – Mar 19	Difference
PSNI Cash Forfeitures	£300,000	£1.5m	+£1.2m
Restraint Orders	£3.5m	£5.8m	+£2.3m
Confiscation Orders	£462,000	£602,000	+£140,000

Since April 2018 all fraud has been recorded on Niche. During the 2018/19 financial year there were a total 4,137 fraud offences recorded by the PSNI compared to 3,581 recorded by Action Fraud in 2017/2018 which equates to an increase of 15.5%.

In October 2018 £1m was restrained in cryptocurrency from a suspect involved in investment fraud. This is the first time such a seizure and restraint has taken place within the PSNI.

The NCA is leading the UK law enforcement response to a large-scale cash-based money laundering methodology exploiting bank accounts held mainly by overseas students studying in the UK. Trend information has been disseminated to the PSNI relating to cash suspected of being linked to criminal activity in those geographical areas. The original operation had led to a significant number of Production Order applications throughout the UK and Northern Ireland.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Money mules

Members of the public are advised to stay alert to signs of recruitment of money mules. Offenders may seek to recruit mules by:

- Asking people, in person or online, to receive or transfer money into or from their bank accounts, offering a cut in return. Alternatively, providing people with cash and paying them a nominal fee to purchase goods for shipment overseas, to minimise traceability.
- Conning people into becoming mules unwittingly, by asking for bank details via seemingly genuine job adverts. Signs of recruitment include adverts proclaiming 'easy job; work from home; big cash pay outs' or 'instant money; minimal hours'.

Identified mules may have their accounts closed, be unable to obtain new accounts, phone contracts or credit and can face prison terms of up to 14 years.

Visit www.moneymules.co.uk for further advice or

- ❖ **PSNI Tel 101**
- ❖ **Via PSNI website**
- ❖ **Crimestoppers Tel 0800 555 111 (anonymously)**
- ❖ **Via Crimestoppers-uk.org website (anonymously)**

2.7 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME (IPC)

THE THREAT

The most common types of counterfeit goods being seized in Northern Ireland include clothing, alcohol, tobacco, digital TV “boxes”, cosmetics, sunglasses, handbags, footwear, DVDs, CDs and electrical items.

The scale and distribution of IPC continues to grow through the use of the internet, with goods frequently advertised for sale via social media, auction sites and online classifieds. There are also thousands of websites dedicated to the sale of counterfeit goods. While these websites often give the impression of being secure and trustworthy, by using these sites and providing their personal and banking details, consumers are leaving themselves open to becoming victims of identity fraud or having their devices compromised by malicious software and potentially used for other types of criminality. This, again, is evidence of the digital footprint of most crime types.

The issue of Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) remains one of the main IPC concerns in Northern Ireland with homeowners purchasing various forms of “boxes” to stream digital TV channels, box sets and films, instead of entering into a contract and paying a monthly subscription to a registered broadcaster. Going forward, rising costs of subscription TV and online streaming services may encourage more and more people to use these illegal streaming sites. This in turn may increase the number of cyber-motivated and fraud offences with people using these sites at high risk of being hacked and falling victim to various forms of cyber crime.

There are thousands of websites dedicated to the sale of counterfeit goods. By using these sites and providing personal and banking details consumers are leaving themselves open to becoming victims.

Successful prosecutions for the sale of illegal streaming devices are starting to be seen in Northern Ireland. However, to date, there have been no custodial sentences given.

Buying counterfeit or fake products is often seen as a very minor crime with little impact. However, the reality is the harm these products can cause to individuals, communities and legitimate businesses: physical harm in terms of cosmetic and personal hygiene products causing burns and skin reactions; counterfeit toys containing toxins harmful to children; and fake electrical goods posing the risk of electric shock or fire. It also affects and stifles local business and investment. Everyone needs to think hard about the impact of any purchase of counterfeit goods. Crime groups are involved in selling counterfeit goods and using the profits from sales to finance other illegal activities such as drug dealing and human trafficking.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

In November 2018, the PSNI received information to suggest, “digital-boxes” and “Firesticks,” were freely available from business premises in Belfast. The information was supplied to Sky Television through a member of the OCTF Sub Group on IPC, and was followed by a “test purchase,” at the site. This supported other information held by the police which suggested people linked to the business utilised a number of apparently legitimate local businesses for money laundering purposes and had developed links with paramilitaries.

Searches were conducted, (under Copyright Designs and Patent Act 1988 and Article 10 PACE (NI) Order), at this business as well as a residential address in Belfast. During these searches one arrest was made and a number of relevant items, including digital boxes, communication devices, a quantity of controlled drugs and over £15,000 cash were located and seized.

As a result of the searches, the PSNI has mounted a financial investigation in relation to criminal benefits which is believed to be approximately £200,000.

At this juncture, sixteen Production Orders have been supplied to financial institutions, with further anticipated.

Sky Television has requested the Investigating Officer attend a conference in London, in September 2019, to brief law enforcement partners from across the globe, in relation to this investigation and the potential for investigations into the confiscation of Proceeds of Crime.

TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

Doorstep Crime

Doorstep crime remains the leading priority for Trading Standards Service (TSS) in Northern Ireland. It is carried out by callous, unscrupulous and organised crime groups who deliberately prey on the most vulnerable in society, predominantly older people. These criminals are mobile and work throughout Northern Ireland, GB and across the border with the Republic of Ireland.

The impact on victims of doorstep crime can be devastating; they can lose trust in those who are close to them and shut people out of their lives. There is also evidence that suggests that some victims never get over what has happened to them and they may move into assisted accommodation sooner, as they are no longer able or confident to live alone.

In some instances, entire life savings are wiped out to pay for often unnecessary work, leaving the victim penniless and a once independent individual can find themselves having to rely on others and on the state for support. There is also the impact that doorstep crime has on legitimate traders, drawing trade away from genuine local businesses who can help bolster the local economy.

TSS has worked tirelessly on tackling organised crime groups involved in doorstep crime, most notably through:

- A number of TSS prosecutions and joint cases with the PSNI are currently in court in which elderly victims have paid thousands of pounds for work that was not carried out;
- Participation in the multi-agency "Operation Rogue Trader" with the PSNI and HMRC culminating in two arrests, the seizure of nine vehicles and over 180 check points;
- Forging excellent relationships with the PSNI and other enforcement partners, the financial sector through the 'Banking Protocol', the third sector and, most importantly, victims of doorstep crime;

- Working with partner agencies to increase awareness, reduce the impact of doorstep crime and develop preventative actions to disrupt problem traders and reduce consumer detriment; and
- Continuing to raise awareness of doorstep crime and participate in national and regional prevention activities. Continue to promote the Friends Against Scams campaign which includes information on Doorstep Crime.

Case Study - Doorstep Crime

TSS prosecuted two doorstep criminals from Coalisland who were fined £2,000 and ordered to pay compensation of £2,350 after obtaining £4,700 from a 75 year old widower for grossly overcharging for home improvement work that was either not carried out or done to a poor standard. The victim sadly passed away before the individuals were sentenced.

The victim was persuaded to have minor repair works carried out to his house. Over the next couple of days he parted with various sums of money to members of the three man gang. He was perceived as a "cash-cow" and his bank statement showed that they took some £4,700 in total, which was in excess of the actual costs for the work carried out.

The victim felt obliged to pay as the gang had started the work and he felt intimidated when he was followed to the bank to collect cash. Only when another member of the gang tried to get the victim to part with more money to tarmac his driveway did a neighbour, who was now aware of situation, intervene and get rid of the gang.

Case Study

A consumer in Belfast had been targeted with over-priced power washing of their driveway and roof amounting to £1,500. TSS, with PSNI officers as backup, was able to respond immediately to the intelligence received and the consumer did not pay any money.

Case Study - Rogue Trader

A pensioner from Newcastle, County Down was saved from handing over £6,900 to a rogue trader who was overcharging for laying tarmac. TSS received intelligence from a taxi driver who was taking a pensioner to the bank to withdraw money to pay the trader. The job was overpriced and of poor quality. Rapid response from TSS and PSNI officers resulted in the arrest of the rogue trader and the pensioner avoided handing over the £6,900.

Case Study - Banking Protocol

Police, alerted by a banking protocol, discovered an elderly man planned to pay over £12,000 to have a driveway resurfaced with brick pavers. PSNI officers contacted TSS who went to assist. The work was stopped with only a small payment made. The job was later undertaken by a bona-fide and competent trader.

Case Study - Counterfeit Fancy Dress

TSS received a complaint from a licensed distributor that large quantities of counterfeit children's fancy dress clothing were being sold online. Test purchases of a couple of garments showed the garments to be counterfeit. TSS staff, accompanied by representatives of the licensed UK trade mark holder, visited premises in Antrim. 4,400 suspected counterfeit items were seized. The counterfeit clothing bore trade marks or logos of Marvel comic book heroes such as Spiderman, Superman, Super Mario and Wonderwoman while the rest were Disney outfits such as Cinderella, Snow White and Mickey Mouse.

The business was fined £10,400, a director was given 140 hours community service and a Proceeds of Crime investigation resulted in the business being ordered to pay £191,508.68.

Counterfeit Goods

Throughout 2018-19, the TSS has continued to carry out seizures of counterfeit goods. Investigations are ongoing with outcomes that may result in prosecution in a number of cases. Among the items seized in respect of trade mark abuse last year were:

- designer goods
- children's toys
- phone chargers
- alcohol

TSS continues to work with other law enforcement agencies and OCTF partners to carry out seizures and share intelligence, ensuring that the most effective action is taken against the rogue traders. This includes online sales and visits to outdoor markets. TSS also continues to work closely with trade mark holders and licensees in gathering intelligence and information for prosecutions.

TSS continues to develop working relationships with internet service providers and e-commerce platforms (including social media websites) to establish protocols and processes for interventions, particularly relating to online markets and advertising on search engines.

