



Annual Report & Threat Assessment

Organised Crime in Northern Ireland

www.octf.gov.uk

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, looking slightly to the left. She is holding a black mobile phone to her ear with her right hand. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The woman has dark hair and is wearing a ring on her finger. The background is out of focus.

**IF YOU KNOW ABOUT IT
REPORT IT...**

Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the twelfth Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) Annual Report and Threat Assessment. It reports on the collective successes of OCTF partners during 2012/13 and sets out the main threats looking ahead.

It has been a successful year in a number of areas - tiger kidnap levels were low, as were cash-in-transit attacks and the trend in tobacco fraud is down. There have also been excellent successes against an array of organised crimes including immigration offences, evasion of duty and drugs - there were nearly one thousand more drug seizures in 2012/13 than two years before in 2010/11.

During 2012/13 the total value of recovered criminal assets paid over to Northern Ireland was approximately £2.1million. Half of this was distributed through the Assets Recovery Community Scheme and the report details a number of the valuable projects which have benefitted. The other half is distributed to the law enforcement agencies involved and they also use this to fund projects which they would otherwise be unable to undertake.

Organised crime continues to present serious challenges. The main threat areas are highlighted in the report. I am particularly concerned, however, that a recent survey has shown a decreasing number of people see it as their role to refuse to purchase counterfeit or illicit goods or services.

Against that backdrop it remains vitally important that we all work collectively to tackle those who prey on our community. Law enforcement agencies and government will continue their work. It is also crucial, however, that all members of our society understand how their actions can potentially support organised crime and impact on the society in which they live or work.

One aspect of the OCTF's work in the year ahead will be to increase understanding of organised crime across a variety of audiences and to raise appreciation of its real and serious consequences. For instance, money spent on fake goods lines the pockets of criminals and enables them to purchase drugs or to run prostitution rings involving trafficked victims. We want politicians to work with us to increase the volume of the message against organised criminals and we want the public to reject laundered fuel and fake goods and to report suspicious behaviour. Together we can tackle the blight on our community brought by organised crime.

During 2012/13 the murder of Garda Donohoe in the Republic of Ireland in January has brought home the dangers faced by those fighting organised crime. It also highlights the importance of the excellent cooperation that exists between law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border. The challenges faced by tackling organised crime of course extend well beyond the island. Organised crime groups operate into Great Britain and globally. Drugs and human trafficking victims are examples of this. Cyber Crime is another and we have recently established a sub-group on that issue.



David Ford MLA
Minister of Justice

Your Help Is Needed To Combat Organised Crime..

**Please do not let Organised
Criminals prey on Our Society**

**HELP US PUT A STOP TO IT BY
CALLING HMRC HOTLINE, PSNI
OR CRIMESTOPPERS NOW!**

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

HMRC HOTLINE	0800 595 000
PSNI	0845 600 8000
CRIMESTOPPERS	0800 555 111

WEBSITES

ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE	www.octf.gov.uk
POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND	www.psni.police.uk
HER MAJESTY'S REVENUE & CUSTOMS	www.hmrc.gov.uk
SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME AGENCY	www.soca.gov.uk
HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT	www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk (this will be revised during the year)
BORDER FORCE	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ border-force
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	www.dojni.gov.uk

You can follow the OCTF on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/OCTF/136184833076303

OCTF Annual Report And Threat Assessment 2013

Chapter One	Structural Overview	Page 5
Chapter Two	Prior Year Results	Page 7
Chapter Three	Threat Assessment	Page 25
Chapter Four	Public Awareness & Outreach Events	Page 45
Chapter Five	Assets Recovery	Page 47
Chapter Six	Looking Ahead	Page 55
Appendix 1	OCTF Partner organisations	Page 59





Chapter 1

Structural Overview



Structural Overview

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) was established in 2000 to provide strategic direction to tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland through multi-agency partnership.

The OCTF does not take any operational responsibility – that remains with the individual law enforcement agencies - but is supported by a structure of sub groups each dealing with specific operational and policy issues:



A list of OCTF partner organisations is at Appendix 1, although contacts are maintained with others too.



Chapter 2

Prior Year Results



OCTF Mission

The mission of the OCTF is to help secure a safe, just and prosperous society in Northern Ireland by confronting organised crime through multi-agency partnership between Northern Ireland Government Departments, law enforcement, the Public Prosecution Service, Policing Board, business community and the community at large.

Key Priorities in 2012/13

Over the past twelve months the principal threats from organised crime were assessed to be:

- Armed robbery (including tiger kidnaps)
- Criminal Finance – fraud and money laundering
- Cyber Crime – mainly cyber enabled forms of existing crime
- Drugs
- Extortion
- Intellectual Property Crime (counterfeiting, including currency)
- Organised immigration crime, including human exploitation
- Public Sector Fraud – excise and tax

Key Successes in 2012/13

In this reporting year:

- 4,475 drug seizures with a value of £10.2m
- 2,784 arrested by PSNI for drug offences – almost 10% more than the previous year
- 22 fuel laundering plants dismantled
- 567 convictions for benefit fraud

The following are just some examples of the law enforcement activity that led to these successes:

i. **Armed Robbery and Cash-in-Transit**

Cash-in-Transit attacks in the 2012 calendar year remained at the low level seen in Northern Ireland since 2007, with 25 recorded during the calendar year. The number of attacks has remained between 22 and 25 each year during this five year period. At the start of the 2013 calendar year there had been arrests and charges in relation to 60% of the attacks that occurred during 2012. A total of 39 people had been arrested and charged in relation to 15 of the 25 attacks.

Case study

In September 2012 G4S were the subject of a cash-in-transit robbery whilst they were replenishing an ATM machine on the Ormeau Road in Belfast. A man wearing a mask and brandishing a handgun challenged G4S staff and stole an alarmed cash box containing £25,000 before getting into the passenger seat of a nearby getaway car and making off. The vehicle was recovered a short time later in East Belfast and turned out to be a stolen car bearing false plates. Police investigations revealed that this man had not been working alone but was part of an organised crime group, there was at least one other vehicle involved and the stolen cash box was later recovered in another part of Belfast. Police enquiries identified four suspects who were arrested and questioned in relation to the incident, searches were conducted and items stained in dye which are believed to have been used in the robbery were recovered. Sufficient evidence was obtained to enable all four suspects to be charged in relation to this incident.

ii. ATM attacks

There were no ATM attacks during the 2012 calendar year.

iii. Tiger Kidnaps

During the 2012 calendar year there were two tiger kidnap incidents in Northern Ireland; while these impact on victims, neither was substantive (i.e. no money was stolen). This is a significant reduction on the seven tiger kidnaps in 2011.

iv. Drugs

In 2012/13 PSNI made 4,475 drug seizures in Northern Ireland. The number of drug seizures has increased over the last three years, with there being nearly one thousand more seizures in 2012/13 than two years ago in 2010/11.

Although the number of drug seizure incidents has increased from 2011/12 to 2012/13 the street value of the drugs seized decreased by approximately £2.9 million. In 2012/13 the estimated street value of the drugs seized was £10.2 million.

As with the number of seizure incidents, the number of persons arrested for drug offences has steadily increased over the last three years. In 2012/13, 2,784 persons were arrested by PSNI for drug offences, 241 (9.5%) more than in 2011/12 and 349 (14.3%) more than in 2010/11.

Cannabis was the most common drug seized, seen in over three quarters (3,463 cannabis seizures) of all drug seizure incidents. In total, 405 kg of cannabis resin was seized along with 361 kg of herbal cannabis, 6,813 cannabis plants and 410 cannabis joints.

Benzodiazepines seizures accounted for the second largest number of seizure incidents in 2012/13. Just over one in every ten seizure incidents in 2012/13 involved the recovery of benzodiazepine tablets. A total of 95,542 benzodiazepine tablets were recovered by the PSNI in 2012/13 (the number of these seizures is unavailable for previous years).

The third most commonly seized drug was cocaine. There were 375 cocaine seizure incidents that involved the recovery of 11.6 kg of cocaine powder.

Other drugs seized in 2012/13 included 22.8 kg of amphetamines powder, 11.3 kg of psychoactive stimulants, 1 kg of heroin powder and over 6,000 ecstasy tablets.

Case study

A County Antrim man was sentenced to over three years in prison for his part in trafficking mephedrone into the United Kingdom (UK). Over an 18-month period Richard Smyth imported 26 kg of the class B drug from China via international parcel service. The SOCA investigation began in September 2011 after intelligence showed Smyth was one of a number of 'hubs' throughout the UK who were importing mephedrone for onward distribution.

The SOCA operation showed how Smyth, in an attempt to disguise his illegal activity, imported the drug in 1 kg and 2 kg parcels hidden in boxes labelled "metal corrosion inhibitors." When Smyth was arrested in October SOCA officers seized 12 kg of mephedrone, two computers, seven mobile phones, boxes of silver foil and £5,000 in cash. The Judge also sentenced Smyth to three and a half years for money laundering to run concurrently. A Serious Crime Prevention Order hearing is to be held.



Case study

In 2010 PSNI ran a proactive investigation against an organised crime group that was involved in the regular supply of large quantities of controlled drugs into Northern Ireland. The operation was conducted in partnership with East Midlands Special Operations Unit.

In October 2010 PSNI stopped a taxi in Belfast after a handover of £900,000 worth of drugs was made from a lorry which had travelled from Scotland. Two organised crime group (OCG) members were arrested. In December 2010, PSNI stopped another lorry and two cars in Belfast. Cannabis with a potential street value of £520,000 was seized and three OCG members were arrested, including the leader of the crime group.

At the same time Detectives from Organised Crime Branch searched an upmarket apartment in Belfast which was being used by the group to store cannabis and process cocaine. Drugs with a potential street value of £1,100,000 were uncovered in the flat together with a range of equipment which was being used in the preparation and supply of controlled drugs. Following further enquiries, police arrested another two members of the group. The main successes in the police operation were:

- The seizure in Northern Ireland of controlled drugs with a potential street value of £2,500,000 and the dismantling of this highly active organised criminal group by the conviction of 7 members including the principal.
- The seizure of cannabis with a street value of £500,000 in England and conviction of 11 persons there, including the principal who was originally from Belfast. The leader of this group was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment in April 2013.

The following table shows PSNI seizures in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 (Source: PSNI Central Stats)

		1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013		1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012	
	Drugs Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized
Class A					
Cocaine:	Powder (kg)	354	11.6	302	12.2
	Wraps	23	36	37	317
	'Crack' (gms)	-	-	-	-
Ecstasy:	Tablets	143	6,286	165	30,220
	Powder (gms)	18	352.4	18	124.1
	Capsules	-	-	-	-
LSD:	Doses	-	-	1	1
	Microdots	1	5	-	-
Opiates:	Powder (kg)	31	1.0	24	1.0
	Tablets	3	61	1	13
	Ampoules	-	-	-	-
	Mls	9	1,217.1	10	151.5
	Wraps	16	85	23	80
Class B					
Amphetamine:	Powder (kg)	75	22.8	108	5.5
	Wraps	7	14	10	19
	Tablets	16	2,283	14	4,572
Cannabis:	Resin (kg)	737	404.6	916	191.5
	Herbal (kg)	2,609	361.0	2,027	402.0
	Plants	230	6,813	286	14,307
	Oil (gms)	-	-	-	-
	Joints	310	410	241	340
Psychoactive Stimulants ^A :	Powder	164	11.3	205	2.3
Total Seizure Incidents ^{1,2}		4,475		3,920	
Street Value		£10,202,057		£13,160,066	

Key: - Green - Amount seized or number of seizure incidents higher than last year Red - Amount seized or number of seizure incidents lower than last year.

¹As seizure incidents can involve more than one drug type, seizure figures for individual drugs cannot be added together to produce totals.

² Total seizure incidents include drugs not presented in this table such as benzodiazepines (diazepam, temazepam and nitrazepam), ketamine, piperazines and steroids.

A In 2011/12 the psychoactive stimulants reported on only included mephedrone. In 2012/13 this category includes more drugs such as NRG-1.

v. Excise and Tax Fraud

The priorities for Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) in Northern Ireland are tackling oils fraud, tobacco fraud and tax evasion.

Oils Fraud

HMRC has a range of sanctions at their disposal to target those involved in oils related crime. The sanctions range from civil action including seizure of fuel, pumps, vehicles and/or cash, civil investigation of tax (direct and indirect), combined with a strong regulatory control system and civil penalties regime, through to criminal prosecution and confiscation of assets.

During 2012/13 HMRC seized over 820,000 litres of illicit fuel worth an estimated value of £480,000 in evaded revenue.

In the latest available figures the uncollected revenue from non UK duty paid diesel in Northern Ireland was estimated by HMRC at £160m in 2010/11 – that is 25 per cent of the market share. This was an increase from £70 million in 2009/10. The non UK duty paid market share in NI diesel does however show a decreasing trend from 39 per cent in 2006/07. The non UK duty paid market includes both the illicit market and legitimate cross border shopping consumed in Northern Ireland. Separate figures are not held. The illicit market includes both fuel laundering and fuel smuggling.

During 2012/13 HMRC dismantled 22 illegal fuel laundering plants.

Case study

During searches in south Armagh in January 2013, HMRC's Road Fuel Testing Unit (RFTU) discovered the most sophisticated fuel laundering operation ever found in the UK. The plant, detected in an industrial unit just yards from the border with the Republic of Ireland, was large enough to house three articulated tankers and had been constructed around two large underground tanks. The underground tanks, along with other tanks and gantries above ground, had the capacity to launder 70,000 litres of fuel per day with an annual revenue loss of £18 million to the Exchequer. The RFTU seized and removed 39,000 litres of laundered fuel, 18,000 litres of toxic waste, fuel tanks and vehicles.



