



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

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OCTF Annual Action Plan

April 2025 to March 2026



**ORGANISED
CRIME**
TASK FORCE

2025-26 OCTF Organised Crime Action Plan

Introduction

The current Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy¹ was developed for the period 2021-24. In April 2024 an Addendum Action Plan² covering 2024-25 was developed in consultation with relevant Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) Partners. This Action Plan carried forward actions from the Strategy that remained ongoing or incomplete as of 2024. Having taken stock of the current structures in place, and the need to ensure enhanced collaborative working in order to meet our commitments around Safer Communities under the Programme for Government, we have agreed with partners that a further single year Action Plan for 2025-26 should focus on the actions required to develop an enhanced collaborative and strategic approach to tackling the harms caused by Organised Crime.

2. The Department of Justice over the past six months has been giving consideration to how best we can ensure a cohesive approach to issues of threat, risk and harm right across the 'Safer Communities' spectrum. We are mindful that just as we need to refresh the Organised Crime strategic approach, we are also seeking to develop a strategic approach to Community Safety, whilst also being aware that we need to mainstream the best practice elements of the approach to tackling paramilitarism that read across to the OC threat, as the programmatic element of this work winds down in 2027. On this basis, it makes sense to bring all of this together under one strategic framework which we would seek to see in place in 2026/27.

Background

3. From an OCTF perspective, we have been considering how our new organised crime strategic direction can align with this wider framework, whilst recognising that the underpinning strategic approach already in place (2021-24) provides an ongoing framework for day to day collaboration and engagement. Where we want to focus our efforts and develop further is in ensuring that the OCTF governance arrangements

¹ [Organised Crime Strategy | Northern Ireland 2021-2024](#)

² [OCTF Addendum Work Plan 2024/25 | Organised Crime Task Force](#)

remain fit for purpose; the meetings are best structured to support collaborative effort to address serious organised crime threats; and that we have a system in place to measure benefits and be clear what is working, and what is not. Any approach needs to also be flexible to adapt to emerging risks and threats. A further key concern is the potential for duplication of efforts and the emergence of a siloed approach, which could hinder the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. This is particularly relevant given the current burden on resources felt across many operational partners.

4. Since its establishment, the OCTF has played a vital role in combating organised crime. However, with the evolving nature of threats such as cybercrime, human trafficking, and paramilitary-related criminality, it is essential to ensure that OCTF remains agile and responsive to these issues that require collaborative working. This consideration of existing structures will look at whether overarching governance arrangements remain best suited to tackle evolving threats and challenges, and highlight areas where enhanced collaboration may streamline processes for all partners involved. This will require substantial work, and therefore we have proposed a further Action Plan to cover April 2025 - March 2026. By implementing a shorter-term plan, we can ensure that immediate priorities are addressed and good operational partnerships continue in tackling the threat, while laying the groundwork for inclusion in a more comprehensive, long-term framework.

5. Work has already commenced to inform the potential new framework. In order to facilitate our longer-term approach, we have been horizon scanning: research has been compiled on the approaches in neighbouring jurisdictions and European counterparts. Current OCTF Strategy and Sub Group partners have been contacted and begun to consider the future direction of travel from each of their respective organisational perspectives. In addition, there has been initial contact with colleagues in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. We plan further extensive engagement with all jurisdictions to gain a greater understanding of their current arrangements and any planned changes over the coming weeks.

2025-26 Action Plan:

6. Our Action Plan for 2025-26 is not simply a continuation of existing efforts; but an opportunity to reassess, evaluate and elevate our ambitions. We believe there is

scope to develop a more ambitious, forward-thinking approach that strengthens collaboration, modernises enforcement mechanisms, and better addresses emerging organised crime threats. The focus of the action plan for 25/26 therefore moves away from reporting against our 'Business as Usual' (BAU) and instead focus on those actions that will get us to where we need to be for April 2026. The ongoing operational partnership working to tackle the threats posed by organised crime will continue to be captured and highlighted in our annual reporting.

7. The one-year plan provides flexibility which will allow us to consider how we can incorporate new policy directions locally, ensuring continued collaboration amongst partners and stakeholders. In developing the new arrangements we want to ensure that partners and stakeholders are actively involved so as to foster a sense of ownership.

8. Annex A sets out the work we intend to carry out over the coming year.

2025-26 OCTF Annual Action Plan

Action No	OCTF Strategic Action	Lead	Deliverables	Target Date
1.	Contribute to the development of a new five-year strategic framework for 'Safer Communities' which includes an approach to tackling organised crime which is sufficiently agile to respond to emerging threats.	DoJ, LE Partners, OCTF partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review existing governance arrangements and scope options for potential models.• Development of a "theory of change" in relation to a less siloed approach.• Benchmarking of approaches in other jurisdictions.• Engagement with partners and stakeholders to inform proposals.• Provide recommendations on a new approach.	March 2026

2.	Carry out scoping work to ensure enhanced alignment and a more joined up approach with wider local and national strategies with a view to reducing duplication.	DoJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a mapping exercise to identify linkages with existing Strategies. • Identify current commitments to delivery in partners' Action Plans. 	March 2026
3.	Improve our understanding of vulnerability and harm caused by organised crime.	DoJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake desktop research of existing best practice, regionally, nationally and internationally. • Develop options for ongoing measurement of this issue in order to inform collective action 	November 2025
4.	Development of a shared measurements framework to ensure that we can effectively measure progress.	DoJ, LE Partners, OCTF Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing analytic support function and consider future needs. • Identify suitable metrics which can be utilised to monitoring progress. 	March 2026
5.	Scope requirements for a shared OCTF organised crime communications plan.	DoJ, OCTF Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with OCTF Sub Groups Chairs to develop a strategic communications 	March 2026

			<p>approach to deliver enhanced comms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with DoJ colleagues to learn from their experience of public awareness campaigns. • Consider initial options for a potential communications campaign with Government Advertising Unit (subject to funding). 	
6.	Develop and plan for implementation of new legislative provisions to tackle organised crime.	DoJ, LE Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of new organised crime measures in the UKG Crime and Policing Bill, Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill and the NI Justice Bill. 	March 2026
7.	OCTF Strategy Group / Sub Group members to agree strategic priorities for 2025/26	DoJ, Sub Group Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued co-ordination and collaboration through OCFT Strategy and Sub Group meetings to deliver joint operations. • Continued horizon scanning to identify emerging threats. 	March 2026

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DoJ to engage with Sub Group Chairs to identify strategic priorities for 2025/26 and develop any necessary transitional arrangements for the new approach.• Establishment of a Sub Group Chair forum	
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