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## DA Scotland Report

NCA Summary April – August 2023

Statistics and visuals in this report reflect all activity undertaken by the NCA and is assessed to have had an impact in Scotland. In line with NCA Strategy (Upstream, Overseas and Online), not all activity included has been undertaken within Scotland, some will have been assessed as having a broader UK impact, that includes Scotland.

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About the NCA

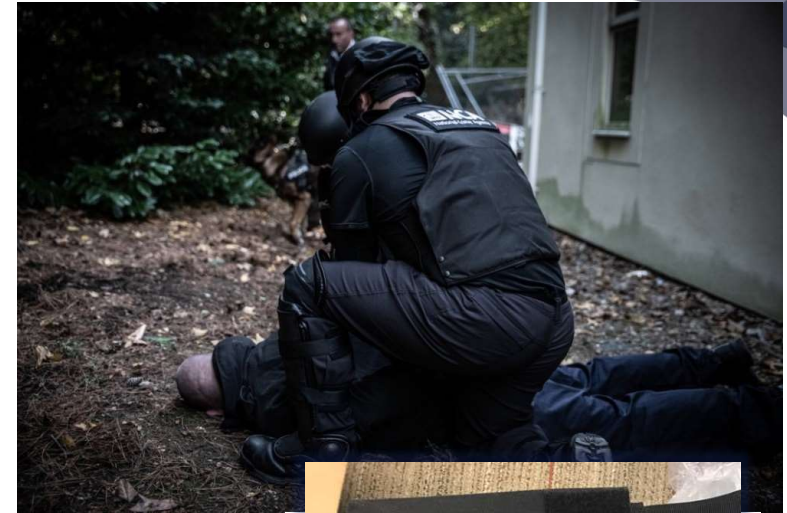
- The NCA was **established in October 2013** as a Non-Ministerial Department (NMD) under the Crime and Courts Act 2013.
- Around **5,900 NCA officers work** in overt and covert sites **across the UK**, with NCA officers in Scotland based alongside Police Scotland in the **Scottish Crime Campus** at Gartcosh.
- Additionally we **145 International Liaison Officers (ILOs) posted in 48 locations overseas** covering over 100 countries.
- Our budget for **2022/23 was £795.5m** from a number of funding streams

NCA in Scotland

- As a national agency our ambition for Scotland is to take action nationally and internationally to **protect communities in Scotland** from serious organised crime (SOC) and, working in partnership with Police Scotland and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, take action in Scotland against SOC to **Divert, Deter, Detect and Disrupt**.
- NCA investigations in Scotland are **approved and authorised by the Lord Advocate** under Schedule 1 of the CCA 2013.

Joint Working

- Performance **ambitions for Scotland are set in consultation** with Police Scotland.
- We work alongside Police Scotland to **identify High Value Targets and tactical vulnerabilities**.
- Intelligence and investigative opportunities are **jointly developed through collaborative arrangements under Organised Crime Partnership (OCP) Scotland**. Use of **niche NCA capabilities** are considered as part of this response.
- This work ensures that operations undertaken by the OCP are in **line with the new operational strategy** and further **strengthen our relationship with Police Scotland**.



## NCA Strategy 2023-2028

### 1. Degrading the most harmful organised crime groups by:

- going **upstream** to disrupt those at the top of the criminal chain, those who enable their activities, and those who launder the money they make
- taking action **overseas**, tackling the threat at source and en route to the UK
- increasingly focusing on **online** crime to combat a critical enabler of the organised crime business model, reflecting the fact that more crime takes place online or is enabled by technology

### 2. Leading the UK's operational response by:

- improving how the threat is understood and used to prioritise across the system
- strengthening multi-agency 4P (Pursue, Prevent Protect and Prepare) plans to reduce the harm from each threat
- improving performance measurement across the system
- bolstering the national services and capabilities provided by the Agency to system partners
- strengthening the system response to new and emerging threats

### 3. Transforming the Agency's capabilities by:

- unlocking the value of data to drive operational effect
- delivering a new approach to capability development
- improving the Agency's situational awareness
- strengthening the foundational capabilities as they relate to data technology and estates

### 4. Growing a highly skilled workforce by:

- better understanding the skills the Agency needs to transform workforce planning
- creating career pathways that improve officer experience
- becoming a more attractive employer through reformed pay and benefits
- improving the Agency's learning offer to meet future challenges
- establishing a more diverse workforce and inclusive culture
- embedding smarter working into the Agency's ethos