Tobacco Fraud

The trade in illicit cigarettes includes the smuggling of genuine products from areas with lower rates of duty, the smuggling of counterfeit cigarettes, and the smuggling of cigarettes produced entirely independently of the International Tobacco Manufacturers which have no true, or a very limited, legitimate market and are known as “illicit whites”.

There has been a decreasing trend in the cigarette illicit market share. The level in 2010/11 was 6 percentage points lower compared with 2006/07. The illicit market share for cigarettes was however still estimated to be 9 per cent in 2010/11, with associated revenue losses to the United Kingdom of £1.2 billion.

In 2012/13 HMRC in Northern Ireland seized over 2.12 million cigarettes and 335 kg of hand rolling tobacco with a combined value of £840,000.

Case study

An operation targeting distributors of illicit cigarettes in Northern Ireland led to the arrest and interview of a man following the discovery of 1.1 million cigarettes in a van when stopped on the A1 near Hillsborough. A second member of the organised crime group was caught with a further 200,000 cigarettes in the same week. After a third seizure, of 100,000 cigarettes, HMRC officers raided premises suspected to be a temporary storage site for the illegal cigarettes where they seized a further 80,000 cigarettes. Three men have been reported to the Public Prosecution Service.



vi. Immigration and Human Trafficking

The Northern Ireland Local Immigration Team (LIT) of Home Office Immigration Enforcement has an important role to play in protecting our borders and working in partnership to strengthen the Common Travel Area (CTA). As a part of the CTA, the Irish/ UK land border, coupled with differences between Irish and UK visa requirements, means that Northern Irish domestic ports are susceptible to abuse and are a risk to UK and Irish immigration controls - immigration offenders transit Northern Ireland to reach Great Britain and in the opposite direction to reach the Republic of Ireland, as well as coming to Northern Ireland.

Operation Gull

Whilst the CTA has major benefits to all who live and work legally in Northern Ireland and Ireland, it is also open to exploitation by illegal migrants. Home Office Immigration Enforcement and the Police Service of Northern Ireland work together under the heading of Operation Gull.

The operation focuses on domestic UK flights into and out of Northern Ireland and on the domestic UK sea crossings between Northern Ireland and Scotland to identify and arrest illegal migrants going to and coming from the Republic of Ireland by way of the land border. Operation Gull also intercepts people who could cause harm to Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK.

In 2012/2013, almost 300 illegal migrants were intercepted by Operation Gull attempting to abuse or facilitate abuse of Northern Ireland ports as a means of illegal transit across the UK. There is growing evidence that the work that Operation Gull does at Northern Ireland's sea ports in partnership with the Scottish Police at Galloway ports is having a deterrent effect on those who would abuse these travel routes - combined detections on both sides of the Irish Sea are down by 20% on 2011/12 figures. The operation has also led to the arrest and removal of a number of illegal migrants.

Case studies

April 2012:

A Romanian national encountered at Belfast docks was found to have been deported from the UK in July 2007 after serving a 5 year prison sentence for bank fraud. He had entered the UK illegally across the UK/ Irish land border. He has since been deported to Romania.

January 2013:

Two Lithuanians and a Polish national were detained and returned to prison to serve the remainder of their criminal sentences having breached the terms of their early release by re-entering the UK in breach of their deportation orders. These three offenders were convicted criminals who had committed serious crimes (sexual assault, firearm smuggling & drug offences). All will be deported on completion of their sentences.

Tackling Immigration Crime

Home Office Immigration Enforcement continued to conduct enforcement operations against a range of immigration crime, including facilitation, document fraud, sham marriages, rogue employers and illegal workers. A number of tough sentences were handed down by the courts last year and the criminals removed from the UK.

Case studies

Sept. 2012:

A Belfast man was sentenced to 15 months after he was found guilty of assisting unlawful immigration at his trial in Belfast Crown Court. Officers from the Home Office specialist immigration crime team had intercepted two counterfeit Spanish passports sewn inside the soles of leather slippers and sent from Nigeria to an address in Belfast. A search of the criminal's house found cash and laptops containing photos for use in producing false passports.

Dec 2012:

A Glasgow man was sentenced to six months in jail at Belfast Crown Court for assisting unlawful immigration (Facilitation) by attempting to arrange a sham marriage. The sentence was the result of an investigation by UK Border Agency¹ officers who stopped a wedding at Belfast City Hall. The would-be groom, a Pakistani national, entered the UK on a student visa but had made no attempt to study. He was living in Glasgow and working in the UK illegally. He was found guilty and jailed at his trial at Belfast Crown Court and has since been deported from the UK.

Jan. 2013:

A woman from Leicester was sentenced to 15 months in jail at Downpatrick Crown Court for her part in an attempted sham marriage and bigamy. UK Border Agency officers had investigated and then stopped a wedding taking place at Downpatrick Register Office. The woman had flown to Belfast that day along with an Indian man who she had met only twice before. She also admitted marrying other men in sham marriages both in the UK and India.

Human Trafficking

The number of potential victims of human trafficking who were rescued in the 2012/13 financial year:

Human Trafficking 2012-2013		
Total No Victims	Exploitation Type	Countries
16	9 Sexual 2 Domestic Servitude 5 Unknown	China Romania UK Nigeria Poland Philippines Guinea-Bissau

PSNI Organised Crime Branch made the following interventions:-

- 9 Arrests for Controlling Prostitution - 6 charged, 3 reported
- 13 Arrests for Brothel Keeping - 10 charged, 3 reported
- One female has been reported to the Public Prosecution Service, Northern Ireland in relation to Human Trafficking. This case remains ongoing.

¹ On 1 April 2013, UKBA was split into two separate operational units within the Home Office; UK Visas and Immigration, and Immigration Enforcement

Case study

Matyas Pis, 38, living in Dublin, was convicted of the trafficking of two women into the UK, controlling prostitution and brothel keeping.

This was the first conviction for human trafficking in the Crown Court here.

A sentence of 18 months imprisonment followed by 18 months on licence was imposed on 23 April 2012 at Belfast Crown Court. Pis was subsequently deported from the UK.

On three occasions, between December 2010 and March 2011 Pis arranged for two women to work in Belfast as prostitutes. The women said they asked the Hungarian national to book their air tickets, and he provided them with an apartment in Belfast. The women paid the defendant rent for the apartment and paid back their travelling expenses.

There was no allegation that the women were brought or held against their will.

The Judge said that even though there was no coercion involved, any case of trafficking human beings was a serious case.

As this was the first time that the courts in Northern Ireland have had the opportunity to sentence someone for trafficking offences, the judge set out guidance for the courts to follow until the Court of Appeal has an opportunity to provide an authoritative guideline.

Detective Chief Inspector Douglas Grant, welcomed the conviction and commented that: "These two women had been trafficked from Slovakia through the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland for the sole purpose of sexual exploitation."

"Police received information from the Hungarian authorities on 19 March 2011 that these two women were in Belfast.

"Following an investigation they were rescued on 21 March. The public can be assured that, if they report suspicious or unusual activity to police, we will take their report seriously and will act on it."

vii. Border crime

Border Force is a separate directorate within the Home Office (prior to March 2012 it was part of UK Border Agency - now Home Office Immigration Enforcement). Border Force is responsible for frontline United Kingdom border immigration and customs functions at all sea ports, airports and rail hubs. Border Force is a law enforcement agency that protects the United Kingdom from criminal activity, terrorism threats, revenue, customs and immigration offending, whilst facilitating legitimate travellers and trade. They work closely in partnership, to defend the UK's interest, with other agencies such as OCTF, PSNI, HMRC, SOCA and DHSSPSNI.

2012/13 Border Force seizures in Northern Ireland included:

- 7.2 million cigarettes
- 500 kgs Hand Rolling Tobacco
- 6.13 kgs Class A drugs
- 37 kgs Class B drugs
- Plus numerous Class C medicines
- Offensive weapons - 140
- Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) cash seizures €130,000 plus \$10,000 and £9,200.

Case studies

- 4.25 million cigarettes with Irish health warnings, suspected to be counterfeit, were seized by Border Force Officers at Belfast docks. The container goods were manifested as cardboard but the cover load was rags. The goods were detected when the container was x-rayed by officers and the load was not consistent with the goods declared. Container was destined for south Armagh.
- Border Force Officers at Belfast Port detected 1.2 million cigarettes concealed within a consignment at a remote warehouse. The consignment was manifested as plastic bags destined for County Tyrone. The goods were seized.
- Baggage was sent from Dubai via London Heathrow to Belfast City in August 2012. 134,000 cigarettes were seized by Border Force Officers. Prosecutions are pending in relation to two Northern Ireland passengers.
- POCA – €120,000 transmitted from Lagos via London Heathrow in June 2012 was seized by Border Force officers.

viii. Intellectual Property Crime

Case study

In November 2011 PSNI conducted a search and seizure operation against the sale of counterfeit goods at Clogher Market, Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh. Twelve people were arrested, 7 stalls were seized, approximately £10,000 in cash was seized as well as 6 vans and 1 car. Over 900 items of counterfeit clothing were identified. Prior to the operation taking place Trading Standards had identified stalls in the market as selling counterfeit goods.

Samples of seized jewellery were subsequently sent to the brand names concerned and complaints in relation to breach of trademark and copyright have been received from number of established jewellery stores in London. Police have established that the jewellery seized, if it was genuine, would cost approximately £12,500. A number of defendants have recently been sentenced at Belfast Crown Court.

ix. Social Security Benefit Fraud

During 2012/2013 the Social Security Agency's (SSA) Benefit Security Service (BSS) carried out 5,138 benefit fraud and 1,044 duplicate cheque encashment investigations. During the same period there were 567 convictions for benefit fraud and 491 Administrative Penalties (similar to a fine) imposed.

Counter fraud activities within the SSA remain a high priority. Although there was no evidence of organised fraud against the benefit system uncovered in the last year, the SSA remains vigilant with the BSS Organised Fraud Unit (OFU) investigating any incidence of potential organised criminality against the benefit system. During 2012/2013 the OFU investigated 120 serious and complex fraud allegations and raised overpayments totalling £166,064. There was no evidence of systematic organised criminal activity detected in any of the frauds investigated.

The OFU continues to undertake various assurance exercises in order to assess any potential risk associated with the payment of benefit into bank accounts, including Post Office Card Accounts. During 2012/13 these exercises have involved:

- examination of bank accounts showing multiple benefit customers listed at one address; and
- examination of bank accounts used by benefit customers receiving multiple benefits and using more than one address.

To date these exercises have not uncovered any organised or gang related criminal activity and there is currently no evidence of any direct or organised attack on the social security systems in Northern Ireland.

The SSA Document Examinations Teams continue to verify and validate the allocation of National Insurance Numbers and this remains an important deterrent to those criminals intent on committing identity fraud. The Teams work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions' National Identity Fraud Unit to detect individuals applying for false National Insurance Numbers using counterfeit documentation.

Liaison and cooperation continues between SSA and other law enforcement agencies where there is a threat that could potentially impact on the Northern Ireland Social Security system.

The OFU maintains a close working relationship with colleagues from both the Department for Work & Pensions in Great Britain and the Department of Social Protection in the Republic of Ireland with regard to possible cross border benefit frauds.

The SSA continues to participate in data matching exercises with HMRC and other government departments to look for inconsistencies in data provided that may point towards benefit fraud. During 2012/2013 176 cases were referred to the SSA's Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) for consideration. The FIU secured 22 Confiscation Orders to the value of £331,368, 4 voluntary payments amounting to £70,468 and one compensation order for £33,800.

x. Illegal dumping of waste

The Environmental Crime Unit (ECU) of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency focuses on serious, persistent and predominantly commercial-scale environmental offending that is prompted by financial gain. Its investigations are intelligence-led, aided by software packages which help analyse intelligence and ensure the most serious offending can be identified and addressed. Its criminal, financial and intelligence investigators carry out complex investigations, some of which involve multiple defendants and companies. In addition to depriving environmental offenders of the proceeds of criminal conduct, through the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002, the confiscation approach the Unit takes deprives offenders of the means to further offend and discourages others from doing so.

Between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013, ECU secured 15 convictions against waste offenders. These convictions generated fines of £50,900 and four suspended sentences ranging from three to six months each.

ECU's Strategic Partnership with the PSNI has now been rolled out in every police district in Northern Ireland, with very encouraging results so far. Through sharing resources and expertise, both ECU and the PSNI have increased their ability to target and disrupt those involved in environmental criminality, and particularly in metal theft. Many of these individuals and groups have also proved to have been of interest to the PSNI for other crimes.

An example of this successful cooperation has been Operation Churn, in which PSNI and ECU officers worked together to optimise action against those transporting and trading in metal without the appropriate licences. ECU officers are continuing to provide advice and support to the PSNI where their operations involve environmental criminality.

As an extension of this joint work, ECU has developed closer working relationships with HMRC and new connections with the Harbour Police, as well as continuing its membership of the Organised Crime Task Force's Criminal Finance Group and the Cross Border Fuel Group.

Case study

On 24 September 2012 a County Down tyre recycling business, OM Recycling Ltd, was made the subject of a £120,000 confiscation order under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 at Newry Crown Court in relation to waste offences.

OM Recycling Ltd operates a licensed tyre storage and treatment facility at Chapel Hill Road Mayobridge. The company's licence allows the storage of up to 150 tonnes of unprocessed tyres and 100 tonnes of shredded tyres inside the two sheds on site. It does not permit baling of tyres or large scale stock piling of tyres.