Scams

TSS works to tackle mass marketing scams and disrupt the operations of perpetrators behind mail scams. It works in partnership with agencies across the country and with the National Trading Standards Scams Team to identify and support victims of mass marketing fraud and reach out to all the known scam victims in Northern Ireland, who are listed as people that have sent money to scammers.

In the majority of cases victims have lost thousands of pounds and have been identified as incredibly vulnerable. TSS officers continue to visit victims and provide advice and support to each person as well as investigating the scammers and taking enforcement action, where possible.

Ongoing criminal investigations, as well as a robust education and awareness-raising policy, has brought the problem of scams to the fore of the public's attention. TSS continues as a member of the ScamwiseNI partnership which shares intelligence and helps formulate strategy and policy on protecting vulnerable consumers in Northern Ireland from falling victim of sophisticated and extremely detrimental scams.

In 2018/2019 pro-active work to combat mass marketed scams included:

- Participation in ScamwiseNI with the PSNI, DOJ, Commissioner for Older People, the Consumer Council and Age Sector Platform;
- Publicity of ScamwiseNI on websites and in the media and by advertising about ScamwiseNI and particular campaigns are launched targeting scams;
- Developing the Banking Protocol initiative in Northern Ireland, where victims of crime have been detected;
- Working with advertisers to try and stop scammers from posting adverts;
- Actively participating in the COSLA /NTSST initiative involving the training of local Royal Mail staff which will enable postal workers to identify scam posts and make referrals to their internal security team. These referrals help the TSS to identify potential scam victims;
- Providing evidence/intelligence to the National Trading Standards Scams Team, which has enabled them to undertake investigations and disrupt scams e.g. this has led to the shutting down of PO Boxes, which had been used by scammers;
- Presenting at major charity/government events to local community groups on the issue of mass-marketed scams;
- Raising public awareness of eCrime scams such as subscription traps, secondary ticketing and fake job scams;
- Meetings with a wide range of organisations/ stakeholders to highlight the detriment caused to citizens by scams e.g. PSNI, church leaders, Health and Social Care Board, Safeguarding Teams in the Health Trusts, Older Persons Commissioner's Office, carer groups, the Rural Community Network;
- Dementia Care and others;
- Identifying opportunities for a more joined-up working approach to combating scams eg TSS has been working with local Crime Prevention Officers as it appears that scam victims are also targeted by rogue doorstep traders;
- Undertaking educational work with social workers, carers, dementia groups to help identify a scam victim. This has already proven to be very worthwhile in that scam victims have been identified by care workers. This has resulted in referrals to TSS that has enabled the service to provide the victims with one to one advice and to persuade them to stop responding to scam mail;
- Assisting the National Scams Team by participating in a pilot project relating to the use of 'call blockers' as a means to disrupt telephone

scammers (These are devices which block scam phone calls while allowing legitimate callers to get through); and

- Arranging for a new initiative (Friends Against Scams) to be rolled out across Northern Ireland.

Case Study - Scam Correspondence

An 89 year old lady lost more than £14,000 of her life savings through responding to scam mail. On average she received approximately 150 letters each week. Some of these scam letters contained magazines and the associated paperwork indicated that she had won thousands of pounds, and to claim her prize win, she had to place an order for goods. The victim visited her local Post Office regularly to buy postal orders and often sent over £100 of her pension each week, for goods that she did not want/ need. Her granddaughter said "it became like an addiction". Often when members of the family would call with her, she would ignore them, as she was so engrossed in reading the scam letters.

The impact which this scam had on this lady and on her family was detrimental in that she was neglecting herself, was not heating her home and forgot to eat, lost weight and had to be hospitalised. Despite a number of advisory visits being provided by the TSS, this elderly lady refused to believe that she was being scammed. TSS continues to work to prevent this lady falling victim to further scams.

Case Study

For over 10 years an elderly gentleman had been responding to scam lotteries, scam clairvoyants and scam phone calls. After a number of advisory visits by the local Trading Standards team, he stopped responding. A call blocker was installed to prevent scam phone calls from getting through. During the last visit by TSS officers, he stated that he had been able to save money as a result of no longer responding to scams. He advised that he had used this money to put a surround around his wife's grave and that he would not have been able to have done this if Trading Standards had not visited him to provide advice on scams. This gentleman provided a Criminal Justice Witness statement, subsequently used by the National Trading Standards Scams Team to undertake a major investigation and resulted in the seizure of assets and arrests being made.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

The OCTF IPC Sub Group continues to meet and provide a forum for engagement between PSNI, Government and relevant stakeholders across the private sectors, in response to IPC crime and related developments, issues and threats. A key aim is to work in partnership to enhance and promote reporting mechanisms and provide a forum for sharing concerns and information on IPC incidents. This year the Group took part in a public awareness event to promote IPC-free trading and encourage reporting of IP Crimes.

St Georges Market

From 19-21 October representatives from the OCTF Intellectual Property Crime (IPC) Sub Group set up a stall at St Georges Market in Belfast to display counterfeit goods and highlight the dangers, particularly health and safety risks associated with "fake" goods.

Representatives from partner agencies were on hand to advise members of the public of the physical harm that can be caused by purchasing counterfeit good and to emphasise that profits of the sales help to fund organised crime groups and enable them to exert more control over our communities.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Think about the cost - price is usually a good indicator as to whether goods are likely to be counterfeit.

Be wary about buying branded goods particularly online and outside of usual retail premises. Markets, fairs and car boot sales are prime locations for counterfeit goods, as is social media.

Many counterfeits are difficult to spot but for goods that consumers are able to inspect first hand, consumers should look out for poor packaging, bad spelling or printing, photocopied instructions and lack of regulatory markings.

Online photographs of genuine items can be used to promote items but the delivered goods may well be counterfeit.

IF IT LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS!

Report your suspicions to:

- ❖ **PSNI Telephone 101**
- ❖ **Via the PSNI website**
- ❖ **Crimestoppers Tel 0800 555 111 (anonymously)**
- ❖ **Trading Standards at <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/consumer-affairs/trading-standards-service>**
- ❖ **Via Crimestoppers-uk.org**

2.8 ARMED ROBBERY AND EXTORTION

THE THREAT

Physical ATM Attacks

2018/19 saw two notable crime series in relation to ATM attacks:

Rip Out Attacks

These attacks were well publicised and documented across the various forms of media. They involved entire ATMs being stolen in rip out attacks using plant machinery which had been stolen from locations close by. The attacks began in late 2018 and continued on an almost weekly basis through to April 2019, reaching levels not seen in Northern Ireland for many years. The attacks ceased in April 2019 after a number of significant arrests, searches and seizures were made of members of an organised crime group.

During the 2018/19 financial year there were a total of 14 such attacks with incidents mainly occurring in two distinct geographical areas; Ballymena/Antrim and Tyrone/Republic of Ireland. More than one organised crime group was believed to have been involved in these attacks, with offenders being extremely well organised and with a high level of proficiency and expertise in the use of plant machinery, specifically diggers. In some cases the theft took only a matter of minutes to complete, meaning, in terms of the time spent at the scene and the risk of being detected, these crimes were relatively low risk compared to the large scale profits made and amount of money stolen in most cases.

There have been no further incidents reported since the arrests of members of one particular organised crime group; PSNI remain alert to the possibility that such criminal activities could resume.

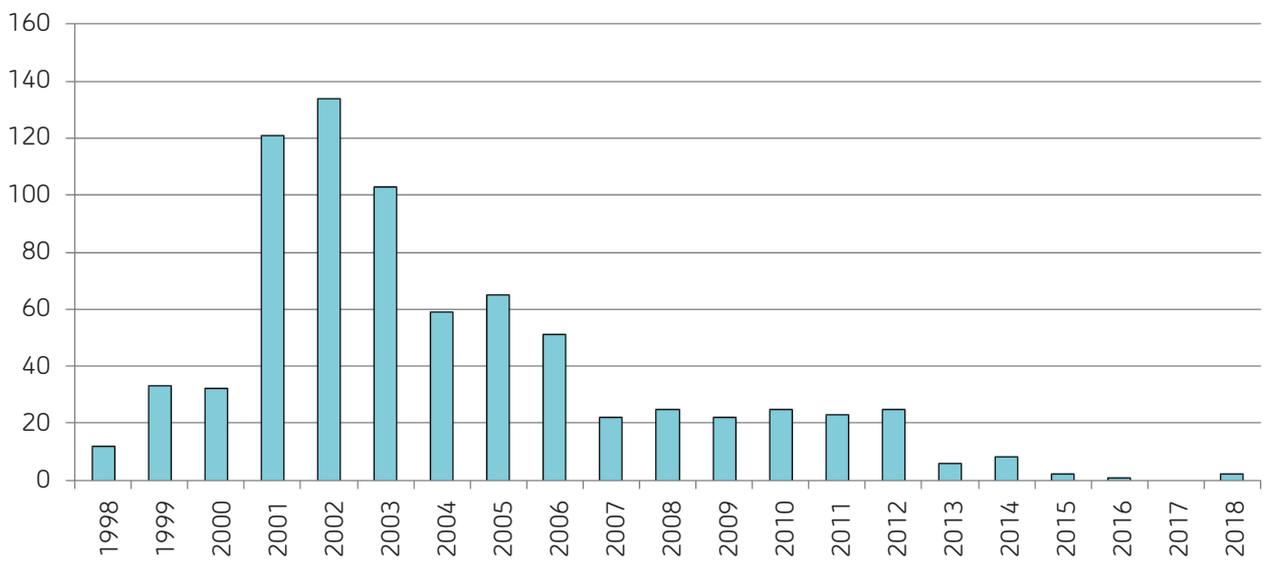
Bunker Type ATM Attacks

These ATMs are situated in the wall outside premises, not stand alone, however they are housed in a bunker type structure which can be accessed through an external door. Once inside, offenders worked at forcing entry to the side or back of the ATM while out of sight of the general public. The attacks were mainly concentrated in the Belfast area and the surrounding towns with notable sums of cash stolen. These attacks also started in late 2018 and continued through to mid May 2019, only ceasing after a number of prominent members of a Belfast based OCG were arrested, charged and remanded. There is no overlap in offenders involved in both types of ATM attacks with no evidence to suggest that those involved in the bunker attacks were also involved in the rip out attacks.