## NCA Strategy – Impact for Scotland

### Protecting the Public

Our approach as a National Agency to protecting the public in Scotland from Serious Organised Crime (SOC) is to twofold:

1. To take action outside of Scotland, upstream (in England and elsewhere), overseas (in Europe and wider), and online to best protect the public from SOC before it impacts and harms Scottish Communities utilising niche organisational capabilities. These capabilities such as the NCA International Liaison Officer network, its corporate relationship with Social Media companies and industry, or enhanced cyber capabilities, are system capabilities established to support wider UK law enforcement partners.
2. To work in partnership with the Police Service of Scotland and Procurator Fiscal office to take action in Scotland to protect Scottish communities from SOC, pulling through niche NCA capabilities to support frontline use in Scotland.

### NCA Scotland

The NCA presence in Scotland consists of officers who are involved in Investigations, Intelligence and Intelligence analysis relating to serious organised crime. The current NCA operating model within Scotland is predicated on the general premise the NCA will support PSoS, where requested, with its niche capabilities.

More specifically the NCA is collaboration with PSoS within the Organised Crime Partnership (Scotland) (OCP). The OCP is comprised of 15 NCA officers and 15 PSoS officers who are collocated and jointly managed.

It is founded on the doctrine that its collaborative activities are tasked, co-ordinated and focused to complement mutually agreed objectives relating to the investigation and disruption of SOC, enabled through the exploitation of high quality confidential intelligence. NCA investigations in Scotland are agreed by Lord Advocate under Schedule 1 of the Crime & Courts Act 2013.

### Working Together

We're working closely with PSoS to keep in lock step with the strategic changes they are making regarding prioritisation of resources against the SOC threat, providing support from NCA capabilities wherever possible. NCA are developing a High Value Target approach to identifying the most pernicious subjects of interest that harm Scottish communities. This is still at an early stage but is viewed as a natural evolution from the current doctrinal partnership approach taken by the OCP and will be a built on that experience and capability.

## NCA impact in Scotland – Disruptions

### Impact Measurement

As part of the Agency strategy for 2023/24 we will continue to operate at the high end of high harm of serious and organised crime.

The success of this strategy is principally measured using Pursue lead disruptions, assessed as having a Major or Moderate impact, on P1/ P2 investigations (a prioritisation framework of four descending levels (1-4) which represents a hierarchy for accessing capabilities and resources). These are referred in the following data slide (slide 5) as the **operational tilt** and reflects the Agency's strategy to focus on activity that will degrade the most harmful organised crime groups.

Another crucial component of the NCA strategy is how we support delivery in the devolved administrations and ensure that we work collaboratively, supporting PSoS to tackle the most significant threats facing the public. One way in which this will be measured is through our delivery of support disruptions.

#### Disruptions Definition

A disruption has been achieved when an agency takes **action** in response to a threat which has an **impact**. It is a measure of impact, and not a measure of activity or effort; it should only be recorded when the agency can clearly articulate the threat, the action taken and the resulting impact.

Disruptions may impact upon an Organised Crime Group (OCG) or individual, resulting in them being unable to operate at their usual level of criminality. A disruption may also relate to a specific national threat, resulting in a reduced threat level. A **lead disruption** is recorded by the agency that is tasked with responding to the OCG. A **support disruption** is recorded by an agency that has provided some form of resource or capability to assist another agency.

#### Impact Assessment

**Major** – A significant and/or long term disruptive impact on the capability of the OCG, individual or vulnerability.

**Moderate** – A noticeable and/or medium term disruptive impact on the capability of the OCG, individual or vulnerability.

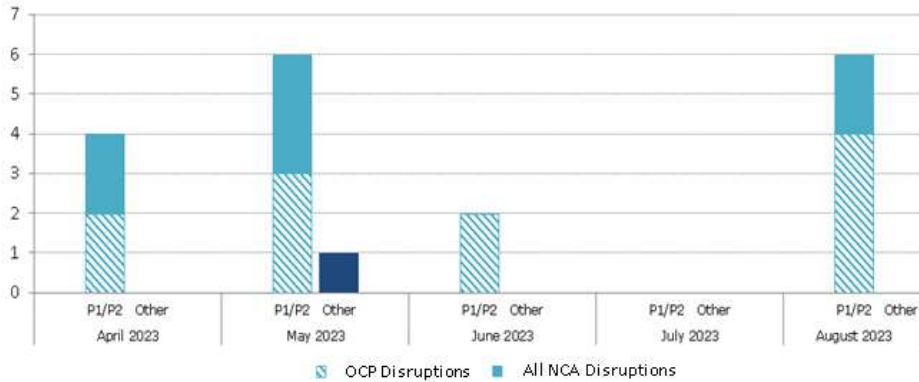
**Minor** – A minimal and/or short term disruptive impact on the capability of the OCG, individual or vulnerability.