During site inspections by Northern Ireland Environment Agency officers in 2009 and 2010, approximately half a million tyres were found to be stored in bales outside the licensed area. In October 2009 the company failed to act on an instruction under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 to remove all tyres stored in excess of permitted limits.

The company's two directors admitted to NIEA officers during interview that they had allowed excess tyres to be stored on the site contrary to the conditions of their waste management licence, that they had been aware that they were operating outside of their licence conditions and that they had failed to remove the tyres in the time allowed.

OM Recycling Ltd and its two Directors pleaded guilty to 4 offences each under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997. The court made a confiscation order against the limited company under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 for £120,000 in relation to benefit acquired from criminal conduct. Each defendant was also fined £250 for each of the four charges totalling £3,000.

xi. Criminal Finance & Assets Recovery

Law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland obtained confiscation orders on £1.359m of criminal assets during 2012/13. A further £729,000 cash was forfeited. The full value of these assets is realised when they are paid over in accordance with directions set by the Court. In other words there can be a delay between an Order and recovery.

Case study

A pro-active, intelligence led investigation conducted by PSNI Organised Crime Branch, focused on a Chinese organised crime network (many being immigration offenders), involved in various crime types, principally cannabis cultivation and supply; and money laundering.

It became apparent during the course of the investigation that the organised crime group operated as a connected network across the British Isles, with 'cells' or 'units' operating in various towns and cities.

A common feature of the tactics used by this group was the abuse of the postal system to move both drugs and cash between UK cities. It was assessed that the Northern Ireland based members of this OCG were unable to keep up with demand for their herbal cannabis through locally grown drugs and so they needed to supplement their supplies with drugs grown elsewhere in the UK.

These drugs were sent through the post to Northern Ireland from various cities in Great Britain. Enquiries to date have revealed postal deliveries of herbal cannabis sent from London, Manchester, Cardiff and Newport.

As well as postal deliveries of herbal cannabis coming into Northern Ireland, there have been multiple instances of large amounts of cash being posted out of Northern Ireland. Cash has been sent to addresses in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Cardiff.

To date drugs valued up to £1 million have been recovered and £755,000 in cash has been seized upon delivery or while in transit to the postal address.

Case study

In October 2007 members of PSNI's Organised Crime Branch stopped a car in Newry and recovered £100,000 in cash from its interior and during a subsequent search of a Money Service Bureau seized a further £550,000. All monies were seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

In September 2011 the defendant pleaded guilty to obtaining services by deception and fraud by false representation and in December 2011 was sentenced to 2 years 6 months imprisonment, suspended for 2 years.

Confiscation proceedings were commenced after conviction and in September 2012 a confiscation order for the sum of £325,000 was granted. As the money initially seized was still under detention an immediate payment of the order was made.

Case study

In December 2009 three defendants were convicted for offences in relation to stolen motor vehicles (they later received suspended custodial sentences and fines).

A confiscation investigation commenced which established that the criminal benefit of the three totalled over £1 million with confiscation orders totalling some £63,000 being successfully obtained in court in April 2012.

xii. The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS)

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) is an independent prosecuting authority established under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The PPS is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. The statutory function of the PPS is to take prosecution decisions and conduct criminal proceedings which are instituted in Northern Ireland in relation to matters investigated by any police service in Northern Ireland, including PSNI, Ministry of Defence Police and Belfast Harbour Police. The PPS also takes decisions and conducts prosecutions in respect of files submitted by a range of other Government bodies such as the Department for Social Development and the Health and Safety Executive.

Each investigation file submitted to the PPS is considered by a legally qualified and experienced Prosecutor to determine if the Test for Prosecution is met. The Test for Prosecution is met if:

- i. the evidence which can be adduced in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction – the Evidential Test; and
- ii. prosecution is required in the public interest – the Public Interest Test.

Where the prosecution test is met criminal proceedings will be brought by the PPS either in the Magistrates Court (summary prosecution) or the Crown Court (indictable prosecution).

The PPS is an integral member of the Organised Crime Task Force and is represented on the Strategy Group and several sub-groups.

Figures for the year 2012/13

Figures for files received are those received within the year 2012/13. Figures for decisions are in respect of decisions taken during the year but it should be noted that they may relate to files received in previous years. It should also be noted that decisions may not yet have been taken in relation to all of the suspects charged or reported in the 2012/13 year.

Money laundering offences

The vast majority of these files were received from PSNI but the figure includes one case from SOCA.

Files received	106
Suspects reported or charged	149
Decisions to prosecute	101

Controlling prostitution

These files were all received from PSNI.

Files received	4
Suspects reported or charged	10
Decisions to prosecute	10

Drugs (*figures excluding simple possession shown in italics*)

The majority of these files were received from PSNI but the figures also include cases received from Belfast Harbour Police, SOCA and Home Office Immigration Enforcement.

Files received	3,881	<i>(3,408)</i>
Suspects reported or charged	4,478	<i>(3,928)</i>
Decisions to prosecute (indictable)	372	<i>(352)</i>
Decisions to prosecute (summary)	2,114	<i>(1,797)</i>

Human trafficking

These files were all received from PSNI.

Files received	6
Suspects reported or charged	8
Decisions to prosecute	2

Cases from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and Northern Ireland Environment Agency

The PPS Fraud and Departmental section takes prosecution decisions and has carriage of criminal proceedings in relation to large or complex fraud cases investigated by PSNI and a wide range of offences investigated by other Government Departments. Of the Government Bodies who submit files to the PPS, the agencies most likely to investigate activities involving organised criminals are Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

HMRC

HMRC submit investigation files to the PPS on a variety of fraud and tax evasion offences and there is the potential for organised criminals to be involved in these offences. The most commonly encountered criminal activity investigated by HMRC is fuel laundering and cigarette smuggling; which are both forms of excise duty evasion.

Files received	14
Suspects reported or charged	22
Decisions to prosecute	18

One notable case which came to trial in late 2012 involved the seizure of over 300,000 cigarettes on which excise duty had not been paid. The estimated revenue loss to HMRC was in excess of £63,000. The defendant was convicted by a jury of conspiring to evade customs duty and being concerned in carrying dutiable goods with intent to defraud. He was sentenced to an immediate custodial term of 18 months with a further 18 months on licence.

NIEA

Although PSNI and Belfast Harbour Police submit files in relation to waste offences, the vast majority of such cases are received from NIEA. Where appropriate the PPS will seek confiscation of any proceeds of criminal benefit from illegal waste activities.

Files received	27
Suspects reported or charged	48
Decisions to prosecute	39

OCTF Threat Assessment 2013

Overview

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) members continue to work in partnership in order to tackle organised crime in Northern Ireland. Organised crime groups (OCGs) are often fluid, with membership changing, depending on the skills needed for a particular enterprise. They will also adapt to the environment in which they are operating by changing the types of crime they are involved in, developing new expertise and exploiting any perceived weaknesses and loopholes.

Increased security measures by cash-in-transit (CIT) companies and financial institutions have resulted in cash-in-transit robberies becoming higher risk for lower gain. Detection rates and cash recovery rates in respect of CIT attacks remain high. Sporadic ATM/safe thefts continue to occur and, whilst success rates for the criminals remain low, the damage these crimes cause to the local community and provision of vital services can be devastating. Tiger kidnaps have seen a significant decrease however there remain a small number of experienced OCGs intent on carrying out this type of offence.

The area of fraud and criminal finance continues to develop as criminals adapt their methods to a changing economic environment. In the past year law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland have continued to see insider-enabled fraud and also the use of 'electronic money' and pre-pay cards in order to facilitate both fraud and money laundering. In addition, there has been an increase in the use of professional facilitators, as well as increased legal challenges to the POCA regime, as OCGs seek to circumvent and exploit perceived weaknesses in the money laundering legislation.

Cyber crime, both in the form of 'pure' (computer dependent) cyber crime and cyber enabled crime, has become a growing area of business in Northern Ireland. Whilst pure cyber crime incidents remain somewhat unusual locally, cyber enabled crimes, commonly fraud, harassment and intimidation and offences containing a sexual element, are regularly reported to law enforcement agencies. OCGs are increasingly using information and communications technology (ICT) to communicate, advertise illicit goods and conduct online banking and money transfers.

The drugs market in Northern Ireland has seen extensive change over the past few years, mirroring that seen in other parts of the UK and in Europe as a whole. The emergence of new psychoactive substances has been challenging for law enforcement and also increases the risks for users who may be unaware of the true nature of the substance they are taking. A growing illicit market in prescription drugs is increasingly being exploited by OCGs who are keen to make money, regardless of the potential impact on the communities in which they live. The extortion of those involved in drugs supply has also become a way for paramilitary groups to both raise money and exert control over the community.

Counterfeit goods continue to be widely available in Northern Ireland and there is a general lack of public understanding of the connection between the purchase of such goods and the supporting of OCGs. There has been a continued increase in the use of the internet and online shopping to market and distribute counterfeit products, with the use of social media becoming particularly prevalent.

International OCGs continue to be involved in 'human trafficking exploitation' (the organised prostitution and the trafficking of human beings for the purposes of both sexual and labour exploitation). A growing industry offers high profits for unscrupulous OCGs but leaves victims' lives devastated.

As fuel and tobacco become increasingly expensive commodities to purchase legitimately, OCGs continue to be involved in laundering and smuggling. The waste product from laundering plants has been found in areas of natural beauty, causes extensive environmental damage and significant cost in clear-up operations. Counterfeit and illicit tobacco products that have been produced without quality assurance have obvious health and safety risks and the routes used to import them can open up importation networks for other illicit products.

Paramilitary Involvement in organised crime

Paramilitary groups remain active in Northern Ireland. These groups' political intent is not always clear, however some remain a threat to national security and are also heavily engaged in organised crime. In the past year dissident republican groups have been responsible for a number of attacks principally against members of the PSNI, Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and military.

Despite publicly denouncing organised criminality, dissident republican groups remain largely dependent on organised crime to fund their terrorist activities. Some dissident republicans are generating significant sums of money from fuel laundering and tobacco smuggling. In addition there has been suspected dissident republican involvement in a range of other criminality in the past year, including armed robbery (such as cash-in-transit robbery), extortion, money laundering, drugs supply, burglary, insurance fraud, counterfeit currency and intimidation. Dissident republican groups also remain heavily involved in 'civil administration' and extortion against those they suspect of being involved in organised crime, in particular drugs supply.

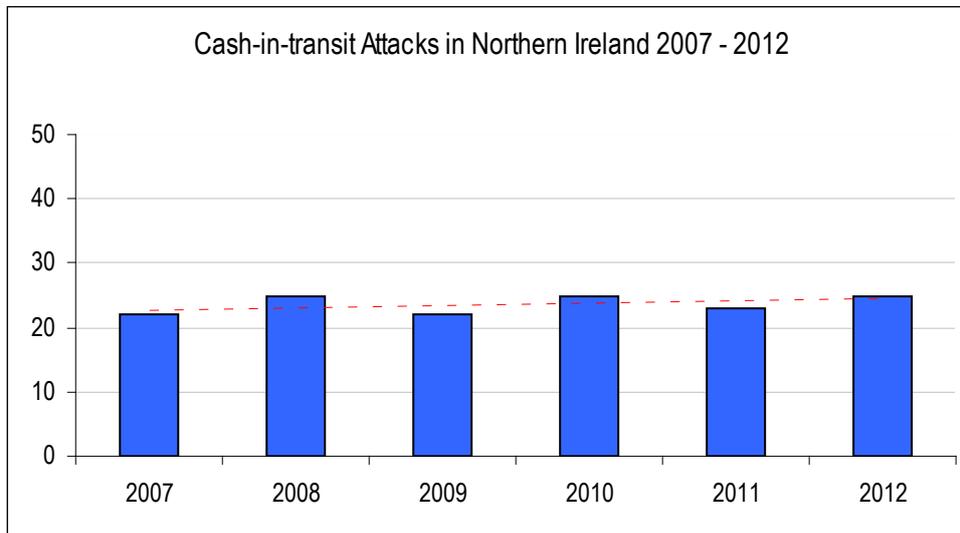
There also remains involvement in organised crime by some members of the loyalist groups - Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). It is often unclear how much of this activity has been sanctioned by the leadership, it is clear, however, that some members are involved in extortion, money lending, robbery, contraband, drugs, burglary, thefts from the rural community and money laundering for extensive personal gain.

This chapter offers further information about the key threats from organised crime in Northern Ireland, as identified by the OCTF:

- Armed robbery (including tiger kidnaps)
- Criminal Finance – fraud and money laundering
- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Extortion
- Intellectual Property Crime (counterfeiting, including currency)
- Organised immigration crime, including human exploitation
- Public Sector Fraud – excise and tax
- Emerging and future areas of organised criminality

Armed Robbery

Cash-in-transit attacks



Cash-in-transit (CIT) attacks reached their peak in Northern Ireland in 2002, when there were a total of 134 attacks recorded during the calendar year; an average of over two per week. At this time the OCTF formed a dedicated Armed Robbery Expert Group, made up of representatives from law enforcement alongside banks, CIT companies, Post Office and other local businesses engaged in the movement of high value loads. Following the formation of this group, the number of CIT attacks saw dramatic reductions over a five year period, before levelling out to an average of around 23 attacks per year over the past six years.