As with previous years, ATM gas attacks and “Black Box” attacks continue to occur throughout mainland UK and the Republic of Ireland but they have so far not been seen to the same levels in Northern Ireland.

Cash in Transit (CIT) Attacks

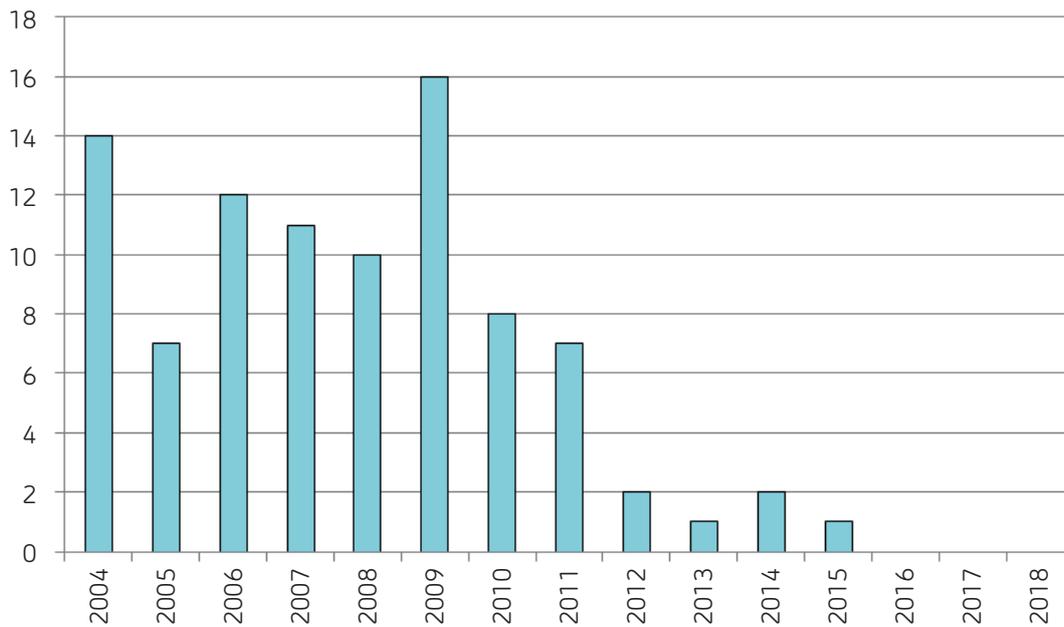
CIT Attacks in Northern Ireland, 1998 - 2018



There were three successful CIT attacks during the 2018/19 financial year. In general however, CIT attacks remain uncommon occurrences in Northern Ireland, due to increased security measures and the continued level of partnership working between CIT companies and law enforcement. Figures over the past decade have been on a downward trend with incidents now a fraction of the level experienced during the early 2000s.

Tiger Kidnaps

Number of Tiger Kidnaps in Northern Ireland, 2005 - 2018



Similar to CIT attacks, tiger kidnappings have become extremely rare in Northern Ireland. Levels have been significantly reduced since 2012 and there were no incidents during 2018, the third year in a row that no incidents were recorded.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Message to help Prevent Attacks on ATM Machines

The OCTF Armed Robbery Sub Group produced an article which was published in the Farming Life supplement of the News Letter (on 29 December 2018) to encourage owners of plant machinery and farm vehicles to protect their property. The article highlighted how unsecured machinery, such as diggers or JCBs often stolen from nearby sites, can be used to rip ATMs from buildings. The OCTF message was in support of operational activity to reinforce that prevention is the key to help stop or frustrate any future attempts of this crime type.

2.9 EXCISE EVASION AND TAX FRAUD

THE THREAT

HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service (FIS) with responsibility for civil and criminal investigations into the most serious tax evasion and fraud works closely with partner agencies locally and across international borders to draw upon and share expertise to tackle organised criminality in Northern Ireland.

The UK tax gap is 5.6% which represents an estimated £35 billion in uncollected taxes, money needed to fund public services.

The latest tax gap figures show a general downward trend in criminal attacks on the tax system from £5.4bn in 2016/2017 to £4.6bn in the latest published figures for 2017/2018 with most excise regimes reflecting a reduction.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT - RESULTS

In the financial year 2018/2019, HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service (FIS) Northern Ireland prosecuted 46 people for a range of criminal offences relating to income tax and PAYE fraud, excise evasion, falsely claiming tax credits and associated offences under the Fraud Act 2006 and money laundering legislation.

The UK tax gap is 5.6% which represents an estimated £35 billion in uncollected taxes, money needed to fund public services.

In addition, the Belfast Proceeds of Crime (POC) team recovered;

- £506,978 through Confiscation Orders;
- £422,142 through Compensation Orders;
- £76,717 cash seized;
- £4,284,510 through civil tax interventions; and
- £203,330 through Insolvency.

There were also 115 civil investigation settlements with a tax yield including deliberate penalties of £35.4 million.

HMRC's Threat Response Unit (TRU) is the next step in developing the response to criminal attacks on the public revenue. Using the TRU, HMRC is working to bring together the full spectrum of compliance and policy capabilities to help deliver the Serious Fraud Strategy objectives. TRU is taking the lead in monitoring and prioritising emerging threats and coordinating the HMRC and Cross-Government response to these.

HMRC has well established mechanisms for responding to many of our traditional risks like tobacco and alcohol smuggling or MTIC (Missing Trader Intra-Community) fraud. However, organised criminal groups are clearly highly adaptive and innovative when it comes to developing new frauds or adapting existing methodologies. TRU was developed to enable HMRC to respond much faster to these new and emerging risks; Bringing relevant parts of the business together reaching out across Government and law enforcement where required to ensure all necessary assets are deployed to mitigate the risks.

The primary goal is to design fraud out of our tax regimes through prevent initiatives like policy/legislative change or strengthening IT systems with enhanced identification techniques – stopping the fraud at source. However, not all frauds have a straight forward prevent solution so HMRC actively develop and promote responsive elements in its strategies. These can be just as important, if not more so, than preventative measures as they develop our understanding and insight in areas where there is limited knowledge. This increased understanding often leads to prevent measures or targeted education/due diligence projects within the risk population.

VAT

To counter VAT fraud in relation to cross-border supplies of high value motor vehicles a trade bulletin was introduced in 2018/19 in response to intelligence received highlighting the generic threats. Organised crime groups were stealing money by falsely claiming VAT on cross-border movements of both domestic vehicles and plant machinery. HMRC identified a number of risk areas involving legitimate businesses including abuse of the vehicle margin scheme using false documentation and the hijacking of genuine VAT numbers to purchase vehicles VAT free.

Case Study – Motor Vehicles / Plant / Machinery

The HMRC VAT Supply Chain Fraud team in Northern Ireland continues to apply a project based approach to tackling what is regarded as a threat of significant concern to both UK and Republic of Ireland tax authorities in relation to cross border fraud involving the movement of motor vehicles, plant & machinery between UK/Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The project objective was to pro-actively disrupt and prevent fraudulent activity in these trade sectors by identifying, profiling and targeting high risk traders in a structured and systematic manner using the range of systems and intervention tools available to HMRC.

Significant research and analysis was undertaken and a high risk population identified. Utilising the information and intelligence available within HMRC, further enhanced through significant communication between HMRC and Revenue Commissioners, approximately 260 visits and desk based interventions have been carried out to date. 86 of these interventions have been undertaken at the request of the Revenue Commissioners via the formal Standing Committee for Administrative Co-operation (SCAC) process and they have reciprocated in relation to HMRC requests.

Consequently, together we have successfully disrupted and prevented fraudulent attacks on both tax systems by persons of significant interest in relation to supply chain fraud emanating from both north and south of the Irish land border.

The project has to date de-registered 74 VAT registered traders in Northern Ireland alone.

VAT Assessments have been raised to a value of £1.6m, Penalties £690,000 and tax loss letters issued for £2.8m with several cases also referred within FIS to be assessed for criminal prosecution. There are also several cases currently progressing to litigation. The project has facilitated similar outcomes for HMRC nationally.

Case Study – Asset Recovery

This is an update to a case reported last year concerning an investigation into a self-employed ice cream salesman, who deliberately failed to declare his income to HMRC, in order to avoid paying income tax. He facilitated this fraud by concealing his genuine income across several bank accounts including accounts held in his estranged daughter's name. He subsequently used the illicit funds accrued to purchase three properties and further distanced himself from the fraud by registering these properties in his daughters' names. HMRC investigations established the defendant's daughters were innocent victims used by their father to facilitate this fraud.

In February 2018 the defendant was sentenced to 32 months imprisonment, suspended for three years, after he pleaded guilty to cheating the public revenue of £25,000 as well as ten separate money laundering charges.

Confiscation proceedings were instigated and the PoC team successfully demonstrated the defendant had a 'criminal lifestyle' and were therefore able to apply the assumptions under s160 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. These assumptions assert that all assets deemed to be held by the defendant at the time of conviction were obtained as a result of his general criminal conduct, including those properties he had registered in the daughters' names. This resulted in a 1,290% uplift in his criminal benefit from £25,000 to £322,680.61.

In May 2019 a Confiscation Order was granted confirming his criminal benefit to be £322,680.61 with a recoverable amount of £314,536.21. He has until August 2019 to pay the Confiscation Order amount in full or face a default sentence of four years imprisonment.

Alcohol – Tax Gap £0.6bn

Alcohol fraud carried out by organised crime groups is a serious problem although estimated losses have been reduced to £0.6bn in the latest published tax gap figures from their peak of £1.9bn in 2014-15.