## NCA impact in Scotland - Data

Due to reporting constraints, the data does not cover the full first six months 2023, only April to the end of August 2023.

### Tilt Disruptions

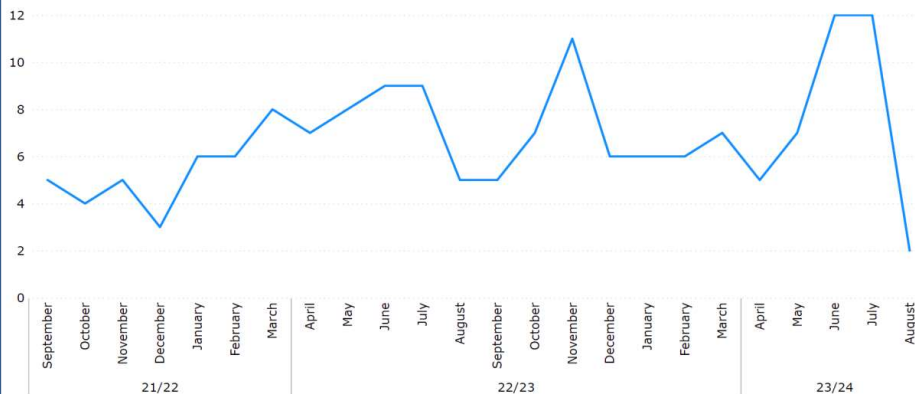
NCA Operational Tilt Disruptions in Scotland April – August 2023



- The bar chart identifies the number of overall operational tilt disruptions (by month) that were delivered by the NCA which had an effect in Scotland. This includes those delivered by OCP Scotland.
- The NCA has delivered a total of **18** tilt disruptions (see slide 4 for the definition) that led to a major or moderate impact in Scotland between April to August 2023.
- Examples of the disruptions delivered by the OCP can be found on slide 6.

### Support Disruptions

NCA Support Disruptions in Scotland year on year comparison



- In the past 12 months the NCA has continued to collaborate successfully with PSoS as per the NCA strategy with the delivery of 84 support disruptions.
- 38 support disruptions have been delivered between April to August 2023 and in July, for the first time, the NCA undertook more support disruptions than lead disruptions in Scotland.
- Examples of these disruptions and further support provided by the NCA can be found on slide 7.

## NCA working with OCP: Impact & Sentences of note examples

OCP Scotland -International investigation into Class A drug supply, working in partnership with international partners against overseas HVT and their international supply chains into UK and specifically Scotland. Seizures of Class A drugs have been made with work ongoing to disrupt and dismantle this Scotland and Overseas based OCG in line with the UK National Strategic Assessment.  
Operation is on-going.

Numerous OCP Scotland investigations led to the recovery of three Glock self loading pistols and over 100 rounds of ammunition (including 50 hollow point) have led to numerous arrests with sentences totalling 18 years 9 months across a number of OCG's. These were all linked to poly-criminality. This supports the NSA analysis that SOC subjects operating at the higher levels of SOC have the ambition to obtain semi-automatic pistols that are easily concealable in order to intimidate and carry out their criminal business.

In June 2023, three organised crime group members were sentenced to 10 years 8 months for their part in international firearms supply. The investigation thwarted their attempt to import a firearm (a Glock self-loading pistol) which was destined for criminal use in the Greater Glasgow area.

An OCP Scotland investigation into a high value target importing drugs & firearms via overseas supply routes into the UK and onward into Scottish communities. To date significant quantities of Class A & B drugs and a firearm have been seized and numerous arrests made. The operation is ongoing.

OCP Scotland – Sentencing of an individual (4 years 2 months) responsible for importing Class A drugs utilising the postal fast parcel system for onward supply into Scottish communities.

OCP Scotland investigation into Western Balkan poly-criminality (Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking/Drugs) relating to multiple drug production locations across Greater Glasgow and West Lothian. This has led to 7 arrests the dismantling of a number of cannabis grows with 2 persons safeguarded and placed within the NRM.

OCP Scotland are conducting a cash based money laundering investigation focused on the exploitation of the UK Banking Industry. Working with NECC Project ADMIRALTY, OCP Scotland were able to identify and work with banking sector partners to reduce the threat posed nationally to the UK economy, and its exploitation by money laundering OCG's.  
To date over 29 arrests have been made and circa £1.3 million in cash seized. Additionally, in 2023 a Prevent/Divert social media campaign was launched working with National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) and Scottish educational institutions to raise awareness in those being potentially exploited by OCG's to launder money.