Following some significant arrests of prolific offenders, the early part of 2013 saw a marked decrease in incidents when compared to the previous year to the same date. It should be noted however that the PSNI still regularly receives and investigates reports of suspicious activity around the time/vicinity of CIT deliveries, indicating a number of organised crime groups (OCG) continue to actively target these deliveries. Prison releases and individuals out on bail, including those on bail for similar offences, can greatly impact on activity in this area. Knives have become the most prominent weapon used over the past eighteen months however, again, this can change dependent on the groups involved. While the number of injuries to couriers remains low, the potential for violence by those involved in this type of activity can never be ruled out. The murder of Detective Garda Donohoe following a shooting incident outside a credit union in Dundalk in January 2013 caused deep sadness within the law enforcement community and served as a reminder of the level of threat armed robbery groups can pose. PSNI are working closely with An Garda Síochána on this investigation.

As well as the reduction in the overall number of incidents, additional security measures taken by industry combined with law enforcement activity has also resulted in a significant number of successful interventions in respect of this type of offence. Whilst the proportion of 'successful' attacks (i.e. ones in which the criminal group escaped with cash) has remained constant over the past three years, there was a significant increase in the amount of cash subsequently recovered by law enforcement. In 2012 stolen cash was recovered in around 42% of initially 'successful' incidents. Rates of arrest and charge also remain high; at the start of the 2013 calendar year there had been charges in relation to 60% of the attacks that occurred during 2012. A total of 39 people had been

charged in relation to 15 of the 25 attacks. This rate is likely to increase even further as some more protracted investigations progress, for example with the return of forensic analysis results or analysis of available CCTV footage.

In last year's Threat Assessment it was reported that there had been an increase in 'bunker' style attacks. A 'bunker' attack is one where the courier is attacked as he or she enters the area to the rear of the ATM or where a prospective robber follows the courier into a financial institution. This change in tactic appeared to have been perceived as having a higher potential gain however, in reality, improved security measures have resulted in limited gains and increased risk from any type of CIT attack, regardless of the modus operandi. The 'bunker attack' crime series lasted around four months from February to May 2011, with five attacks during this time period. The early part of 2012 saw a further three attacks in which couriers were followed into premises, however arrests were made in relation to two of these incidents and all attacks since July 2012 have been of the more traditionally seen 'across the pavement' type, where the courier is attacked as he transports the cash box from the vehicle to the business or ATM.

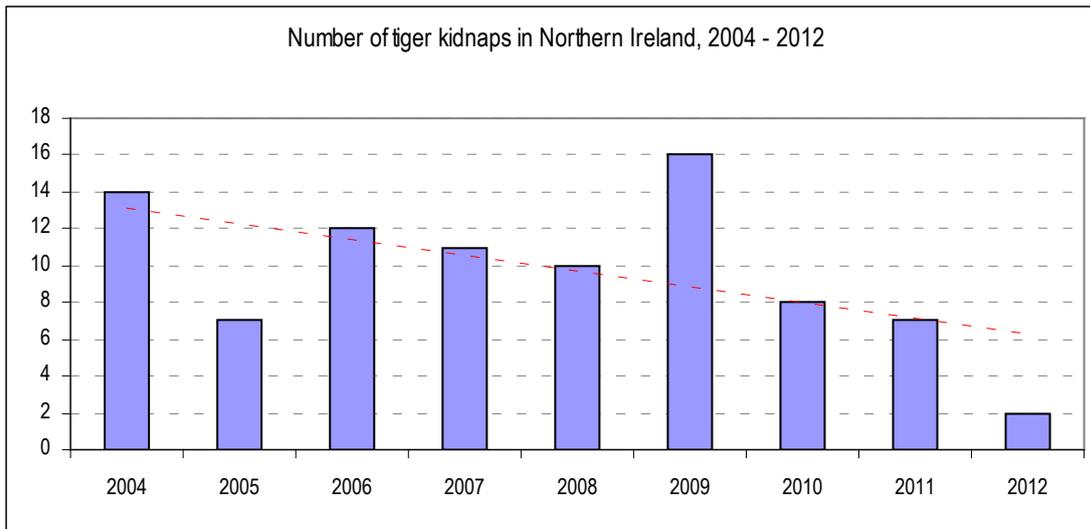
ATM thefts

ATM thefts became an issue in Northern Ireland in 2009 when there were 21 recorded. Two thirds of these incidents (14 of the total 21) involved the use of stolen plant machinery, six of which were "successful". The spike in incidents was the result of one OCG who, after extensive press coverage, were then followed by a number of 'copycat' groups. Following the formation of a PSNI Gold Command Group and the implementation of a strategy to deal with the thefts, the number of incidents reduced dramatically, with low levels recorded in the subsequent years. There remain some OCGs who still consider ATM and safe thefts to be a viable option however the proportion of incidents in which the ATM or safe is successfully stolen remains low. More commonly the OCG will leave empty handed, having caused significant damage to small shops and Post Offices that often provide a vital function to the local community.

As well as attacks using stolen plant machinery, there also continue to be sporadic attacks on ATMs by OCGs trying to gain access through adjoining buildings or using power tools to attack externally housed ATMs. These are largely unsuccessful and often bear the hallmarks of inexperienced crime groups, who lack the capability to carry them out successfully.

Tiger kidnaps

"Tiger kidnaps involve the abduction or holding of a hostage (or the claim of having done so) with the intention of forcing another person to facilitate the immediate theft of valuables or concede some other form of ransom from an institution or business organisation."¹



There was a significant reduction in tiger kidnap incidents in the 2012 calendar year and the early part of 2013. A number of OCGs continue to target in this area. In some instances tiger kidnap attempts are carried out by less experienced groups, who are unlikely to actually hold a hostage. There remain a small number of OCGs, however, who are more experienced in this area and will carry out significant levels of pre-planning and surveillance prior to any kidnap. The most effective way of preventing staff members from becoming the victim of a tiger kidnap situation is to regularly examine cash handling procedures, ensuring no individual has access to high levels of cash or valuable commodities. This is true of any business type, be it a small business or a large financial institution.

In addition to tiger kidnaps, there are a number of OCGs who will attempt to kidnap business owners and/or staff members or carry out robberies and aggravated burglaries at their homes. In some cases these incidents involve threats against the victim and/or family members and suspects are usually armed and may use violence to ensure compliance. Again, the best form of prevention is to ensure that no individual has access to significant cash amounts. Business owners should be particularly careful about takings being kept at home. Night safes at financial institutions provide a better alternative, although care should be taken not to set patterns when dropping off cash to financial institutions or night safes.

Large scale armed robberies and hijackings

Any business dealing with large amounts of cash or easily disposable commodities can become the target of an OCG. Experienced criminals will target businesses that have become relaxed in their cash handling processes or where individual staff members may have access to large quantities of valuables or cash. In addition, high value loads can be hijacked whilst in transit. Any type of business can be vulnerable however some examples from the past year have included post offices, retail outlets, jewellers, restaurants, travel agents, delivery companies, credit unions and public houses. There have been some recent indications of OCGs travelling from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland to commit offences. It is not clear why this is the case, possible explanations may include increased law enforcement activity in the OCGs' usual geographic target area, some connection with Northern Ireland (perhaps through personal or criminal associations or activities), or reduced opportunities due to the recession (making OCGs more willing to travel to increase their potential victim base).

Criminal Finance

Fraud

The threat to the United Kingdom, and indeed to Northern Ireland, from fraud remains serious. The types of fraud being perpetrated have become increasingly complex, particularly in relation to online frauds, and may involve OCGs based in other jurisdictions. The National Fraud Authority's Annual Fraud Indicator 2012 estimates the loss to the UK economy from fraud to be £73 billion. Of this amount, they estimate £9.9 billion is perpetrated by OCGs.

Criminal groups both commit fraud and use it as an enabler. Specific frauds linked to OCGs include tax and benefits fraud, frauds against retail banking, insurance fraud, mortgage fraud, telecommunications fraud and mass marketing fraud. Around 14% of UK OCGs identified through organised crime group mapping data are suspected of involvement in fraud activities.² In Northern Ireland, the figure appears to be lower (around 4%) and those identified as being involved in fraud are also linked to other types of criminality including drugs, human trafficking, extortion, burglary, counterfeit currency, kidnap, robbery, firearms, vehicle theft and plant theft.

It is important to note however that, in addition to locally based OCGs, there are also a number operating from overseas who are targeting local individuals and businesses. Examples of frauds seen in Northern Ireland in the past year which may involve OCGs include:

- Mass marketing fraud - this type of fraud encompasses a wide range of frauds including pyramid schemes, foreign lottery and prize draw scams and holiday club scams. In Northern Ireland one of the commonly seen mass marketing frauds is "419 fraud", also known as "West African letter fraud" or "advance fee fraud". This type of fraud involves '...asking you to help with transferring money out of another country - such as Iraq, South Africa or somewhere in west Africa - in return for a percentage of the money you helped to transfer.'³ Other derivatives of advance fee fraud include romance fraud, foreign lottery, and prize draw scams and holiday club scams. Locally, PSNI continue to see an increase in advance fee frauds involving 'electronic money' or 'e-money'. The victim is told to purchase 'e-money' vouchers in exchange for a promised lump sum (usually as an upfront fee for a bank loan or for a refund of tax or bank charges) and is then asked for the voucher codes. The fraudster can then use the codes to buy goods online, load up pre-pay cards or send money via electronic transfer.
- Insider-enabled fraud – this refers to "...any type of fraud event to which an insider's access to the organisation's assets and systems, or ability to influence the outcomes of organisational processes, is integral to being able to conduct the fraud. An insider can be anyone with this access or ability, most obviously employees, but also volunteers, consultants and contractors."⁴ Experts believe the threat from insider-enabled fraud grows during a recession. The amount lost as a result of insider-enabled fraud can be substantial, however, businesses can be reluctant to report the offence, for fear of reputational damage.

2 National Fraud Authority (March 2012). *Annual Fraud Indicator*. Available online at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/nfa/annual-fraud-indicator/annual-fraud-indicator-2012?view=Binary>

3 National Fraud Authority - <http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.uk/nfa/actionfraud/OtherFraud/Pages/WestAfricanLetter.aspx>

4 National Fraud Authority (March 2012). *Annual Fraud Indicator* Pg 24.

- Boiler Room fraud - this type of fraud involves the high-pressure telephone selling of worthless stocks and shares. Investors do not receive the promised share certificates or dividends. The offenders in this type of fraud are usually based outside the United Kingdom but offer assurances that they are based locally and governed by regulatory frameworks.
- ATM skimming and ATM Reversal Fraud - ATM skimming involves the use of a device which allows the customer's card to be cloned, giving the fraudster access to their account. ATM reversal fraud involves the criminal withdrawing money from an ATM but using one of a number of methods to effectively cancel the transaction so it will not register against the relevant account. ATM skimming and reversal frauds are known to be perpetrated by OCGs who have developed expertise in these areas and who often operate in a number of jurisdictions. Both are seen sporadically in Northern Ireland and often involve non-indigenous OCGs, who will operate in a specific geographic location for a very short period of time before moving on somewhere else. Sometimes the group's activities can be clearly mapped retrospectively along specific road networks as they travel through a number of towns in one day.

Money Laundering

The main aim of an OCG is to make money. This money must then be laundered to make it appear legitimate and allow it to be used to fund further criminal activities or to acquire assets and to hide these assets from law enforcement agencies in order to allow the criminal to live a lavish lifestyle. Since the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) was introduced, money laundering has become more difficult and criminals have sought to become more adept at laundering their cash. There are a number of methods used by locally based organised criminals:

- Layering the profits through a number of accounts – As a result of POCA legislation large transactions through bank accounts are very likely to be detected and reported to law enforcement through Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs). Organised criminals try to avoid detection by placing smaller amounts through a large number of accounts, often in other people's names. This can be a risky choice for the criminal as it widens the circle of people involved in their criminal enterprise, making it more vulnerable to identification by law enforcement.
- The use of professional services - in order to legitimise criminal proceeds, OCGs will often enlist the services of professionals such as accountants, solicitors and banking officials. These 'professional facilitators', sometimes referred to as 'gatekeepers', can provide a range of services and whilst some may do so unknowingly, others will be fully aware of their clients' involvement in organised crime. Even those who are genuinely not aware of their clients' involvement may have acted illegally or irresponsibly by not showing due diligence in the execution of their duties.
- The use of pre-pay cards and e-money – in the past organised crime groups would have physically moved cash across borders in order to reduce the chance of scrutiny at financial institutions. Whilst this is still the case, the increase in electronic money payment systems and transfers offers another alternative. Many of these facilities are not easily traced and allow money to be 'loaded' in one jurisdiction and withdrawn in another in quick time. Pre-pay cards will also often guarantee the exchange rate on the day they are pre-loaded, therefore reducing the risk posed by fluctuating exchange rates.