A major part of tackling fraud is working with trade sectors to improve their knowledge and to identify and counter fraudulent activity across their trades. In the alcohol sector as part of the Tackling Alcohol Fraud at Source HMRC initiative, contact has been made with a number of large producers with interests / supply chains in Ireland. In terms of wider alcohol fraud – various excise warehouses / crime groups in the Republic of Ireland are involved in facilitating transit fraud activity – acting as conduits for goods travelling to/from continental Europe which are diverted to the UK market.

Under EU law, alcohol can be brought into the UK untaxed ('duty suspended'), if certain conditions are met. These include ensuring duty is paid when the alcohol is sold in the UK, recording movements of duty suspended alcohol, and storing it in approved premises. Criminals circumvent these controls, using duplicate documents to bring consignments of alcohol into the UK (known as 'mirror loads') and diverting them into wholesale and retail supply chains without payment of duty.

The profits to be made are considerable; the duty differential between a lorry load of beer (roughly 2,000 cases) duty paid in the UK and France is approximately £18,000. Much of the diverted alcohol is originally produced in the UK and exported to the near continent before being brought back. The contribution of other modes of fraud such as counterfeiting or abuse of the excise duty repayment systems are thought to be less significant.

The Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme (AWRS) was launched on 1st January 2016, to prevent criminals from introducing illicit goods into retail supply chains via wholesalers. UK wholesale alcohol transactions are now subject to supply chain verification via an online look-up service. AWRS has introduced strict compliance requirements in this previously unregulated sector but has been generally well-received by the trade.

Overall revenue protected through HMRC enforcement activity has increased from £300m in 2014/15 to over £1 billion last year. This reflects our increasing focus on tackling the profitability of the crime, including through disruption activity such as revocation of approvals.

Case Study – Counterfeit Vodka

In November 2018, HMRC Officers attended the premises of a transport depot in Glasgow, where they identified and seized 1,008 litres of non-duty paid Smirnoff Vodka (112 cases, each containing 6 x 1.5 Litre optic style bottles). The vodka was mis-described as Cherry Active Car Shampoo and the product was tested, analysed and found to be counterfeit. This has been linked to 11 previous similar deliveries.

In February 2019, 1,200 cases of counterfeit vodka were seized at Cairnryan port manifested as animal bedding with a minimal cover load to disguise the illicit product.

On both occasions, the bottles bore UK Duty paid markings. Both deliveries involved links to Northern Ireland and it is believed that the production of this illicit alcohol is taking place on the island of Ireland.

Fuel – Tax Gap UK Tax Gap £150 million – Northern Ireland Tax Gap – £40 million

Fuel laundering – although not confined to the border region, this crime is associated with remote agricultural areas due to the availability of rebated fuel, large sheds to accommodate laundering plants, commercial vehicles and privacy.

Fuel laundering has a visible effect on local communities, dumping of waste by-products endangers the environment, oil leaks cause traffic accidents and there is an increased risk of fires. Additionally, attempts to launder the Accutrace marker, introduced in 2015, has seen criminals using highly volatile methods involving intense levels of heat. HMRC is aware of attempts that have resulted in buildings and vehicles sustaining severe damage as a result of uncontrolled fire. This shows a total disregard for public safety particularly when these dangerous unregulated plants are located near local communities.

Case Study – Fuel Distillation Plant

In January 2019, in a joint operation with PSNI, HMRC detected and disrupted an illicit fuel laundering site in Newry. As well as the standard bleaching earth process, this site was utilising a new laundering process involving distilling the fuel by heating it to over 200 degrees centigrade. This highly dangerous unregulated process, which attempts to remove the government markers and dyes can lead to explosions and /or fires. This particular site was within 100 metres of the A1 and 200 metres of a children’s nursery, thereby posing a significant threat to the public.



Above: This highly dangerous site was within 100 metres of the A1 and 200 metres of a children’s nursery, thereby posing a significant threat to the public.

The fuel laundered at this site was being transported to Scotland, via an HGV lorry containing a concealed fuel tank, and then distributed to several fuel stations across Scotland and the North of England. The detection and identification of this laundering site owed much, not only to the co-operation of local partner agencies, but also HMRC Officers based in Scotland.

The plant is estimated to have been capable of producing in excess of 46 million litres of illicit fuel over a period of 12 months with the associated potential revenue loss of £24 million.

23,000 litres of laundered fuel and a range of vehicles and equipment were seized by HMRC Officers with two individuals, arrested at the scene due to be reported to the PPS for prosecution.



Tobacco – Tax Gap – £1.5bn

Throughout 2018/19 the smuggling of counterfeit cigarettes was assessed as the main organised crime threat in tobacco related crime. This was closely followed by the smuggling of ‘Cheap White’ cigarettes, UK counterfeit cigarette production and the smuggling of genuine Hand Rolling Tobacco (HRT).

‘Cheap White’ cigarettes are manufactured legally overseas, often with legitimate markets, but which are also exported illegally and smuggled into the UK via OCG smuggling networks. Cigarettes manufactured in the Middle East are those which impact most on the UK market. ‘Cheap Whites’ are themselves now also subject to being counterfeit.

Genuine HRT includes ‘The Turner’, manufactured legally in Belgium but bought in bulk predominantly in Luxembourg and smuggled into the UK.

The number of illicit production sites reportedly producing counterfeit cigarettes for the UK market remains high. The numbers operating in the Baltic States appear to have diminished because of successful law enforcement interventions, however, this appears to have pushed them elsewhere with several countries on the near continent all having interdicted on numerous production facilities. These overseas successes have driven some counterfeit production into the UK and as reported below, current operations are targeting these sites.

The modus operandi for cigarette and tobacco smuggling has not changed hugely. Container seizures remain constant with origin countries in the Far East featuring prominently. These almost always involve counterfeit or ‘Cheap White’ products. Vietnam is assessed as being involved in counterfeit production, including ‘Cheap Whites’ (Richman for example) but many Far East ports are involved in ‘flipping’ containers from the Middle East. ‘Flipping’ involves swapping containers and cutting new paperwork to disguise the origin and description of the contents.

Roll-on/roll-off freight, both accompanied and unaccompanied, remains the most prevalent method of smuggling. This includes the use of groupage hub to hub movements moving smaller loads but more often contained within larger legitimate consignments of other goods. The use of post and fast parcel services remains constant and another variation of the little but often scenario.

In 2018/19 the most seized recorded brands were Richmond (Imperial Tobacco) 88.7 million, Richman 57.1 million and Mayfair 51.3 million. All of these will almost certainly be counterfeit.

Case Study – Tobacco Manufacturing Plant

In late 2018 HMRC FIS staff supported by PSNI Officers searched an industrial unit and discovered a manufacturing plant producing counterfeit cigarettes.

On the premises there was a large IBC (intermediate bulk container) filled with loose tobacco, multiple sacks of loose tobacco, master cases of cigarettes and loose cigarettes and machinery designed to wrap and package cigarettes. It is believed this that this factory was capable of producing 1.5 million cigarettes a day.

Below – boxes of cigarettes found at the tobacco manufacturing plant



FORWARD LOOK

Supply Chain Investigations

HMRC Supply Chain investigations are designed to prevent supply chain fraud tax losses by tackling companies identified as being at high risk of involvement in suspect supply chains.

In each specific threat area, HMRC identify a population of the highest risk businesses and select them for a series of monthly visits. At each visit, officers scrutinise current trading and examine their supply chains. If fraud is found along the supply chain, all the businesses affected are advised in writing and challenged to change their behaviour to prevent future losses. If they fail to act, the warnings provided may be used to underpin subsequent interventions - whether it is civil - through tax assessments and recovery, or through criminal investigations.

As a direct result of this intensive activity, over 30% of the selected businesses each year either change their behaviours to become compliant or cease trading altogether.

By focussing on specific threat areas HMRC develops a comprehensive understanding of the frauds. This understanding is used to educate businesses operating in the legitimate marketplace to help them avoid becoming unwittingly involved.

The Supply Chain Investigation programme began in 2011 in tackling Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) Fraud. Its success in stemming MTIC tax losses led to it being extended to tackle threats in other areas such as alcohol in 2014 and environmental taxes and Customs regimes in 2017.

In 2018 HMRC began work to investigate supply chains in Organised Labour Fraud focussing mainly on the construction industry and on payroll company fraud.

Unlicensed manufacturing and unregulated processes poses unknown health risks to both the operators and the consumer.

2.10 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

THE THREAT

Waste crime continues to be a prominent issue driven primarily by the potential for significant financial gain by those involved through the avoidance of payment of taxes and levies associated with lawful disposal.

Such criminal activity can also have significant impact on our environment by the release of pollutants which damage our natural land and water resources (in the short and longer term) and can also place significant financial burden on public resources through remediation and clean-up of illegal waste sites.

During the period of this report the NIEA received 1,053 reports on waste crime with key issues concerning the misclassification of waste (to avoid higher taxation rates), the disposal of fuel laundering wastes, the disposal of trommel (waste processing residue), the disposal of construction and demolition wastes (including asbestos), and the larger infilling of mixed wastes in unauthorised sites.

Waste crime can have a significant impact on our environment as well as placing a significant financial burden on public resources.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

NIEA Enforcement Branch continues to focus its resources on waste crime, engaging with OCTF stakeholders, sister agencies throughout the UK, the Republic of Ireland and with the waste industry.

More recently, NIEA has developed an agreement with HMRC to refer cases for consideration of environmental tax avoidance, including landfill tax against those who have been investigated by the NIEA in connection with illegal waste disposal. Whilst some outcomes are awaited, in this reporting period, 22 referrals have been made by NIEA.

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, NIEA secured nine convictions in respect of significant illegal waste activities. Sentencing outcomes produced fines (ranging from £150 to £40,000) totalling £51,800.

In addition, during the same period the NIEA secured four Confiscation Orders totalling £455,676.74. This sum represents avoidance of gate fee payments by defendants at licensed waste facilities, landfill tax and VAT. Additionally, four Restraint Orders are in place against nine entities with a total value of £11.5 million.