As a result of an on-going drugs investigation, OCP Scotland worked with European partners to successfully arrest an individual suspected of the illegal importation and supply of cocaine into Scotland. This suspect is now currently awaiting extradition to Scotland

In August 23, an organised crime group member was sentenced to 3 years 9 months for their involvement in the movement of 55 Kgs of Class A (Cocaine) which was intercepted in England but destined for Scotland.

## NCA wider support to Police Scotland

### Drugs

PSoS has been proactively engaging in respect to the threat posed by Benzodiazepine use in Scotland, which were assessed as being implicated in 57% cases of drug misuse deaths. The NCA has been tasked to lead the system response (Project INGIVING) and reports to the NCA chaired National Drugs Board. At the request of the NCA, PSOs have agreed to chair the Benzodiazepines Working Group which brings together law enforcement partners, healthcare professionals and stakeholders to drive down deaths caused by this drug through disruption, awareness and rehabilitation.

The NCA is also leading a whole system operational response (Project HOUSEBUILDER) to increased drug related deaths and overdoses impacting on several regions of the UK as a result of a new group of high strength synthetic opioids known collectively as Nitazenes. The overall strategy is to vigorously pursue all lines of enquiry to prevent Nitazene supply becoming endemic.

The response includes setting up systems to enable the early identification of incidences of high overdose rates requiring emergency medical attention, a senior investigating officers forum to establish best practice and identify intelligence to enable upstream enquiries to identify the source of adulteration as well as a forensic strategy with similar aims.

Although we have not been made aware of any Scottish deaths resulting from Nitazenes, Scotland's drugs early warning mechanisms (which are more advanced than those in England and Wales) have identified increased levels of naloxone administration and emergency medical care requirements resulting from heroin and benzodiazepine consumption since mid-July.

### CSA

NCA has a system leadership role as defined by the Crime and Courts Act 2013, to secure an efficient and effective response to serious and organised crime threat, including online child sexual abuse. The NCA enacts that duty through strategic governance arrangements, of which PSoS are key and active members.

PSoS continues to be fully engaged in the strategic governance arrangements to tackle child sexual abuse (CSA), including regular submission of management information to the Online CSA Pursue Board. Police Scotland also participate in the NCA chaired working group to develop an agreed prioritisation mechanism. The NCA is engaged in the Police Scotland Multi-Agency Preventing Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Group.

Data from the Q1 2023/24 Pursue Board noted that following 551 referrals from the NCA CSA Referrals Bureau, 37 arrests had been made by PSoS with 122 children being safeguarded and 40 victims identified from indecent images of children and notified to the NCA Victim Identification team.

The NCA & PSoS are also collaborating in the Tackling Online Sexual Abuse (TOSCA) Gold Group with the NCA identifying and disseminating cases to PSoS as well as sharing good practice.

The HMICFRS online CSA inspection report (England & Wales) was published on 5 April. Its core aim is to improve the consistency of the law enforcement response to online CSA by setting minimum standards of investigation. While its scope is limited to police forces in England and Wales, the NCA continues to work closely with law enforcement partners such as PSoS to ensure that any useful learning is shared.



## NCA wider support to Police Scotland

### Firearms

The NCA response to the Firearms threat in Scotland continues with coordinated national projects, driving the law enforcement response to the current threats and bridging the intelligence gaps and intelligence requirements highlighted in PSoS monthly and quarterly assessed reporting. This includes:

Project VIZARDLIKE that tackles illegal importation of prohibited front-venting blank-firing handguns into the UK from overseas companies via online platforms. It uses innovative partnerships with the private sector and overseas engagement through the International Liaison Officer Network to identify UK purchasers.

Project SERGEANCY is the nationally coordinated 4P response to criminally converted UK-legal top-venting blank-firing handguns. The NCA has engaged with the private sector to map the lawful supply chain of these handguns. Work is also taking place with forensic experts to assess specific vulnerabilities in these weapons to both inform the Home Office, for consideration of additional legislative or regulatory control, and to enable direct upstream engagement with the manufacturers to consider engineering out these vulnerabilities. In addition, a pilot of a new reporting regime for Firearms dealers is scheduled to go live in September. This will allow dealers to notify the NCA directly of any suspicions or concerns over firearms transactions.