- Property and land purchase – Many organised criminals have invested criminally obtained profits in property and land. Property in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and also Eastern Europe has been popular, however the recession has led to many of these properties losing much of their value. The Northern Ireland Quarterly House Price Index for quarter 4 of 2012 indicated residential property prices are now 13% lower than in quarter 1 of 2005, and less than half of the peak value of the housing market in quarter 3 of 2007;⁵ and the ongoing Eurozone crisis may continue to make borrowing difficult. This may impact on how organised criminals choose to launder criminal proceeds, as property investments have traditionally been a popular method. Failing property portfolios may also result in a small number of organised criminals coming out of ‘retirement’ in order to try to recoup losses. It should be noted, however, that the rental market remains buoyant and many criminals who put their money into property became involved in the buy-to-let sector with a view to long term investment. Given the high degree of negative equity that is being seen across this sector, property portfolios continue to be a method of concealing the proceeds of crime and, in the medium to long term, will represent a significant investment. This is particularly true when mortgage payments continue to be serviced by rental income.
- The use of cash businesses – Some businesses lend themselves more readily to money laundering as they deal mostly with cash. Examples would include public houses, restaurants, fast food outlets, car dealers and taxi firms. OCGs can use these businesses to hide criminally obtained money alongside legitimate profits. This may seem like a relatively easy way to launder money however, since POCA legislation was introduced, staff at financial institutions are trained to recognise ‘unusual’ transactions and this includes unusual movements of cash through business accounts. A professional facilitator, such as an accountant, may therefore have to be employed.
- The use of money service businesses (MSBs) – Northern Ireland bank notes can be undesirable for those wishing to purchase criminal commodities outside the country. Criminally complicit MSBs offer a ‘no questions asked’ money exchange facility which is attractive to organised criminals. Law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland continue to investigate the criminal use of MSBs in cooperation with An Garda Síochána where appropriate. Joint investigations have highlighted complicit MSBs linked to criminality such as drugs supply and cigarette smuggling, in some instances involving the processing of millions of pounds.
- Physical movement of cash across borders – Increased scrutiny at financial institutions has led to some organised criminals resorting to physically transporting cash across borders and often ‘mules’ will be hired to carry out this activity. In some instances the cash is even moved through the postal system. The large number of local bank notes in circulation in Northern Ireland can make this practice more difficult as the criminal group will often have to change the cash into Euro or Bank of England Sterling notes prior to moving it.

There are a wide variety of financial investigation options available to OCTF law enforcement and partner agencies under appropriate circumstances, including cash seizure, seizure of assets such as property and vehicles, and tax enforcement. By working in partnership, agencies can use all the legislation at their disposal to ensure that organised criminals do not profit from their activities. Civil recovery of assets and the taxation of criminal income are currently undertaken by the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) which will be absorbed into the National Crime Agency (NCA) in October 2013.

5 NISRA (2013). *Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index, October - December 2012*.

Cyber Crime

Cyber Crime is a growing area of business for law enforcement globally. SOCA (soon to become part of the NCA) divide the category into two main sections:

- *'Pure' cyber crime* (or computer dependent crimes) - where a criminal act can only be committed through the use of computers or other ICT devices. In these cases the devices are both the tool for committing the crime and the target of the crime. For instance, the harvesting of online bank account details using malware, hacking of networks to steal sensitive data or distributed denial of service attacks on websites or infrastructure.
- *Cyber-enabled crimes* – those that may be committed without ICT devices, but are changed by use of ICT in terms of scale and reach. This can comprise a wide range of criminal activities, including, but not limited to, online fraud, online theft, online sexual offending and where the devices are used to organise or arrange crimes.⁶

Law enforcement agencies deal with a small number of “pure” cyber crime incidents, these remain rare in Northern Ireland and are often committed by individuals based outside the jurisdiction. Cyber enabled crimes, however, have become commonplace, with the internet providing a new medium for committing offences such as blackmail, extortion, harassment and some types of fraud. These types of crimes are not new and are not specific to the internet, however committing them online can make the offender feel they have a greater degree of anonymity. The types of cyber enabled crimes commonly reported to PSNI include:

- Fraud offences – such as fraud on online auction sites and shops, fraudulent websites and advance fee frauds. These frauds can vary from low loss incidents involving family members, right through to organised high level frauds perpetrated by OCGs. In some instances businesses are reluctant to report these types of fraud due to a fear of reputational damage. It is vital, however, that law enforcement agencies gain knowledge in relation to the types of offences being committed to allow effective preventative work to be undertaken.
- Harassment, intimidation, threats and cyberstalking – these usually relate to domestic incidents and ongoing disputes, but may include intimidation of witnesses and predatory cyberstalking.
- Incidents with a sexual element – including the grooming of young people and sharing of indecent images of children.
- Law enforcement has increasingly noted the presence of drugs dealers, sourcing their drugs from online suppliers based overseas. In addition to traditional means, these drugs can be paid for using digital currencies and have also been marketed online.

In addition to cyber enabled criminality, OCGs use ICT in the same way as the rest of society. A study carried out two years ago indicated that 95% of children between the ages of five and fifteen in Northern Ireland lived in households with games consoles and 89% lived in households with PC/laptop-based internet access. 19% accessed the internet at home through a games console and 10% through a mobile phone.⁷ Figures released in August 2011 revealed a 75% take-up for broadband in Northern Ireland. 92% of Northern Ireland residents used a mobile phone and, of those people,

6 <http://www.soca.gov.uk/threats/cyber-crime>

7 OFCOM (2011). *Children's media literacy in the nations: Summary report*, p 5 – 7.

almost a quarter had a Smartphone (23%). At the time of these figures being released, the use of social networking in Northern Ireland had doubled since 2008, with 47% using these sites regularly. 53% of people in Northern Ireland watched TV or video online, 51% used internet banking sites and 32% used the internet to access health related information.⁸ OCGs use ICT for a number of main purposes in Northern Ireland, including:

- Communications - identified methods include the use of websites, online forums, email and social networking sites by OCGs and paramilitary groups. Organised criminals in Northern Ireland are known to participate in, and have created, private online forums to facilitate and further their criminal activities, including drug dealing.
- Advertising and distribution of illicit goods, including sexual services and brothels as well as counterfeit and stolen goods.
- Online banking and money transfer facilities to aid in money laundering activities.
- Targeting of victims, including 'sucker lists' and targeting by sex offenders.

The advancement of technology has led to organised criminal investigations becoming increasingly complex. Europol warns that the development of internet and related technologies can provide 'new tools' for OCGs, with the 'mass of data' available proving challenging for law enforcement. A lack of concerted law enforcement attention or resources around cybercrime and fraud activities will lead to rapidly evolving criminality which becomes even harder for law enforcement to understand and manage.⁹ Recent public order incidents have shown the impact of the increased use of social media. It provides a forum whereby people can communicate and also organise activity. This is an area in which law enforcement is working hard to ensure it is adequately monitored and used appropriately to further investigative opportunities.

Drugs¹⁰

Cannabis remains the most commonly seized controlled drug in Northern Ireland and is consistently the most commonly reported main drug of misuse in the Drug Misuse Database reports. It usually accounts for around 40% of those entering treatment and is seized in almost 90% of PSNI seizure incidents. During the 2012/13 financial year the quantity of cannabis resin seized has outweighed that of herbal cannabis for the first time in a number of years. This is largely due to a small number of particularly large resin seizures. It is an interesting development as the local cannabis market has been seen to favour herbal in recent years.

In Europe as a whole many countries have now moved to a herbal dominated market, however Spain continues to seize the largest amounts of resin in the world, accounting for 34% of world seizures in 2010.¹¹ The continued availability of cannabis resin in Northern Ireland, despite increased local production of herbal cannabis, may be tied in to the long recognised links between a number of local and Spanish based OCGs.

8 <http://media.ofcom.org.uk/2011/08/04/northern-ireland-embraces-latest-technology/>

9 Europol (2011). *The Future of Organised Crime – Challenges and Recommended Actions*.

10 All drugs seizure figures correct at time of writing.

11 EMDCCA and Europol (2013). *EU Drug Markets Report: A Strategic Analysis*.

There was a significant drop in the overall number of people registered on the Northern Ireland Drugs Addicts Index at 31 December 2012; with 17% less than had been registered in the previous year (226 people registered at 31 December 2012, compared to 272 registered at 31 December 2011).¹² It should be noted however that the Addicts Index only takes account of those *addicted* to certain notifiable drugs. It does not take into account everyone using those drugs, or those using drugs that are not on the notifiable list, including new synthetic drugs. New synthetic drugs, which first became prevalent in Northern Ireland in 2010, are not notifiable and can provide a cheaper alternative to many of the more traditionally abused controlled drugs such as cocaine and amphetamine.

In Northern Ireland, the proportion of individuals who entered drug treatment programmes reporting cocaine as their main problem drug remained broadly stable between 2005/06 and 2009/10, however there has been a decrease since new synthetic drugs became widely available in 2010.¹³ This may suggest that at least a portion of the cocaine market has been displaced into the new synthetic drugs market. This theory appears to be supported by seizure data which shows a decrease in quantity of cocaine seized in the 2012/13 financial year. Psychoactive stimulants, such as mephedrone and NRG2 (methylethylcathinone), have seen a significant increase in the amount seized.

In Europe as a whole the heroin market is showing an overall long-term decline.¹⁴ The number of seizures and the quantity seized in Northern Ireland remains low, however there remain geographic hotspots and there are noted links between heroin abusers and crimes such as robbery, burglary and theft in those areas.

Northern Ireland has a significantly higher than UK average prescribing rate for benzodiazepines and they are the second most commonly reported main drug of misuse. Over the ten year period between 2001 and 2011 benzodiazepines were noted as being present in almost twice as many drug related deaths as heroin, methadone and cocaine combined.¹⁵ OCGs are exploiting a growing illicit market by supplying prescription drugs, often alongside other types of controlled drugs. Prescription drugs enter the illicit market through fraud/theft from the legitimate market or, more commonly, through illegal importation. The most common importation method seen has been through the postal system, with many of these drugs being imported from countries such as Pakistan, the Far East and Africa. A significant proportion of those being imported are believed to be either counterfeit or unlicensed.

Extortion

Extortion in Northern Ireland was traditionally carried out by paramilitary groups and often took the form of 'protection rackets', usually against the construction sector. Extortion was used to raise capital for paramilitary activity, as well as to exert control over communities. More recently OCGs, some of whom have maintained links to paramilitary groups, have used extortion as a way of gaining funds for personal use. The extorting of money in exchange for 'protection' is still seen locally, with businesses such as construction companies, restaurants and short term loan companies being targeted during 2012/13. In some instances the criminal will use the name of a paramilitary group in order to threaten the business owner however it is not always clear whether the actions have been "sanctioned" by senior members. Extortion cases reported in the past year have included suspects claiming to be from a variety of both loyalist and dissident republican groups.

¹² NISRA (2013). *Statistics from the Northern Ireland Drug Addicts Index 2012*.

¹³ NISRA Statistics from the NI Drugs Misuse Database, annual releases.

¹⁴ EMDCCA and Europol (2013). *EU Drug Markets Report: A Strategic Analysis*.

¹⁵ NISRA (2012). *Tables for Drug Related Deaths and Deaths due to Drug Misuse Registered in Northern Ireland, 2001 – 2011*.

Extortion against others also involved in criminality remains an issue, with drug suppliers often being the target. Dissident republican groups remain particularly active in this area and it is unclear how much of the money extorted is used for terrorist funding and how much is for personal gain. It is not unusual for drug suppliers to be forced to pay a premium in order to gain “permission” to supply in particular areas unchallenged.

In addition to the targeting of business owners and those involved in criminality, there remain sporadic incidents of ‘personal’ extortion or blackmail. These usually involve victims who may experience significant personal embarrassment or humiliation should particular aspects of their personal life become known. The blackmailer may threaten to reveal details or even video footage of a sexual nature publicly or to a victim’s family members. In many cases this type of offence is opportunistic in nature and may not actually involve an OCG.

It is vital that all extortion incidents are reported to police. PSNI have a number of officers who have vast experience of dealing with this type of crime and can give professional advice and guidance. Where a case is brought to court conviction rates are high, often with sentences involving significant time in prison.

Intellectual Property Crime (counterfeiting)

It is widely acknowledged that the global financial crisis and resulting recession has increased the demand for cheap goods. ‘Bargain hunting’ has become socially acceptable, with the annual income for UK charity shops reaching an all-time high in 2012¹⁶. Research carried out by Lyle Bailie on behalf of the OCTF found that the public in Northern Ireland do not see the purchase of counterfeit goods as criminal and feel it is less ‘shameful’ than speeding or adultery. The link between counterfeit goods and organised crime, whilst frequently acknowledged, is not seen as an adequate deterrent. There remains a lack of understanding of the association between the purchase of fake goods and the subsequent effects on the local economy, availability of local services and the use of money raised to fund other organised crime.

Counterfeit goods remain widely available throughout Northern Ireland, often sold from markets and car boot sales, from shops and houses, and door-to-door. There has been a noted growth in the availability of goods online, in some cases with locally based individuals potentially acting as middlemen for manufacturers based in the Far East; this means that products may not enter Northern Ireland in large deliveries, making notable seizures more difficult. The internet is used to facilitate the importation, advertisement and local distribution of counterfeit goods in Northern Ireland. In particular there is a noted increase in the use of social media sites to advertise counterfeit goods locally.

The majority of counterfeit goods seized in Northern Ireland, with the exception of DVDs and CDs, have originated in the Far East, usually China. This trend is not unique to Northern Ireland; China is believed to be responsible for over 70% of all counterfeit goods seized by customs officials entering the European Union¹⁷. Much of the counterfeit material entering Northern Ireland will come in through the postal system in small quantities. There is also a growing trend of importing items unbranded or unpackaged in order to try and avoid detection; for example the importation of clothing with counterfeit badges and branding to be added at a later date, or raw tobacco which can then be inserted into counterfeit packaging locally.

16 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/9262907/Recession-fuels-charity-shop-boom.html>

17 European Commission Report on EU customs enforcement of intellectual property rights: Results at the EU border 2011, page 3.

Information held by PSNI suggests that individuals are more inclined to become involved in intellectual property crime as a first offence and may also be inclined to stay involved, seeing it as a career choice. The profile of those involved in the importation and supply of counterfeit goods can vary by commodity and it is not uncommon to see individuals specialise in the supply of particular items, especially DVDs/CDs. Those involved in the supply of other items, such as clothing and electrical items, are more likely to be involved in the supply of a wider variety of goods. Those involved in the supply of counterfeit cigarettes and alcohol are frequently linked to paramilitary groups. Over 40% of those identified through PSNI held information as being involved in intellectual property crime in the past year had links to other types of organised crime, predominantly drugs supply.