Case Study - Controlled Waste

In March 2019, a Confiscation Order was imposed against a County Down individual in the sum of £325,609.20. The Confiscation Order followed a guilty plea in April 2018 to three charges of depositing, keeping and treating controlled waste. A sentence was also imposed of 180 hours community service. The conviction and sentencing followed discovery by NIEA officers of 3,942 tonnes of buried and surface waste in April 2016. Mixed controlled waste found on the site included concrete, brick, plastics, wood, textiles, metal, electrical wiring, tarmac and glass,



Above - Lands in County Down, discovered in April 2016, found to contain mixed controlled waste. The surface waste has since been removed and the buried waste remains.

Case Study - Repeat Offender

In March 2019 a County Antrim waste company and its director were convicted for a fourth time for waste offending and fined £40,000 and disqualified from being a director for five years respectively.

This conviction arose from a multi-agency vehicle check point between the NIEA and PSNI where vehicles operating on behalf of the waste company were stopped and found to have incomplete waste transfer notes for the loads they were carrying.

A number of these vehicles were also observed dumping construction and demolition wastes on sites where no waste management licence was in place. The defendant failed to respond to NIEA invitations to attend interview and legal notices requesting waste documentation relating to the movements of his company's vehicles.

The individual has a long history of environmental offending and has been the subject of NIEA investigations for over a decade. He was convicted in April 2006 for nine offences relating to illegal infilling and burning of skip waste and was fined a total of £8,196. In November 2016 he was again convicted of environmental offending after he was found guilty of depositing waste and polluting the environment from the operation of a fuel laundering plant, receiving a two year prison sentence suspended for three years. A further conviction in September 2017 for waste offending resulted in the individual receiving 200 hours of community service.



Above - An innocuous-looking HGV on a County Antrim site – was found to be involved in illegal waste activity and polluting the environment.

There continues to be significant on-going work between central and local Government regarding the management of municipal wastes and in the development of a working protocol to address illegal waste disposal and the Agency actively participates in a 'Five Nations Forum' (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland) in order to share information, resources and good practice. The joint working with HMRC will be further developed including formal agreements on information sharing and data exchange.

Further, during the reporting year the NIEA has conducted a number of recruitment exercises to increase both the number and expertise of investigative staff which will bolster the operational capability and effectiveness of the NIEA in tackling waste crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Please report incidents of waste crime using the generic environmentalcrime@daera-ni.gov.uk email address or Tel 02890 569453.

FORWARD LOOK

In comparison to the previous year the level of reported waste crime has remained constant and continues to pose a considerable risk to our environment both in the short and longer term.

The NIEA cannot address the issue alone and recognises the value in working with our OCTF partners, other environmental agencies and local government in tackling the issue.

2.11 NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY

THE THREAT

Serious and organised crime is estimated to cost the UK economy at least £37 billion a year, with this cost increasing year on year. This figure is highly likely to be a significant under-estimate, particularly in relation to areas such as fraud. The financial cost of serious and organised crime does not capture the true harm caused to those affected. Serious and organised crime can have a devastating effect as criminals target citizens to exploit and defraud in new ways. The threat is growing in both volume and complexity, the key motivation is financial gain, although sexual gratification remains the main motivator of child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE).

NCA works closely with the PSNI and other law enforcement agencies to reduce the impact of serious and organised crime on the communities of Northern Ireland and to deter people from becoming involved in such activity. It also works with partners in the UK and overseas to provide a cohesive, 'whole system' response. The prioritisation of threats is based on the National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime (NSA) and is agreed through the National Strategic Tasking and Coordination Group (NSTCG)⁷. These threats are flexible and dependent on the intelligence picture at the time.

In Northern Ireland NCA has continued engaging with the OCTF Stakeholder Group, Strategy Group and Sub Groups. The Agency has also contributed to delivery of the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy objectives.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

NCA Major Crime Investigative Support provided advice and support to PSNI on 102 instances during 2018/19 and deployed officers into force on 23 occasions. Cases included suspicious deaths, non-accidental injury, rapes, murders and sexual offences and physical and mental abuse.

Twelve cases were submitted by PSNI to NCA Serious Crime Analysis Section, of which seven were analysed and reported on.

In addition to working with partner agencies in tackling the crimes mentioned, the NCA has been involved in tackling other serious crimes, such as Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE)

Two long-running joint operations with the PSNI to tackle online CSAE drew to a conclusion this year. In Operation JARRA, a total of 25 offenders were convicted, with custodial sentences amounting to 15 years and eight months. Probation orders totalling 35 years and six months were also imposed.

In a separate operation, 19 people were charged with offences related to the making, possession and distribution of indecent images of children. In total, 30 children were safeguarded.

Also this year:

- In November, an investigation was instigated which related to a series of serious sexual offences within a sports club environment. The NCA provided specialist advice in relation to interview, safeguarding and major lines of enquiry supported the investigation team who charged a male with 28 offences over a 30-year period.
- NCA teams have worked closely with PSNI to support and advise on the Muckamore hospital investigation, with regard to policy, strategy, resourcing and to provide specific specialist advice regarding the management and disclosure of more than 98 terabytes of data.

FORWARD LOOK

A priority for 2019-20 is the identification and disruption of high-harm and high-impact criminals and organised crime groups, diminishing their capability, infrastructure and influence. In particular, those who:

- Exploit the vulnerable through child sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, servitude, fraud and other forms of abuse;
- Dominate communities and chase profits in the criminal marketplace, using violence and/or criminal reputations in the supply of drugs and firearms;
- Undermine the UK's economy, integrity, infrastructure and institutions through their criminality.

⁷ NSTCG is chaired by NCA Director General, attended by NCA Directors and senior Law Enforcement representatives.

2.12 SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT FRAUD

CONFRONTING THE THREAT: RESULTS

Activities to counter fraud within the benefit system remain a high priority for the Department for Communities. During 2018-19 the Department's Benefit Security Division carried out almost 3,000 benefit fraud investigations. During the same period 191 convictions were secured through the courts for benefit fraud, alongside eight formal cautions and a further 184 Administrative Penalties being applied (similar to a fine).

The Organised Fraud Unit (OFU) within Benefit Security Division investigates any incidence of potential organised criminality against the benefit and National Insurance Number (NINO) systems, including tackling potential risks to the Department's systems through false and hi-jacked identities. The focus on organised fraud continued in 2018-19, during which the OFU completed investigations in 127 serious and complex fraud allegations and raised overpayments of benefit totalling £1.08m. These included:

- Examination of false employment documents provided as evidence to support claims to social security benefits either as proof of low income for Housing Benefit and Tax Credits or to satisfy the Habitual Residence Test;
- Issuing of Intelligence Reports to other law enforcement agencies in order to detect and prevent criminality;
- Multi agency joint operations and investigations with partners aimed at disrupting criminals who seek to exploit the NINO Gateway and the social security system through hijacked identities, counterfeit documents and identity fraud;
- Joint operations with partner law enforcement organisations to identify individuals in receipt of benefit under an assumed identity, or those who have circumvented the NINO Gateway with a false identity in order to avoid prosecution or deportation.

The OFU continues to build and maintain strong working relationships with other law enforcement agencies. This close working relationship has led to joint operations with the PSNI, HMRC, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and the Home Office. These joint operations have allowed for the sharing of intelligence and disruption of criminality.

The OFU also maintains a close working relationship with colleagues from both the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection with regard to possible cross border/jurisdictional benefit frauds. During 2018-19 the DfC investigated a total of 13 cases with an element of cross border fraud, uncovering overpayments amounting to £61k.

Case Study - Benefit Fraud

An allegation was received by the Department that an individual was claiming means tested benefits but owned a business and was suspected of labour exploitation. A thorough joint investigation was conducted by the Department's Organised Fraud Unit and the PSNI. OFU used all appropriate avenues of investigation and intelligence gathering, including directed surveillance and the acquisition of financial documentation. The individual at the centre of the allegation was arrested under suspicion of human trafficking, labour exploitation, money laundering and benefit fraud offences. The individual was interviewed under caution in a joint interview with the PSNI and OFU and was released on police bail pending further investigation. An overpayment of £10k in benefit was raised against the individual. The individual has since absconded from the UK with bench warrant issued for arrest.

Confiscation / Incentivisation

During 2018/2019 Benefit Security Division referred 121 cases to the Department's Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) for consideration. During the year the FIU secured 15 Confiscation Orders to the value of £225,391 and received voluntary repayments amounting to £146,493, giving a total recovery of £371,884.

During 2018/2019, £276,683 was paid to the Northern Ireland Court Service in respect of Confiscation Orders obtained by the Department, this earned incentivisation of £62,253. The Department used the incentivisation monies to fund a Financial Intelligence Officer at EO11 grade.

Case Study - Benefit Fraud - Undeclared Savings

The Financial Investigation Unit obtained a Confiscation Order for £32,681 against a man who failed to declare that he held monies in excess of £70,000 in his bank accounts during his claim to social security benefits. The man claimed benefits on the basis he was a lone parent, with no savings and no other source of income. The Financial Investigation Unit obtained a Restraint Order against the defendant, and an amount of £28,000 was subsequently paid from the defendant's bank accounts to the Northern Ireland Court Service in respect of his Confiscation Order.

Case Study

The Financial Investigation Unit obtained a Confiscation Order for £41,888 against a woman who failed to declare that she held monies that were significantly in excess of the statutory limits, in her bank accounts during her claim to social security benefits. The woman claimed benefits on the basis she was a lone parent, with no savings and no other source of income. The Financial Investigation disclosed various high value Hidden Assets and Tainted Gifts, which were included within the defendant's Available Amount.

2.13 PROSECUTION DECISIONS

Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for Northern Ireland has a statutory function to take prosecution decisions and conduct criminal proceedings, which are instituted in Northern Ireland in relation to matters investigated by the police. The PPS also takes decisions and conducts prosecutions in respect of files submitted by a range of other bodies, such as HMRC and the NIEA.