Project INTERKNOW which is the NCA lead response to the national threat of 3D printed Firearms. The threat from 3D printed firearms is continuing to evolve, with new models and adaptations of existing models being seen online and 3D printers becoming more affordable, faster and of a higher quality. The NCA are jointly progressing a review of previously identified 3D printed firearms cases to debrief and obtain data from each case. A number of these 3D printed Firearms seizures have been in Scotland and it is anticipated that this will build capabilities in tackling the threat. Work is continuing with the College of Policing Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons Curriculum Designer to understand the extent of 3D printed firearms awareness within the current curriculum. The Joint Agency Alert will be shared and circulated on Knowledge Hub to all Chief Firearms Instructors and Armed Policing Command to reach a wider audience of officers. In May of this year a meeting was chaired by HO Firearms Policy team, with CPS and Scottish Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to discuss the difficulties with identifying suitable offences and charges in certain cases involving the 3D printing of firearms. These discussions will continue to ensure that UK wide law enforcement partners and the Agency, working under different legislative powers, are able to successfully charge and prosecute offenders.

Strong engagement has been in place with Police Scotland, the Forensic team (SPA) and NCA in regards to the immediate threat from LifeCards which presented in June 2023. A large quantity were being seized at the UK Border which were being identified in Scotland and nationally. Through the joint collaborative partnership working between the SPA, NABIS and the Agency, a LE response to the threat was produced. Further Forensic testing is required to confirm the legal classification of these Real Imitation Firearms (RIFs) in both Scottish legislation and legislation which governs the rest of the UK.

### MSHT

PSoS continue to work with Project AIDANT (a multi-agency response to the modern slavery and human trafficking threat in the UK), including the issue of labour exploitation with PSoS referring potential victims to the National Referral Mechanism (ensuring victims receive appropriate support).

### ML

NCA and PSoS are working together to formulate a strategy that will tackle money laundering through a UK investigation targeting Chinese underground banking networks.

## NCA wider support to Police Scotland

### Cybercrime

PSoS Cyber Investigations team are one of the NCAs most proactive law enforcement partners and have initiated investigations against UK cybercrime threats as well as responding to intelligence disseminated from US Partners concerning subjects of interest actively offending in Scotland.

PSoS have led operational activity to tackle ransomware activity with support being provided by the NCA in the collation of victim data, technical research & development and the exploitation of covert investigative options. The NCA also continue to provide support to ensure all opportunities are progressed in the upstream investigation into ransomware.

In April NCA tasked PSoS as part of an international operation against an identity fraud website (Genesis Marketplace). Nine packages were to PSoS with four warrants being executed. This action was taken in collaboration with UK and international law enforcement. The NCCU maintained regular engagement with PSoS and PSNI in the build up to and after the disruption phase.

### UKFIU

During April to August 2023, 919 requests for a Defence Against Money Laundering (DAML) were allocated to PSoS for advice. 30 DAMLs were refused and PSoS took action to deny assets of over £60k.

During the same period 78 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) relating to vulnerable persons, 39 for suspected child exploitation and 17 suspected Human Trafficking were fast-tracked to PSoS.

The UKFIU also issued four international requests on behalf of PSoS in relation to money laundering, investment fraud and payment diversion fraud enquiries and disseminated eight counter terrorism related SARs to PSoS.

### Fraud

NCA provided Scottish law enforcement agencies and PSoS advice on aligning public messaging on fraud, including the use of the fraud and cybercrime communications toolkit.

The National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) housed in the NCA is working with the College of Policing and a range of partners to enhance the policing response to fraud, developing a proactive intelligence led approach alongside the transformation of the primarily reactive Action Fraud dissemination approach. PSoS have been involved in its design and will be a potential recipient of the intelligence packages generated.

The NECC is also leading a cross HMG crypto working group to shape and support delivery of associated data sharing, training and public private sector partnership initiatives. PSoS are part of the working group and will be able to draw on the initiatives as required.

The NCA have also been working with the Consumer Protection Partnership to engage with communication teams (including Consumer Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland and COSLA) to reduce conflicting fraud advice to the public and improve actions on protection to the public.

### OIC

Development of collaborative intelligence Joint Fusion Cell, will bring coordination of highest harm OIC intelligence to a single point, to allow analysis, and enable the mass washing of data sets, developing more effective targeting across all tiers of the of the OIC threat, Internationally, Nationally and including Scotland. This will allow partners to maximise disruption opportunities; across equipment supply ; understand how and where OIC OCG's spend and invest their proceeds and against exploitation of social media and encrypted communication platforms