As the variety of counterfeit goods available continues to expand there is likely to be a continued increase in items that pose serious health and safety risks, for example food products, pharmaceuticals, personal hygiene products and electrical items.

Currency

Northern Ireland is unique in the United Kingdom as it has a large number of different types of bank notes in circulation; these include notes from the four main local banks as well as notes from Scottish banks, the Bank of England and Euros. Counterfeit currency can be imported into the country as well as being produced locally, and quality can vary greatly. The production and distribution of counterfeit currency has traditionally been linked to paramilitary groups, and it can be sold through criminal networks.

Organised Immigration Crime & Human Exploitation

Smuggling and Facilitation

People smuggling definition – this term refers to the provision of a service or goods that will facilitate illegal migration.¹⁸ Smuggling does not involve the element of coercion.

Smuggling a person into the country involves an illegal immigrant who is complicit and has usually paid a significant amount of money for the 'service'. Facilitators will often assist in arranging illegal entry as well as assisting those already here illegally to remain. Facilitation methods seen in Northern Ireland include the arranging of flights and transport, organised abuse of our domestic sea and air ports to illegally enter other parts of the UK or the Republic of Ireland by way of the land border, the provision of false passports and other documentation and the arranging of so-called 'marriages of convenience', or 'sham' marriages. Such marriages usually involve the making of a payment by, or on behalf of, an illegal immigrant who is a non EU national, to a national of an EU Member State, in return for that person entering into a marriage with the illegal immigrant. The non EU national subsequently claims EU Treaty Rights relating to residency in the EU, based on the existence of the marriage. Following the abolition of the certificate of approval scheme in May 2011 and a move to a more targeted intelligence-led approach, there has been a sharp rise in the detection of attempts at sham marriage in Northern Ireland. Under immigration law, if Home Office Immigration Enforcement has evidence of a 'marriage of convenience' it can revoke a person's leave to remain in the country (subject to the appeals process).

Abuse of the land border

Whilst the Common Travel Area (CTA) has major benefits to all who live and work legally in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, it is also open to exploitation by illegal migrants. As a part of the CTA, the Irish/ UK land border, coupled with differences between Irish and UK visa requirements, means that Northern Irish domestic ports are susceptible to abuse and are a risk to UK and Irish immigration controls.

As well as working alongside counterparts in the Republic of Ireland, Home Office Immigration Enforcement and the Police Service for Northern Ireland work together under the heading of Operation Gull to intercept immigration offenders transiting Northern Ireland to reach Great Britain and in the opposite direction to reach the Republic of Ireland. Operation Gull has also intercepted illegal immigrants with serious criminal records who could potentially cause harm in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK. The fact that Operation Gull and other operations like it operate not just in Northern Ireland, but across the whole of the UK, means that it is becoming less likely that individuals can remain undetected.

Human Exploitation – Human Trafficking and Vice

Human trafficking definition – a full definition of human trafficking is given in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which the UK ratified in December 2008.¹⁹ Trafficking involves a combination of three main elements – recruitment and movement, control and coercion, and exploitation. In short, a person who has been trafficked has been illegally moved into or through a country for the purposes of exploitation. The control exercised by the trafficker may be physical or psychological.

‘On street’ prostitution in Northern Ireland remains largely confined to specific, limited geographic locations and involves a small number of individuals. In recent years the local vice trade has become more organised and has largely moved ‘off street’ into private residences, apartment blocks and hotels. There are also a number of ‘touring prostitutes’ who visit Northern Ireland for short periods, residing and operating out of hotels and apartments, however an increasing number of brothels operating in Northern Ireland have links to OCGs. In some instances this involves acting as a ‘pimp’ and/or providing accommodation. In other instances their involvement is more organised, for example, assisting females into Northern Ireland specifically to work in the sex industry, or human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Often the OCGs gaining financially from the brothels have extensive previous criminal involvement.

There may be a mix of trafficked and non-trafficked women within a brothel, however those employed ‘voluntarily’ may also be vulnerable due to their background or may have problems with addiction. Section 15 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 criminalises the payment or promise of payment for sexual services of a prostitute who has been subjected to force. This is a ‘strict liability’ offence, meaning the defendant can be prosecuted even if they did not know the victim had been exploited.

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation remains the most common type of trafficking seen in Northern Ireland, however cases of human trafficking for labour exploitation have also been identified. Northern Ireland, like the rest of the UK, is predominantly a destination country however it is also used as a transit country for traffickers bringing people into Ireland and/or GB.

Law enforcement agencies and government departments have recognised the importance of engagement with non government agencies (NGOs). An NGO Engagement Group on Human Trafficking has been established along with three subgroups, focusing on awareness, training and education. Nationally, the UK Human Trafficking Centre (soon to become part of the NCA) continues to provide assistance to human trafficking investigations, as well as working with stakeholders to prevent and reduce the harms caused by human trafficking. Operation Eagle is an overarching scoping exercise in relation to the issue of human trafficking that PSNI are contributing to along with other law enforcement agencies.

The nationality of victims in Northern Ireland tends to broadly mirror the ethnic minority communities legitimately living in Northern Ireland (Chinese and Eastern European). There have also been a number of victims from India and from Africa, predominantly from West African countries. The dominant OCGs identified as operating as trafficking networks tend to be of Chinese or Eastern European origin (examples have included Romanian, Czech and Hungarian organised trafficking networks) and, in some instances, will be working alongside local facilitators.

The methods used to coerce victims into Northern Ireland for both sexual and labour exploitation, and the ethnicity of OCGs involved, are fairly typical of that seen in other parts of the UK and in Europe as a whole. The dominant methods used to coerce victims include the following:

- Deceptive or fraudulent job advertisements in newspapers and online - these are often positions working as a nanny, in a restaurant or as a model.
- Targeting of vulnerable individuals – for example those from poorer backgrounds with low educational attainment.
- The 'lover boy' technique – this is a technique commonly used by Eastern European OCGs as well as for internal trafficking within the UK. The victim, usually a young girl, will be lured into a relationship with an older male who will spoil them with gifts and attention, as well as often providing alcohol and drugs. Gradually the victim will spend more and more time with their 'boyfriend' and become cut off from their family, before being persuaded to move to another town or country. On arrival the 'boyfriend' will disappear, leaving the victim with a 'pimp' and forced to work as a prostitute.²⁰

Public Sector Fraud – Excise and Tax

Oils Fraud

- Smuggling - oils smuggling is the practice of transporting oils from one jurisdiction for sale in another jurisdiction without payment of the required duties. Traditionally, hydrocarbon oils have been transferred from south to north through the use of false paperwork or the physical concealment of oil, for example through the use of hidden tanks. Changes in exchange and duty rates have made this activity less profitable over the past few years, although it still continues.
- Misuse and laundering of rebated fuel - rebated fuels, such as marked gas oil and kerosene, are available on both sides of the border and are subject to lower duty due to the conditions of their use. Rebated fuels are not appropriate for use as a fuel in road vehicles and persons found to be using this fuel incorrectly can have their vehicles seized. OCGs launder rebated fuel in an attempt to make it appear like legitimate, white diesel for use in road vehicles such as cars, vans and HGVs. The laundering process involves the removal of chemical markers and dyes and allows the criminals to sell the product at increased profit. The two main methods used to launder oils are filtration and acid laundering. The filtration method filters out government markers using a variety of filtration agents, such as cat litter or bleaching agents. Acid laundering involves the use of highly corrosive acid to bleach out markers. There is a continued trend towards larger and more sophisticated oils laundering plants. A laundering plant found in January 2013 included the use of an underground tank which it is believed was purpose built and included in the original design of the property. This is indicative of a growing industrialisation of the process as OCGs continue to gain experience and attempt to maximise profits.

Fuel laundering results in large quantities of waste product which must be disposed of by the launderers. This waste product will usually be dumped and causes significant environmental damage. The waste can contaminate surrounding land as well as waterways and can lead to extensive clean-up costs.

Fuel laundering continues to offer significant profits to OCGs, often operating on both sides of the border. Laundering is an example of a crime type that originated in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and was traditionally associated with republican paramilitary groups operating in border areas. As levels of expertise have grown there is evidence of locally based 'specialists' exporting both their illegal fuel and also their skills to other parts of the United Kingdom. The increasing price of road fuel has resulted in a growing market and there is a concern that the absence of custodial sentences in court may make this be perceived as a high profit, low risk area of criminality. HMRC is currently working with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland on the development of a new marker system for rebated fuels and the Lord Chief Justice is currently preparing some sentencing guidelines. In addition DOJ are consulting on legislative change to enable the Director of the Public Prosecution Service to refer unduly lenient sentences from the Crown Court to the Court of Appeal.

Tobacco Fraud

The recommended retail price (RRP) of a typical pack of 20 cigarettes in the Most Popular Price Category (MPPC) in the United Kingdom has increased by 77% in the past ten years, up from £4.51 in 2003, to £7.98 in 2013.²¹ OCGs continue to take advantage of these rising prices by smuggling tobacco products in from countries with lower duty rates and by importing counterfeit brands and 'illicit whites' from overseas. 'Illicit whites' are cigarettes produced entirely independently of the International Tobacco Manufacturers and effectively are brands manufactured specifically for smuggling. The demand for illicit whites is increasing as they are seen as a cheap alternative to inferior quality counterfeit brands. The illicit market share for cigarettes in 2010/11 was estimated to be 9% in the UK as a whole, with hand rolling tobacco (HRT) estimated to be 38%.²²

Tobacco fraud can take place at a variety of levels: from individuals bringing in tobacco products in excess of the allowed amounts for onward sale to family and friends, through to large scale importations by OCGs. Smaller quantities are predominantly brought into the country by air passengers or through postal deliveries. Large-scale shipments are favoured by OCGs as they allow bulk quantities to be imported. Sophisticated concealment methods will often be used to hide the true nature of the cargo and, in some cases, false companies and entities are established for the sole purpose of tobacco smuggling. In other cases legitimate companies have their details hijacked by smugglers in so-called 'cuckoo importations'. More recently there has been a trend towards importing raw HRT independently of counterfeit packaging. This is done in order to try and evade law enforcement agencies. Typically, illicit cigarettes are manufactured in the Far East and, to a lesser extent, Eastern Europe. They are usually shipped using containers with an average load consisting of between 6 and 10 million cigarettes. Locally based OCGs will frequently bring loads in through ports in the Republic of Ireland or the south of England before transporting the tobacco products via land into Northern Ireland. Local criminals operating in this area will have links to international OCGs and it is not unusual for these established importation networks to be used to import other goods as well, such as drugs or firearms.

21 Information from Tobacco Manufacturer's Association. <http://www.the-tma.org.uk/tma-publications-research/facts-figures/uk-cigarette-prices/>

22 HMRC (October 2012). Measuring tax gaps 2012, Tax gap estimated for 2010-11. Available from <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/tax-gaps/mtg-2012.pdf>

Emerging and Future Areas of Organised Criminality

OCGs are, in general, quick to adapt to changes in market forces and will often alter their methodologies or move into other areas of crime in order to maximise profits and reduce risk. There are many factors which can impact on organised crime locally, including political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legislative factors. Whilst it is easy to concentrate our efforts on working in the present, failing to identify emerging threats can have a detrimental impact on the overall effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. OCTF partner agencies recognise the importance of strategic thinking, and have carried out analysis to identify factors that may impact on future organised crime trends in NI, as well as identifying high risk areas for future organised crime activity.

Potential high risk areas of criminality identified have included some types of environmental crime; such as habitat destruction through illegal logging and/or peat bog excavation, heritage crime (including metal thefts from heritage sites and theft of/from archaeological materials/sites), metal theft and waste crime. Interestingly it has been noted that, whilst there are no indications of crime group involvement in wildlife crime in an organised way, there are individuals linked to a variety of wildlife crimes (including the keeping of dangerous wild animals, killing wild birds, persecution of wild animals and poaching), who also have involvement in organised criminal activities. The links between the two areas may be a reflection of the psychological composition of some of those involved in organised crime. Prior PSNI analytical work carried out in relation to organised dog fighting showed a strong link between those involved with other violent crimes including murder, kidnap, indecency and serious assault.