The PPS receives investigation files and determines if the Test for Prosecution is met. Where this is the case, criminal proceedings will be brought by the PPS either in the Magistrates Court (summary prosecution) or the Crown Court (indictable prosecution).

Statistics on Key Offence Groups of cases before the PPS over the 2018/19 period are provided below:

Files Received with a complaint relating to the Relevant Offence Groups (based on Files Received between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019)

Offence Group	Number of Cases	Number of Suspects
Money Laundering	217	276
Controlling Prostitution	8	13
Child Prostitution	2	3
Drugs	4,566	5,063
Drugs (excluding simple possession)	831	1,072
Human Trafficking	7	9

Files Received from NIEA or HMRC

(based on Files Received between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019)

File Source	Number of Cases	Number of Suspects
NIEA	27	41
HMRC	16	28

Decisions Issued for offences relating to the Relevant Offence Groups

(based on Most Serious Decision Issued between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019)

Offence Group	Indictable Prosecution	Summary Prosecution	Diversion	No prosecution	Total
Money Laundering	149	40	0	67	256
Controlling Prostitution	-	0	0	#	5
Child Prostitution	-	0	0	0	-
Drugs	356	3,227	871	550	5,004
Drugs (excluding simple possession)	315	276	39	271	901
Human Trafficking	4	0	0	9	13

"-" refers to a count of less than 3.

"#" refers to a number >=3 which has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Decisions Issued on Files from NIEA or HRMC

(based on Most Serious Decision Issued between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019)

File Source	Indictable Prosecution	Summary Prosecution	Diversion	No prosecution	Total
NIEA	7	25	0	-	#
HMRC	74	9	-	8	#

"-" refers to a count of less than 3.

"#" refers to a number >=3 which has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

PPS Statistics and Research April 2019 Prosecutions

In terms of the relationship between the number of referrals and the number of investigations/prosecutions, it should be noted that the investigations/prosecutions figures provided relate to potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking recovered in Northern Ireland who were referred to the National Referral Mechanism. One offender may therefore be associated with multiple victims/investigations. Also a number of investigations each year relate to potential victims who come forward in Northern Ireland but who are declaring historic modern slavery/human trafficking occurring in other countries and with no footfall in Northern Ireland. Whilst these investigations are taken forward as far as possible, they may be less likely to lead to prosecutions and convictions due, for example, to the length of time which has elapsed to secure evidence, the challenges of investigations relating to conflict zones and through the lack of evidence gleaned from a potential victim, such as a named offender.

It should be noted that proactive police investigations also take place where no potential victims enter the NRM process.

From 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 there were as follows:

- 17 restraint requests received
- 43 Confiscation Orders totalling £2,087,534.96

Incentivisation receipts are directed towards staff and operational costs to support the conduct of prosecutions and restraint and confiscation proceedings in organised crime cases.

i CHAPTER 3

Raising Public Awareness



Raising Public Awareness

Every year OCTF partners plan or attend events to raise the public's awareness of organised crime, providing information on crime trends, how organised crime affects communities and how individuals can equip themselves, their families and businesses to avoid becoming victims of organised crime.

Some of the public facing events have already been mentioned in the body of the report, however others are listed below.

Balmoral Show 2018

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) has attended the Balmoral Show for many years. The event is an opportunity for the Department of Justice, law enforcement agencies and the private sector to engage directly with the public to raise awareness of criminal activity and to help individuals, communities and businesses to protect themselves against crime.

This year the DOJ enabled volunteers from No More Traffik, one of the Department's NGO (Non-Governmental Organisations) partners on the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking (MSHT) Engagement Group, to attend the Show and raise public awareness of the issue.



Above - OCTF Representatives pictured below - HMRC, Border Force, DOJ and PSNI

Cross Border Organised Crime Conference

The annual Cross Border Organised Crime Conference took place on 7 and 8 November 2018 at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, under the theme "Shared Problems, Shared Solutions".

Delegates were drawn from law enforcement bodies but primarily made up of PSNI and AGS officers. Opening speeches were made by our Permanent Secretary, Peter May; Irish Justice and Equality Minister, Charles Flanagan TD; PSNI T/Deputy Chief Constable, Steve Martin and Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris.

The Conference offered delegates the opportunity to develop, maintain and strengthen working relationships as well as providing a series of informative presentations on subjects of mutual interest and operational workshops on financial/civil recovery; human trafficking/modern slavery; and carousel VAT fraud.

i CHAPTER 4

Assets Recovery - ARIS & ARCS Funding



Assets Recovery - ARIS & ARCS Funding

Organised crime groups seek to make huge profits. They also need funds to operate and keep illegal enterprises going. Law enforcement agencies respond to this by relentlessly pursuing the proceeds of crime through asset recovery powers.

This deprives criminals of illegal gains and disrupts criminal activity and further funding of crime. The legal basis for asset recovery work is the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. Under this legislation, criminal assets can be confiscated. Confiscation Orders are made after a conviction to deprive a defendant of the benefit obtained from crime. Money surrendered to the courts under confiscation orders is allocated to the Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS).

ARIS funds from confiscation orders are split 50-50. 50% of the total ARIS pot is shared between the agencies responsible for investigating, prosecuting and administering successful cases (see the table below) and 50% is allocated to projects to prevent crime or reduce the fear of crime, often delivered in community settings, under the Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS).

The total value of criminal recovery receipts paid under confiscation orders during the 2018/2019 financial year in Northern Ireland was approximately £1.4 million.

ASSETS RECOVERY INCENTIVISATION SCHEME (ARIS)

The Table below sets out the value returned to each law enforcement agency and the PPS and Courts Service under the ARIS scheme in 2018/2019.

Agency	ARIS Payments 2018/2019
Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)	£135,031.27
HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)	£109,232.57
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)	£14,861.15
Department for Communities (DfC)	£60,182.35
National Crime Agency (NCA)	£4,039.88
Public Prosecution Service (PPS)	£323,347.22
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS)	£71,854.94
Total Paid	£718,549.38

During 2018/2019 the agencies used their incentivisation allocations for a number of purposes including:

PSNI

PSNI approved ARIS expenditure for the following:

- The purchase of two pieces of specialised technical equipment for the Cyber Crime Centre which will assist in accessing communication data.
- Financial assistance to the Cyber Crime Centre in support of publicity campaigns to combat cyber crime.
- The provision of body-worn video hardware for Special Operations Branch.
- Funding towards ScamwiseNI which provides information and education in order to prevent scams and fraud.
- Provision of specialist equipment to assist in the field of telecommunications investigations.

HMRC

Nationally, HMRC invested in their capability and capacity to tackle the threats arising from fiscal crime; in particular enhancing the skills of Financial Investigators within the organisation through the development of new training programmes and an expansion in the numbers of accredited Financial Investigators.

In Northern Ireland, HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service has benefitted from these new training opportunities and an increase in the number of financial investigation specialists.

NIEA

In this reporting period NIEA utilised receipts from Confiscation Orders to the value of £14,861 in the following ways:

- Provision of property valuation services by Land and Property Services as part of financial investigation work in a major environmental crime case.
- External Health & Safety training for criminal investigators.
- NCA registration and NCA training course for a new financial investigator and the provision of NCA re-registration fees and NCA training for existing financial investigator staff.
- Procurement of financial investigation analysis software license.
- Procurement of equipment used during intrusive survey work on illegal waste sites including gas monitors and underground cable detectors used.
- Procurement of advertising to aid the fight against fly-tipping and promotional material for raising awareness of waste duty of care responsibilities.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES (DFC)

DFC used ARIS receipts to employ a Financial Intelligence Officer (FIO) at E01 grade. The FIO interrogates the Suspicious Activity Reports (SARS) database to identify cases of benefit fraud. The FIO then refers these cases for further investigation to the Department's criminal investigation teams.

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE

In PPS ARIS receipts are targeted towards front-line services - particularly the staff costs and counsel fees in the prosecution of Proceeds of Crime actions.

ASSETS RECOVERY COMMUNITY SCHEME (ARCS)

The Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) seeks to re-invest in projects to prevent crime or reduce the fear of crime. Projects supported through ARCS need to demonstrate how they will benefit, one or more of victims, communities and the environment.

The 2018/19 call for applications in August 2018 led to 187 applications being received by the Department of Justice for consideration. Following an Assessment Panel's review of all the applications, 50 projects were offered funding.

Funding was made available, not only for short-term projects, but also for longer term strategic justice projects – for a period up to end March 2021.

A total of £512,501.05 was allocated in 2018/19 for projects that would be delivered by the close of Year 1, with the majority of projects starting in December 2018 or January 2019.

ARCS has funded and continues to fund a range of activities, including drug support projects, restorative justice initiatives, awareness and diversionary projects for young people and supporting older or vulnerable people.

Examples of some of the projects supported during 2018/2019 are set out below, as is a comprehensive list of the projects funded across the three year period.

Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) Community Action Groups

This project (which takes place over a two year period) involves "conversations" in eight communities (across Northern Ireland), each of which will be identified as exhibiting low community capacity and limited community infrastructure.

During the period of this report one "conversation" took place in East Belfast with approx. 80 people in attendance. The aim was to empower and encourage residents, agencies, groups, churches and faith groups to work together for the benefit of the whole community. 35 people signed up to take forward the actions identified at the event. Social Isolation was the top issue raised at this event. Loneliness and isolation amongst the older generation was a major concern raised but so was loneliness amongst young people, lone parent families, carers, working people living alone and people with no transport. This is something that ROC feel could be addressed by members of the Action Groups, through harnessing the power of community.



Another significant issue raised involved young people. These discussions were wide ranging and included anxieties of youth isolation, lack of facilities, anti-social behaviour, mental health and lack of engagement with young people. Concerns were also raised for younger children; issues included lack of play areas, activities, as well as children's mental health and no role models.



Above: Glenburn ROC conversation held at Lisnasharragh Primary School

Raising Awareness of Coercive Control

Around 200 participants (from a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies across Belfast and the South Eastern Trust areas) attended sessions to hear the lived experience of coercive control from Luke and Ryan Hart (two brothers whose father eventually killed their mother and sister). It has helped highlight that domestic abuse is not just physical and reinforces the knowledge that often the point of leaving an abusive relationship can potentially be the most dangerous.

The intention of the project was to create more awareness and understanding of coercive control; how dangerous it can be and how to identify it. The feedback from participants shows their understanding and awareness has been increased with many participants discussing how they will use this within their jobs. The increased awareness will lead to agencies being better able to support people experiencing domestic abuse and be able to signpost to appropriate support organisations

The session also provided participants with an opportunity to hear about the introduction of domestic homicide reviews in Northern Ireland and the current situation around the coercive control legislation.



Above: Ryan and Luke Hart, speaking at the conference.

On the Street Community Youth

This project provides street-based detached youth provision in parts of Londonderry with three detached youth workers in operation at weekends (between 7pm and 11pm) throughout the year to engage and support young people to offset potential for anti-social behaviour.

In the reporting period the youth workers engaged with more than 350 young people aged up to 17 years and provided support to local partners including City Centre Initiative, PSNI, DCSDC Community Safety Wardens, Foyle Search & Rescue and other local youth providers operating in and around this area. The aim was to create a greater sense of community safety across the city centre by working collectively with other stakeholders in order to reduce the number of young people taking part in ASB and reducing the need for intervention from emergency services.

Interventions by the youth workers included contacting family members, PSNI or other emergency services in order to assist young people who were vulnerable due to being under the influence of alcohol or having been identified as having suicidal thoughts.

Dreamscheme's Diversionary and Inter-generational Youth Project

This Dreamscheme project had two elements; a Friday night youth intervention programme targeting 15 young people in both Belvoir and Braniel estates and a mid-week inter-generational programme targeting a total of 30 senior citizens and 50 young people in the same estates.

The number of participants was exceeded with 41 young people attending. Diversionary activities included bubble football, swimming and Zumba, which resulted in reducing opportunities for young people to participate in anti-social behaviour. Four weeks of street work was also delivered resulting in an improvement in community safety as a result of the youth workers having established good relationships with the young people, their parents, residents and schools. Inter-generational activities included bingo and quiz nights and a follow-up survey of the young people involved showed that 85% felt their relationships and attitudes towards older people had improved.

Below - inter-generational working with Dreamscheme



Turnaround

This project prevents crime by engaging and supporting individuals referred to Turnaround by the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland in a programme that is centred on transitional employment, but which also seeks to address other factors that impact on desistance.

It builds a portfolio of transitional work experience and employment opportunities for people serving custodial or community sentences. Activities include providing pre-release training and support to help people plan for their futures.

'Outwork', a grounds maintenance enterprise is fully operational. To date, a four-year contract has been secured with Belfast International Airport along with other contracts with a social housing provider and private customers.

In addition, an "Outwork" crew has provided pro-bono grounds maintenance to the Lyric Theatre, strengthening a relationship between that organisation and Hydebank College that has seen Hydebank students engage in pro-social community activities and work experience at the Lyric Theatre and through touring events.



ARCS PROJECTS FUNDED

Applicant	Project Title	Description of Project	ARCS Award £
1st Rathfriland Boys Brigade	Safety in Numbers	Educational/information events for young people vulnerable to becoming involved in crime with parent / family / community interventions.	12,584
AGE North Down & Ards	PACE – Partner Anti-Crime Events	Address anti-social behaviour in young people and the fear of crime felt by older people in local urban and rural areas across Ards and North Down.	12,600
Barnardo's	Families Matter - Beyond The Gate	Support for families as a parent moves towards pre-release from prison with a focus on the needs of the child.	49,161
Belfast and South Eastern Trust Domestic Violence Partnership	Raising awareness of coercive control in relation to domestic violence	Awareness raising seminar on coercive control for a wide range of stakeholders.	2,500
Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) Co. Ltd.	Retail Crimewatch Digitalisation	Project to allow secure digital transmission of images of convicted prolific shop-lifters and instant messaging between PSNI and retailers.	10,500
Belfast Community Sports Development Network	Community Sports Support Hub	Establish a post-prison Community Sports Support Hub, with the aim of reducing re-offending and supporting rehabilitation.	85,117
Belfast Street Pastors	Home Safe and Sound	Work with police to assist young people to get home safely following any intervention with PSNI in West Belfast area.	3,672
British Red Cross	Promoting Reporting in the Refugee Community	To reduce crime within the refugee and asylum seeker community through direct engagement with vulnerable people, delivery of crime awareness training. Encourage positive engagement with the police.	8,253
Children's Law Centre	Support for young people in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre	Training, information and advice to support young people in the Juvenile Justice Centre.	31,391
Community Intercultural Programme	Empowered to be Free	Interventions to support vulnerable individuals who are at risk of being exploited or in fear of being controlled in the labour market.	58,000
Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJ)	South & East Belfast CRJ Engagement Project	Develop full-time presence in the local area to help empower and support local communities to actively participate within the justice family.	182,402
Corpus Christi Youth Centre	Ballymurphy Community Development	Reduce offending behaviour in young people through courses on substance abuse, drug and alcohol awareness, IT, sports, digital media and soft skills.	26,700
Dialogue For Diversity	Support and Encouragement for Ex-Prisoners Through Mentoring	Mentor ex-prisoners to encourage and support them and refer to other support agencies, post release interventions to reduce re-offending.	15,033

Applicant	Project Title	Description of Project	ARCS Award £
Dreamscheme Northern Ireland	Diversionary and Inter-generational Youth Project (Breda and Belvoir Estates)	Diversionary programme and personal development work for young people in the local area to help combat anti-social behaviour and crime, also includes an inter-generational project.	4,910
East Belfast Community Development Agency	Street by Street Youth Work Engagement Project	Targeted street-based youth work in East Belfast to prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour.	26,466
Edgarstown Residents Association	Rising of Edgarstown	Community relations project with young people including personal development, health and well-being interventions and social development.	32,038
Feeny Community Association/ Feeny Youth Group	Youth Activity Programme	Initiatives to prevent alcohol, drugs and substance abuse among young people.	7,400
Fermanagh and Omagh PCSP	Operation Online	School based project to promote safe social media use and prevent cyber bullying.	16,733
Hillcrest Trust	Law and Order Programme	Address anti-social behaviour by targeting disengaged young people.	2,666
Leafair Community Association	Safer Communities	Inter-generational work including educational awareness about crime. Environmental regeneration to discourage anti-social behaviour.	20,000
Life Change Changes Lives	No Lost Cause	Reduce offending, through inter-generational diversionary and therapeutic community programme, including counselling for addictions and working with offenders and victims of crime.	144,920
Ligoniel Improvement Association	Ligoniel's Greater Assets	Early intervention for young people to reduce anti-social behaviour, based on developing skills, progressing to accreditation and internships.	9,842
Men's Action Network	Breaking the Cycle	Assist offenders, including those still in the prison system, to understand criminal behaviour effects and lasting negative impact.	10,960
Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP)	MEAAP Friends Against Scams Campaign	Create local business SCAM champions and identify and support older people at risk of falling victim to scams.	21,844
Northern Ireland Alternatives	PACE Project (Policing and Community Engagement)	Empower local people to problem solve creatively and build partnerships within local communities through training, forums, volunteerism and advocacy.	120,346
North West Play Resource Centre	Listen To Use (Crime Prevention Films)	A film-making project engaging 'at risk' young people, to encourage improved relationships with the PSNI and understanding around issues of stop and search and reduce fear and intimidation and the influence of paramilitaries in the long term.	66,770

Applicant	Project Title	Description of Project	ARCS Award £
Off the Streets (OTS) Community Youth Initiative	OTS City Centre Street Work Provision	Weekend youth workers will support and deliver informal learning opportunities to help reduce crime and disorder.	57,627
Parenting NI	RESPECT Parenting Project	Multi-disciplinary support project - including a Parenting Helpline and workshops and materials for parents.	83,532
Pint-sized Productions	"Wasted" by Kat Woods, Theatre Production Tour	Produce and tour a production of "Wasted", a play that deals with issues such as appropriate sexual behaviours, consent and rape.	3,000
Poleglass Community Association @ Sally Gardens	Safer Communities	Tackle anti-social behaviour by delivering OCN accredited qualifications and a providing a mentoring programme to "at risk" young people.	37,200
Prison Arts Foundation	Community Braille Service	Provide a low-cost Braille printing and transcribing service, staffed by ex-offenders to help prevent reoffending.	46,000
PSNI Crime Prevention Headquarters	Strategic Crime Prevention Initiatives	Contribute to long term support to strategic crime prevention initiatives to vulnerable people within the community, including crime protection products, awareness and advice activities – regional project.	25,000
PSNI Crime Prevention (Belfast)	Support Crime Prevention Role	Contribute to long term support to strategic crime prevention initiatives to vulnerable people within community through distribution of security items to communities across Belfast to support crime prevention.	25,000
PSNI in partnership with Fermanagh & Omagh PCSP & District Council, Waterways Ireland, Forestry Service and Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism.	Beauty Spot & Public Jetty Crime Prevention Signage	Crime prevention at beauty spot areas.	4,500
PSNI Neighbourhood Policing Team	Good Morning West Belfast Project	Measures and support for older and vulnerable people becoming the victims of crime.	19,266
PSNI Older Persons Acquisition Group	Cold Calling & DNA Marking Scheme	Crime prevention advice for older people and supply of crime prevention items within high risk areas, areas with higher concentration of older people - spread over rural, urban and Border areas.	16,672
PSNI, on behalf of Scamwise NI Partnership	Scamwise NI	Scam prevention advertising messaging.	90,000
PSNI Rural Crime Partnership	Rural Crime Partnership Crime Prevention and Awareness Scheme	Measures to support the prevention of crime within rural community, including 'Police Stop me' sticker campaign – a reminder to police to check machinery.	5,000
Redeeming Our Communities (ROC)	ROC Community Action Groups	Capacity-building in 8 communities with low capacity to empower residents, agencies, churches and faith groups to work together towards safer, stronger communities.	65,175