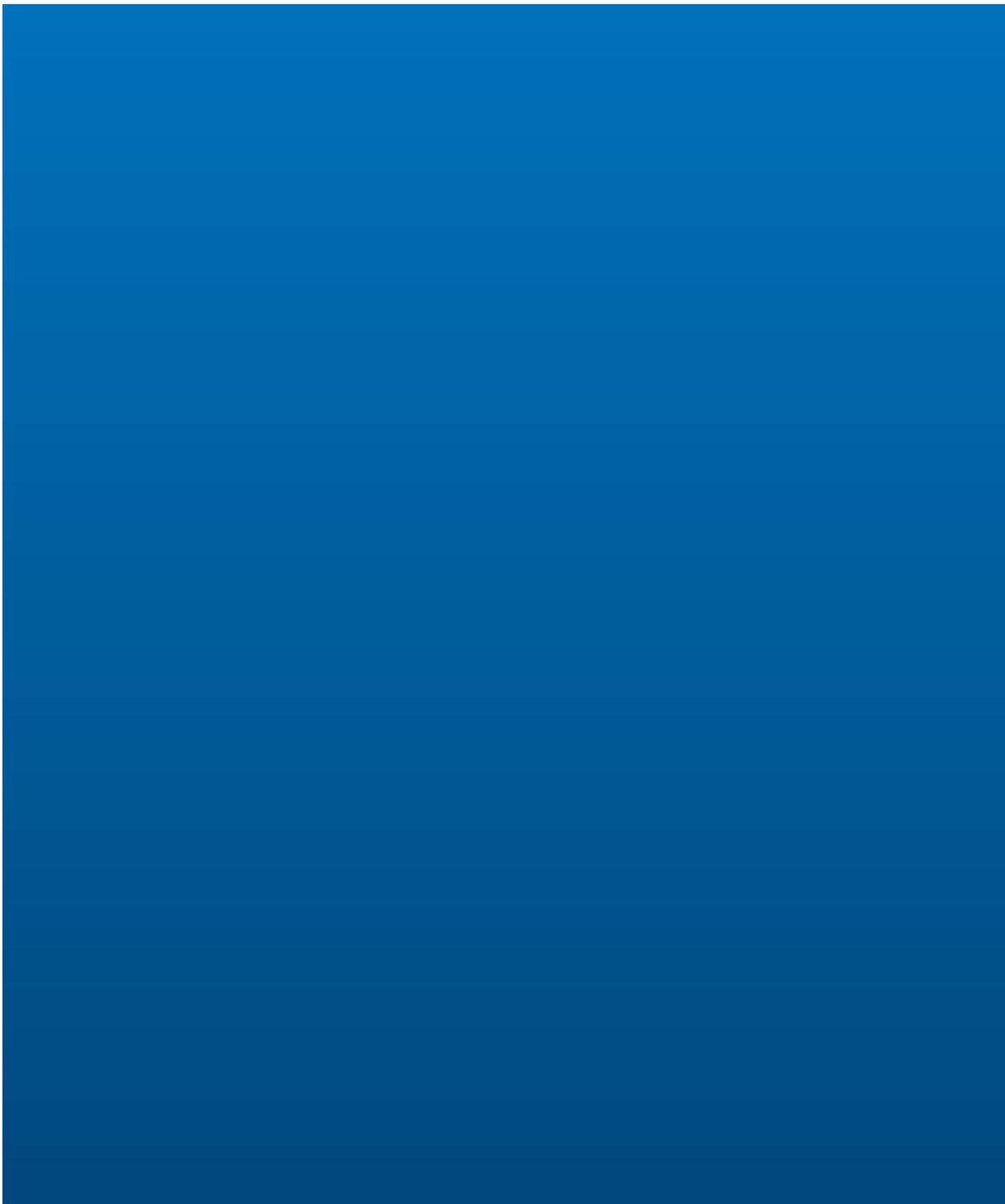
Another high risk area is identified as that of food fraud. This was discussed as a growing area of concern in the Cross Border Organised Crime Assessment 2012. *“Food fraud can involve counterfeit goods, the false labelling of manufactured foods that contain lower grade ingredients or the marketing of lower grade quality food as prime quality.”*²³ Since the publication of this report the ‘horse meat scandal’ (in which horse meat was discovered entering the legitimate supply chain labelled as beef), and the discovery of falsely labelled cod products in local supermarkets, has resulted in growing awareness and public concern. There have also been recent incidents involving the smuggling of foodstuffs with high rates of import duty into the UK and Ireland,²⁴ the discovery of an illegal abattoir at a fuel laundering plant in Newry in October 2012, and PSNI is also aware of a number of early indicators that locally based OCGs may be interested in this area. Food fraud can be something of a ‘grey area’ because there is not always involvement by the types of OCGs traditionally known by, and recognisable to, law enforcement. It may also not necessarily pose a public health concern. As food prices continue to rise this type of activity may be perceived as low risk but high profit for OCGs. This has been seen in other parts of the world²⁵ and is likely to continue to impact locally.

As well as environmental crime and food fraud, other identified high risk areas include the interest of OCGs in other new criminal marketplaces such as involvement in illicit waste disposal (this has already been seen but may continue to grow with the continued increased cost of legitimate waste disposal), alternative energy supply and trade in rare minerals.

23 PSNI and An Garda Síochána (2012). Cross Border Organised Crime Assessment 2012. Page 15.

24 A notable example would be the smuggling of garlic into Ireland as a result of high levels of customs duty aimed at preventing the importation of cheap garlic from China into the EU.

25 A notable example would be the involvement of the Italian mafia in the supply of mozzarella cheese.



Each year the OCTF members attend and organise a number of outreach events. These events give the members of OCTF an opportunity to engage with the general public, voluntary organisations and the business sector on the issues which affect them, and to raise awareness of the key organised crime threats being faced in Northern Ireland. The following are a sample of the events.

Balmoral Show

In May 2012 the OCTF attended the last Balmoral Show to take place in the Kings Hall, Belfast, distributing leaflets and displaying a selection of fake goods. It was the fourth time that the OCTF had attended the show and once again it provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with the rural community to raise awareness of organised criminal activity and encourage the general public to report suspicious activity to the police.



Launch of the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment 2012

In July 2012 the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment was launched at Riddel Hall in Belfast. Keynote speeches were given by David Ford, Chair of the Organised Crime Task Force, Chief Constable Matt Baggott, and there was a presentation by Lyle Bailie on research regarding the proposed Changing the Mindset campaign.

Cross Border Organised Crime Seminar 2012

The 10th annual Cross Border Organised Crime Seminar was hosted in October 2012 by the Department of Justice in conjunction with the Department of Justice and Equality in Dublin. Delegates attending the seminar received presentations and workshops on topics including future crime trends, the globalisation of organised crime, human trafficking fiscal fraud and counterfeit pharmaceutical drugs. Justice Minister David Ford and Assistant Chief Constable Drew Harris along with their counterparts Minister Alan Shatter and Deputy Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan from An Garda Síochána provided keynote speeches at the event.

EU Anti Trafficking day – 18 October 2012

The Minister hosted an event for Non Government Organisations (NGOs) to highlight the support available to recovered victims of trafficking and to announce the establishment of a Human Trafficking Engagement Group. The Group comprises membership from among those who responded to the Department's consultation on engagement with the NGO sector. At the same event, the Minister launched a visual media competition to raise awareness of human trafficking with 3rd level students. The competition was a joint initiative with colleagues in the Department of Justice and Equality.



Business Seminar

An OCTF Business Event took place on 21 November in Belfast. It included presentations on rogue traders; the role of money in organised crime; and Changing the Mindset. This was a very informative event which attracted significant interest within the business community.





Chapter 5

Assets Recovery



In 2011/12 David Ford, Northern Ireland Justice Minister, secured agreement from the Home Office that the full value of assets recovered in Northern Ireland through the criminal recovery process would be returned to Northern Ireland. David Ford secured legislative approval to direct 50% of these assets to community projects that reduce crime or the fear of it – the Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS). The other 50% is returned to the law enforcement agencies to further enhance their assets recovery work and to continue the fight against organised crime (ARIS).

During 2012/13 the total value of criminal recovery receipts in Northern Ireland was approximately £2.1million.

Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS)

50% of the recovered criminal assets were made available from the Assets Recovery Community Scheme to be invested in innovative projects to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and to support communities affected by crime. Bids for this year's funding were invited from across the Department of Justice, Health and Social Care Trusts and Education and Library Boards. Policing and Community Safety Partnership managers were also asked for expressions of interest. Bids were assessed by an evaluation panel comprising representatives of the OCTF, Community Safety Unit and the Business Community and recommendations made to the Justice Minister.

Projects aimed at assisting the elderly and vulnerable in the community included running information sessions to raise awareness of scams and frauds from cold callers and a home alarm system which funded the purchase of a variety of home security measures which would be installed in the homes of the elderly and vulnerable to help them feel more secure. A number of innovative schemes were also funded to help break the cycle of reoffending by working with partners and children of offenders to tackle the stigma and pressure they can come under.

In total, 120 requests were received. Funding to the value of £564,000 was approved for the 57 projects that met the criteria, audit and governance requirements.

Examples of projects funded by ARCS are:

Cage Soccer

Cage Soccer continues to be a very popular youth diversionary activity. This year the Minister had the opportunity to visit Benone beach where an inter PCSP cage sports competition was held. The cage offers flexibility for a variety of events, not just soccer. The community groups already using cage soccer have praised the flexibility, as they can use it indoors and out and on grass or hard surfaces and it requires very little space. It provides a perfect focal point to enable youth workers to engage young people and get to know them as they participate. There can also be a strong cross community focus as it provides a stimulus which young people can all relate to. It distracts them from becoming involved in all types of criminality by offering a more enjoyable alternative. This year funding was awarded to Ards, Coleraine, Limavady and Omagh PCSPs to facilitate cage soccer related bids.

Ballymena North

Justice Minister David Ford visited a youth diversionary and educational project in Ballymena.

The Ballymena North Business and Recreation Centre received £4,335 from the Asset Recovery Community Scheme to support the delivery of education sessions and physical diversionary activities.

The project aims to educate young people on the dangers of drugs and alcohol and to reduce the likelihood of them engaging in anti-social behaviour.

David Ford said: **“I take great pleasure in visiting projects that are making such a worthwhile contribution to the local community. The diversionary activities available, which run at times when anti-social behaviour has perhaps been an issue in the past, provide young people in the area with a constructive way to spend their time.**

“The educational programmes run by the Hope Centre are also so important. Drugs and alcohol can devastate lives and communities. Its impact on crime levels and the fear of crime is also very real. It is one of the main contributory factors in offending behaviour. Indeed Policing and Community Safety Partnerships have been given objectives that include tackling alcohol related violent crime in their local action plans. Educating children and young people on the dangers involved is one of the main ways of preventing any future problems.”

David Ford concluded: **“I want to commend Ballymena North, the Hope Centre and Ballymena PCSP for the work they are doing to make Ballymena a safer place for everyone.”**

Building Bridges Across the Age Divide

Led by the Cregagh Community Association and supported by the Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) the *‘Building Bridges Across the Age Divide’* project aims to develop connections between the older and younger generations in the area to help address perceptions and build relationships.

David Ford said: **“Recovering criminal assets is an important tool available to law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland. These ill gotten gains should not remain in the hands of those who have struck fear into communities and do not care about the impact of their actions. I think it fitting that such money is reinvested into communities and to people working on the ground to make Northern Ireland safer. This year nearly £600,000 has been directed to such projects, the breadth of which is very impressive. From supporting victims of domestic violence, to providing diversionary activities for young people and helping to make older people feel safer in their homes, each of the projects have the common aim of making Northern Ireland a safer place for everyone.”**

It can clearly be seen that by engaging both the young and young at heart, intergenerational work helps neighbours to share experiences, gain a greater understanding of one another and help to build respect and trust.

Priorities going forward

The Department of Justice intends to continue to focus on similar key priorities in 2013/14. It is reviewing the application process in an effort to reduce the administrative burden. Education and Library Boards and Health & Social Care Trusts are now formally designated members on PCSPs and therefore projects can be routed via PCSPs which also enables a better overview of the funding being directed into the area. It is also planned to issue the call earlier in an effort to give projects a longer period in which to spend monies awarded.

Restraint and confiscation

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) takes decisions as to whether or not to seek restraint and/or confiscation of assets in cases referred by all the investigating agencies including the Social Security Agency (SSA) and in appropriate cases PPS will process the applications to court to obtain the relevant orders.

Number of restraint orders made	7
Number of confiscation orders made	45
Total value of confiscation orders made	£1.359 million

Total Northern Ireland Assets Recovery Figures 2008/09 – 2012/13

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total number of cash seizures	174	182	148	205	175
Total value of cash seizures (£)	1,867,355	1,802,429	1,368,170	2,179,344	2,211,060
Total value of forfeiture orders (£)	818,337	874,600	1,020,964	559,116	728,976
Total value of court orders (£)	16,125,241	18,476,011	6,300,334	5,074,086	3,098,395
Total assets recovered (£)	7,315,627	4,431,218	5,296,301	4,668,689	2,714,416

Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS)

The value returned to each law enforcement agency under the Assets Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) is set out below:

Agency	ARIS Payments 2012/13
Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs	£ 11,420
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service	£108,010
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	£31,500
Social Security Agency	£91,672
Police Service of Northern Ireland	£110,671
Public Prosecution Service	£245,263
Serious Fraud Office	£481,564
Total	£ 1,080,100

In addition to funding Financial Intelligence Officers, Financial Investigators, Administrative Support and refresher training, ARIS money was also used for:

- The Environmental Crime Unit's refresher investigative and interview training for its investigators and financial support for conferences on organised and archaeological crime and on Northern Ireland's built heritage. It has also purchased a number of pieces of specialist equipment, including computers specifically designed for ECU, and a range of field machinery that will enable it to carry out detailed and thorough investigations;
- Public Prosecution Service projects relating specifically to improving staff knowledge and skills, dealing with proceeds of crime issues and improving PPS IT infrastructure.
- NI Social Security Agency funding for a Financial Intelligence Officer and two Administrative Officers to undertake ongoing employer data cleansing exercises.
- HMRC ARIS funds are diverted to a central fund from which various projects are authorised.
- PSNI ARIS funds have been used for a variety of projects across all police districts:

District A

Crime Prevention Material. Including the distribution of items such as panic alarms, 24-hour timers and UV marking pens at information stands and at talks to the community within A District.

£5,000

Building Relationships with Women. The project is about building an understanding and relationship between local women from areas where trust and working with police has been historically difficult.

£5,376

BYTES Project. A youth engagement programme aimed at engaging with young people who suffer from low self-esteem or have become involved in anti-social behaviour or criminality.