Applicant	Project Title	Description of Project	ARCS Award £
SOS NI	SOS Supporting a Safer City	First aid training and provision of costs associated with running the SOS Bus in Belfast in support of crisis intervention for vulnerable people and work towards safer communities in partnership with community/ resident associations.	62,604
St. Peters Immaculata Youth Centre	Tackling Self-Harming Behaviours	Project targeting young people involved in, or likely to become involved in crime through substance abuse in the Divis area.	23,333
The Conservation Volunteers	Probation Men's Shed in Coleraine	Training and practical conservation work for Probation Board clients, where other work placements are not suitable - prevent re-offending by offering skills development, sense of being valued and increasing confidence.	4,400
The Right Key (CIC)	The Changemakers and Probation Board NI Joint Project	Provide an addiction programme for groups and individuals through counselling and music and creative arts sessions.	11,280
The Turnaround Project	Turnaround Grounds Maintenance Social Enterprise	Work experience and employment opportunities for people serving custodial or community sentences.	93,717
The Y Zone - Portadown Elim Church	Youth-hut Initiative	Work with and mentor disaffected young people engaged in anti-social behaviour in local hotspot areas, including outreach Saturday evening services.	11,780
Top Ten Women's Drama Group	Outside In	Working with a group of young people on an anti-social behaviour project to capture community stories and produce a DVD resource.	20,828
Ulster GAA	Live To Play – Getting the Message	New road safety awareness campaign.	10,000
Upper Springfield Resource Centre	Families Bereaved Through Car Crime (FBTCC) Youth Education Project	Deter young people becoming involved in car crime by producing training materials and awareness DVD for schools.	17,200
Vineyard Compassion	Link to Work	Supervised work placements and mentoring for NI Prison Service and Probation Board NI referrals.	93,188
ZKJ Ltd	Fight2Unite	Use mixed martial arts to engage with young people not in employment, education or training on a cross- community basis to reduce antisocial behaviour and risk of falling into crime.	7,500
Total			1,816,610

Appendix 1

OCTF Partner Organisations

- Allied Irish Bank
 - An Garda Síochána
 - Anti-Counterfeiting Group
 - Bank of Ireland
 - Belfast City Council
 - Border Force
 - Centre for Secure Information Technologies, QUB
 - CiSP
 - Citi
 - Charity Commission NI
 - Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
 - Confederation of British Industry
 - Criminal Assets Bureau
 - Cyberrisk
 - Cyphra
 - Danske Bank
 - Deloitte
 - Department for Communities
 - Department for the Economy
 - Department of Finance
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Justice
 - DIAGEO
 - Federation Against Copyright Theft
 - Federation of Small Businesses NI
 - Foods Standards Agency
 - Forensic Science Agency NI
 - Fujitsu
 - Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
 - GetSafeOnline
 - Group 4 Security
 - Health and Safety Executive NI
 - Health and Social Care Board
 - HM Revenue and Customs
 - Home Office Immigration Enforcement
 - Intellectual Property Office
 - Invest NI
 - Japan Tobacco International
 - Law Society
 - Migrant Help
 - National Crime Agency
 - National Cyber Security Centre
 - NIZC
 - NI Chamber of Commerce
 - NI Courts and Tribunal Service
 - NI Cyber Cluster
 - NI Environment Agency (DAERA)
 - NI Policing Board
 - NI Prison Service
 - NICVA
 - Philip Morris International
 - Police Service of Northern Ireland
 - Post Office Limited
 - PriceWaterhouseCoopers
 - Public Health Agency
 - Public Prosecution Service NI
 - Queen's University Belfast
 - Retail NI
 - Revenue Commissioners
 - RMS Cash Management
 - Royal Bank of Scotland
 - Royal Mail
 - Safer Cash
 - Security Industry Association
 - Sky
 - Supergroup
 - Tobacco Manufacturers Association
 - UK Human Trafficking Centre
 - Ulster Bank
 - Ulster University
 - Women's Aid
- (contacts with others not listed when appropriate)

Appendix 2

Paramilitary Crime Task Force - Executive Action Plan and Operational Results

The Executive Action Plan is a series of 38 commitments from the Northern Ireland Executive aimed at tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime.

The programme is the Executive's response to the 2016 Panel Report which was set up following the Fresh Start Agreement in 2015 to make recommendations on the disbandment of paramilitary groups.

A total of £50m has been pledged over five years to support delivery of the Action Plan. It involves Government Departments, law enforcement agencies, local councils and community and voluntary sector partners working together.

The focus is on robust law enforcement, implementing long term prevention measures, addressing social issues that affect communities, and building confidence in the justice system?

What do we want to achieve?

The programme has four outcomes:

- paramilitarism has no place;
- a society where citizens and communities feel safe and confident;
- the public support and have increasing confidence in the justice system; and
- support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.

Progress to date

The programme is now in its fourth year and, over that time there has been substantial progress across four main delivery approaches: long term prevention; building capacity to support transition; strategies and powers to tackle criminal activity; and building confidence in the justice system.

Long term prevention

- Almost 400 young men aged between 16 and 30 have benefitted from new Probation Board programmes which provide intensive mentoring support and boost rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

- 110 young people are engaging in bespoke programmes delivered by youth workers which are aimed at supporting vulnerable young people in communities most impacted by paramilitarism and coercive control.
- CCEA has created educational resources for post primary schools aimed at encouraging Active Citizenship.

Building capacity to support transition

- 539 women from 26 locations have completed Phase 1 of the Women Involved in Community Transformation project (WICT) to empower and enable them to become involved in community development work. Over 420 have moved on to Phase 2.
- Work is continuing to help support those areas most vulnerable to paramilitary activity and coercive control as part of the Communities in Transition project.
- 217 young people have participated in the Attorney General's "It's Your Law" programme.

Strategies and powers to tackle criminal activity

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force, which includes PSNI, NCA and HMRC, has*:

- charged or reported 148 people to the Public Prosecution Service;
- carried out 433 searches and arrested 199 people;
- secured 20 convictions or criminal justice outcomes;
- prevented a total revenue loss of £3.374m;
- restrained £260,250 cash and confiscated £579,893 cash;
- seized £525,030 of drugs;
- seized two properties and 35 vehicles; and
- seized 163 weapons.

*These statistics are from April 2016 to March 2019 and are subject to change.



Strategies and powers to tackle criminal activity

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force, which includes PSNI, NCA and HMRC has*:



restrained
£260,250 cash

confiscated
£579,893 cash



seized £525,030
of drugs



seized 35 vehicles



seized 163 weapons



seized 2 properties
(£255,000)

Building confidence in the justice system

- Almost 1,200 people have completed a training programme for police and community partners which supports new approaches to problem solving and policing with the community.
- Local policing initiatives are being delivered to promote engagement, problem solving and visibility of policing, tackling issues such as drugs and anti-social behaviour.
- Improved processes have been introduced to speed up the justice system for cases involving serious assaults, serious drug offences, attempted murder and taking banned items into prison. The average time to complete these cases has decreased significantly.

Raising public awareness

In October 2018, we launched the “Ending the Harm” public awareness campaign as a follow on from the “I am Your Money” campaign, which was first launched in 2016.

The hard-hitting multi-media campaign about the brutal reality of so-called paramilitary style attacks (PSAs) is aimed at highlighting the devastating impact of PSAs on victims, their families, local communities and wider society, by telling the story of a shooting from the points of view of the victim, his mother, the paramilitary gang member and a witness.

The campaign also focusses on highlighting the coercive control of paramilitary groups within some local communities; challenging the levels of implicit acceptability and complacency on the issue; and encouraging a public conversation.

There is a bespoke website linked to the campaign (www.endingtheharm.com) which has a number of sections including some real-life stories and information on where people can go for help and support.

How do I find out more about the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme?

You can find out more about the programme by visiting the Northern Ireland Executive website:

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/articles/executive-programme-tackling-paramilitary-activity-and-organised-crime-0>

You can read our newsletters at:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/tackling-paramilitarism-programme-newsletters-2018-19>

For more information on the "Ending the Harm" campaign, visit:

www.endingtheharm.com

You can also follow us on Twitter **@endingtheharm**

Appendix 3

Other useful contacts

Organised Crime Task Force	www.octf.gov.uk
Border Force	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/border-force
Crimestoppers Northern Ireland	https://crimestoppers-uk.org/in-your-area/northern-ireland/
Department for Communities	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/
Department of Justice	https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/
HM Revenue & Customs	www.hmrc.gov.uk
Immigration Enforcement	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-enforcement www.gov.uk/report-immigration-crime
National Crime Agency	www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/
PSNI	www.psni.police.uk
Trading Standards Service	https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/consumer-affairs/trading-standards-service

If you think you have been the victim of a scam.



helpful contacts



Visit our Facebook page at Scamwiseni



Action on Elder Abuse
Helpline: 080 8808 8141
Tel: 020 8835 9280
enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk



Trading Standards
Consumerline: 0300 123 6262
www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline
consumerline@economy-ni.gov.uk



Police Service of Northern Ireland
Non-emergency 101
Emergency 999



Keeping People Safe



Action Fraud
Tel: 0300 123 2040
actionfraud.police.uk



Victim Support NI
info@victimsupportni.org.uk
www.victimsupportni.co.uk



www.getsafeonline.org

If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam

Stay 4 steps ahead of a scam by using this **scam test**

Seems too good to be true

Contacted out of the blue

Asks for personal details

Money is requested

for help and information, or to report a scam visit
nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni

scamwiseNI
PARTNERSHIP

Organised Crime Task Force
Block B,
Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate,
Belfast BT4 3SG