£14,981

Barnardo's Safe Choices. Focusing on the interlinked issues of child sexual exploitation and children going missing with the aim to eradicate child exploitation and the habitual episodes of children and young people going missing.

£12,223

District C

Redburn Youth Group. A project to address low level youth criminality and anti-social behaviour and provide opportunities for young people to develop their life skills and personal abilities through training/workshops. It is hoped that whilst targeting young people who are at risk of offending, this will lead to an improvement in the quality of life for not only the youth but for the whole community in Holywood.

£5,460

District D

BEAT Programme. The B.E.A.T programme (Be Educated, Be Active, Be Together) is an educational, developmental and fun programme designed to engage young people participating in or at risk of participating in anti-social behaviour at peak anti-social behaviour times i.e. 7pm – 10pm and in areas identified as priority areas.

£6,000

Matrix Project. The Matrix Project in Rathcoole, Newtownabbey offers a drop in centre on a Friday evening from 8pm-11pm for young people aged 15-19 years old. They specialise in drug and alcohol misuse training/services. The drop in seeks to dissuade young people from engaging in anti social activities.

£900

Lisburn SAFE. The scheme will seek to address levels of anti-social behaviour, crime, drugs misuse, environmental damage and deterioration in public order within designated hot-spots areas. The aim is to reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of life for residents. It should also serve to increase feelings of safety and have wider benefits for the local economy, community relations and the health of the targeted areas.

£20,000

SelectaDNA. The purchase of SelectaDNA forensic property marking kits and signage to be provided by the PSNI to residents living within an identified burglary hotspot in D District (Lisburn command) policing area.

£1,600

TUNE FM. An 8 day community radio project in the Whitehead area. Involving over 100 young people participating in planning, training for and presenting radio shows. To coincide with the Whitehead Festival. The object was to reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in the town.

£2,030

District E

Youth Halloween Challenge. A project involving a five day programme of adventure and team building activities for 20 juveniles delivered by a local business on three Saturday nights and culminating in a survival challenge and overnight camp on Halloween night which is specifically designed to appeal to the target, disengaged group. Delivered during key dates as a means to reduce the propensity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

£3,825

SelectaDNA. The purchase of SelectaDNA forensic property marking kits and signage to be provided by the PSNI to residents living within identified burglary hotspots in E District policing area.

£1,113

District F

Drugs Don't Work. Building on a previous successful ARIS funded project 'The Drugs Don't Work'. The drama highlights the effects and implications of substance misuse making the audience (13-15 year olds) aware that they may become more vulnerable to criminal activities and other practices which put them in danger.

£9,000

District G

Ballykelly Choices. Aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour and crime. During the running of CHOICES the Limavady area saw a reduction in anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage continue to have a negative impact on the community and are areas of concern identified in the local policing plan.

£2,050

Bicycle Security. The initiative includes a presentation on bike security (security measures for bicycles and property marking), a presentation on road safety and a practical bicycle marking demonstration. It is also supplemented with a free bicycle security pack, which provides practical advice and materials as well as serving as an incentive for the pupils.

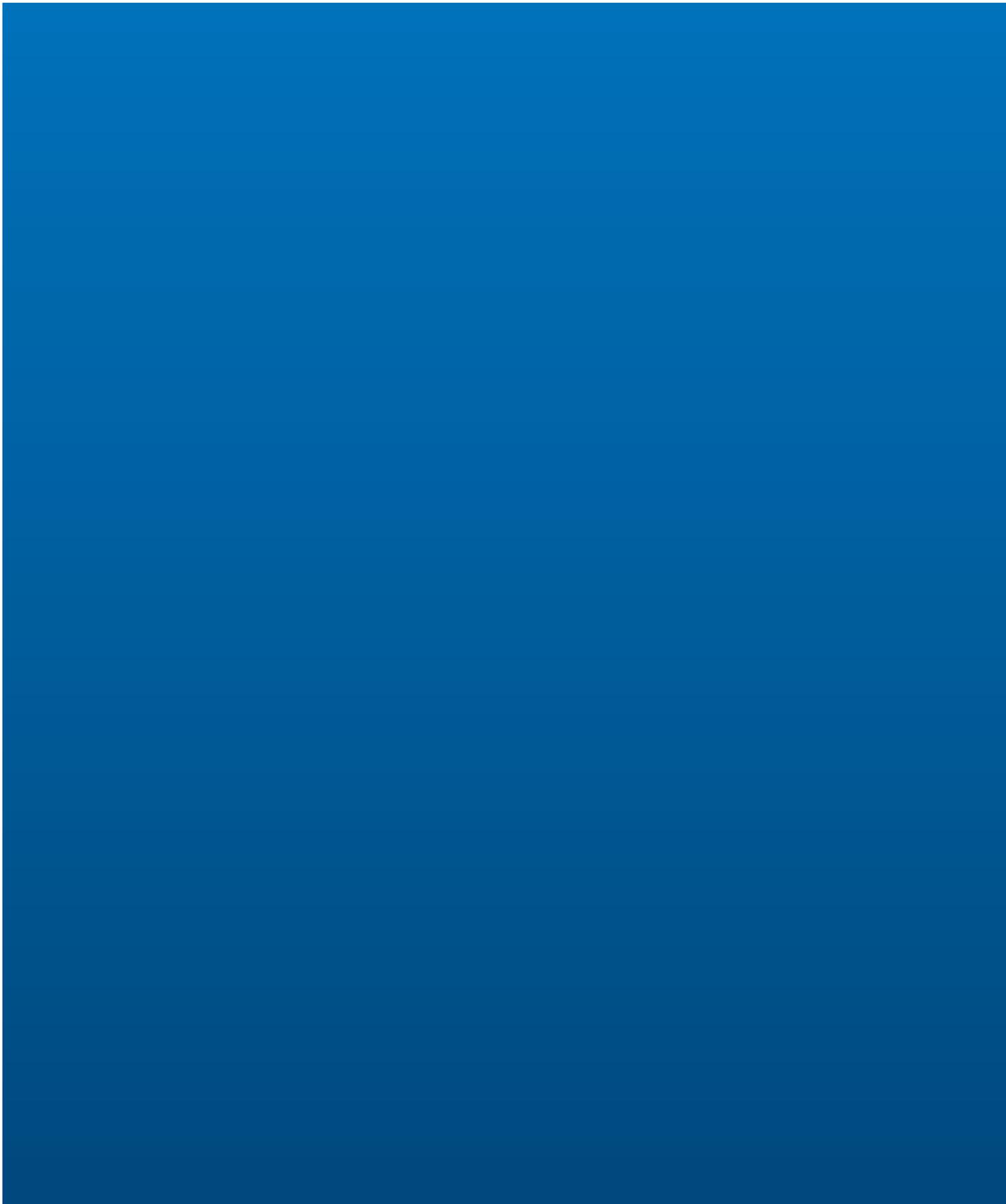
£3,290

Working with Youth Groups (Diversity). To bring together four groups, from different cultural and religious backgrounds, in order to investigate and understand the diversity in our society and, in so doing, promote tolerance and acceptance of each other's traditions.

£19,220

Civil Recovery

Civil recovery receipts continue to be sent to the Home Office, who return 50% to law enforcement agencies under ARIS arrangements. The Minister will be engaging with the Home Office to seek to recover additional funds from these receipts.





Chapter 6

Looking Ahead



National Crime Agency

In April 2013 the Crime and Courts Act 2013 established the National Crime Agency (NCA) which will be operational from October 2013. It will replace the Serious Organised Crime Agency, incorporate the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, and take on the functions of the National Policing Improvement Agency. It will operate as a single agency built around four distinct commands to tackle crimes, which include child exploitation, drug and people smuggling, illegal immigration, fraud and cyber crime. The four commands are Organised Crime; Border Policing; Economic Crime and Child Exploitation and Online Protection. The agency will also house the National Cyber Crime Unit.

The NCA was designed to be a UK-wide body but the Justice Minister sought to ensure that it would respect the devolution of policing and justice powers within Northern Ireland. The Department of Justice, therefore, engaged with the Home Office to shape the NCA in terms of its operation in Northern Ireland. Several significant concessions were secured by the Minister of Justice to ensure that the NCA would be an effective organisation for Northern Ireland, and that Northern Ireland issues, such as the primacy of the PSNI and the role of the Northern Ireland Policing Board would not be compromised. In order for the NCA to extend to Northern Ireland and Scotland the consent of the respective governments was required for the devolved functions. This was passed in Scotland but was not achieved for Northern Ireland. As a result, as things stand, the NCA will not be able to carry out operations against organised criminals or fully support the PSNI in an operational way in Northern Ireland, to the same extent that SOCA can currently. Another concern is that it will not be able to undertake civil recovery of the assets of organised crime groups operating here, save, for example, in taxation cases.

At the time of this Annual Report the Minister of Justice continues to engage with the political parties with a view to reaching agreement to the NCA having a wider role here, subject to appropriate safeguards around issues such as accountability. The Minister's view is that subject to appropriate structures the NCA needs to be empowered to work in full partnership with the police and others so that they have direct access to its range of expertise in specialist areas and international reach in order to protect the people of Northern Ireland.

Fuel marker project

The UK and Irish Revenue Authorities are undertaking a joint process to identify a possible new fuel marker. Improving our ability to detect fraud will ensure that we continue to tackle criminals and maximise the scope to recover the proceeds of crime. If a harder-to-laundry marker is identified, it should be resistant to all known methods of removing it from rebated fuel ("laundering") or ensure it is prohibitively expensive to do. A new marker would be a useful tool for reducing fuel fraud, but would not be enough in itself to completely address the problem, so HMRC will continue to fight fuel fraud on a range of fronts.

Human Trafficking: Legislative Changes

New human trafficking offences, in compliance with the requirements of the EU Directive on Human Trafficking, and provision to make human trafficking cases triable on indictment were included in the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 which received Royal Assent on 25 April 2013. Further legislation is planned for 2013/14 including provision to put support for potential victims of trafficking during the recovery and reflection period of the National Referral Mechanism onto a statutory footing.

Human Trafficking: Initiatives and Events

The Department of Justice, working with its partners across the statutory and non-statutory sectors has produced its first annual Human Trafficking Action Plan for Northern Ireland. The plan, which provides focus for actions during 2013/14, identifies objectives and actions against a range of key priorities, including *prevention, training, support and protection of victims, investigations and prosecutions, and understanding trends in human trafficking.*

A multi-lingual leaflet for victims of human trafficking will be published by the Department of Justice in 2013/14. It will include information on the support that is available in Northern Ireland and signposting to other organisations who can help.

Changing the Mindset

Last year we described the work on the OCTF “Changing the Mindset” project. Its focus is to engage effectively with the public in an effort to bring about a reduction in the demand for goods and services provided by organised crime groups. This work is based on research showing that at present the general public often do not realise, for instance, that buying counterfeit goods may be supporting the more sinister areas of organised crime such as drugs or human exploitation, or that illegal fuel supports other organised criminal activity as well as undermining legitimate trade and leading to large scale dumping of toxic waste.

The OCTF has been working to develop a better understanding of what motivates people’s behaviour, and what would encourage them to change. A strategy is being developed targeting a number of priority groups and this will be constantly reviewed.

Unduly lenient sentences – evasion of duty on fuel or tobacco

Concern has been expressed about sentencing in Northern Ireland for excise evasion offences, including by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee during its inquiry into fuel fraud. As a result, the Department of Justice has recently issued a consultation requesting views on the introduction of legislation to enable sentences in this area in relation to fuel and tobacco to be referred to the Court of Appeal if the Director of Public Prosecutions regards them as unduly lenient. The consultation will run until 30 August 2013





**ORGANISED
CRIME**
TASK FORCE

Appendix 1

OCTF Partner Organisations



OCTF Partner Organisations

- Allied Irish Bank
- An Garda Síochána
- Anti-Counterfeiting Group
- Association for UK Interactive Entertainment
- Bank of Ireland
- Brinks
- British Phonographic Industry
- British Security Industry Association
- BSkyB
- Confederation of British Industry
- Criminal Assets Bureau
- Crown Solicitor's Office
- Danske Bank
- Department of Employment and Learning
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- Department of the Environment (including the NI Environment Agency)
- Department of Finance and Personnel
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- Department of Justice
- DIAGEO
- UK Interactive Entertainment Association
- Federation Against Copyright Theft
- Federation of Small Businesses
- First Trust Bank
- Forensic Science Agency NI
- Gangmasters Licensing Authority
- Group 4 Security
- Health and Safety Executive
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Home Office Immigration Enforcement
- Intellectual Property Office
- Japan Tobacco International
- NI Courts and Tribunal Services
- NI Housing Executive
- NI Policing Board
- NI Chamber of Commerce
- NI Federation of Small Businesses
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Public Prosecution Service NI
- Revenue Commissioners
- RMS Cash Management
- Royal Mail
- Safer Cash
- Serious Organised Crime Agency
- Social Security Agency (NI)
- UK Human Trafficking Centre
- Ulster Bank
- Virgin Media

DON'T GET LOST IN TRAFFICKING



CONTROLLED AREA



NO FOOD



CHILDREN ABDUCTED



SLAVES AT WORK & HOME



ABUSE AND VIOLENCE



INHUMANE CONDITIONS



NO ESCAPE

**IT'S TIME TO
RECOGNISE THE SIGNS!**

Forced labour could be happening in Northern Ireland.
Help Crimestoppers in the fight against human trafficking
by contacting the charity anonymously today.



Watch our video and find out how to read the signs.
readthesigns.co.uk

CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime