



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>SPA Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>15/06/2023</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Livestream</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>NCA Performance in Scotland</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Gerry McLean Regional Head of Investigations Scotland &amp; Northern Ireland</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

This paper provides members with an overview of NCA Performance in Scotland.

## **1 The role of the NCA**

1.1 The NCA's mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime (SOC), which affects UK citizens more often than any other national security threat. It will achieve this by targeting high-harm, high-impact criminals and organised crime groups (OCGs), leading the wider law enforcement system to reduce the SOC threat.

1.2 In 2023 the NCA launched an ambitious long-term Strategy (2023-2028) which sets out how the Agency will perform our operational role more effectively. We also surpassed our 'operational tilt' target to grow high impact disruptions against the most harmful criminals in the UK and overseas by 20%, achieving 37% growth with 364 high impact disruptions. This places us in a strong position to meet the target of growing the Agency's disruptions against the most harmful criminals and groups by 50% in the next year.

1.3 Over the next five years the Agency will achieve this strategy by focusing its activity on the four priorities below:

- Degrading the most harmful organised crime groups
- Leading the UK's operational response
- Transforming the Agency's capabilities
- Growing a highly skilled workforce

1.4 In order to counter the threat most effectively, the Agency's operational focus is the SOC risk to the UK that is:



1.5 The NCA collaborates with a range of UK and international law enforcement partners. Within Scotland, a significant representation of this is the Organised Crime Partnership (OCP), which sees officers from both the NCA and Police Scotland collaboratively responding to the most harmful SOC threats impacting on Scotland.

1.6 The Agency and OCP ensure opportunities are identified and taken to disrupt subjects of interest (SOIs), through the criminal justice system and civil routes. The Agency and OCP also proactively progress a wide range of disruptive and preventative activities to deliver a holistic approach to tackling the SOC threat. This work is coordinated under the 4D objectives used by the Scottish Multi-Agency Strategic Threat Assessment (SMASTA): Detect, Disrupt, Deter, Divert. These objectives are compatible and complementary to the 4P objectives used by the wider NCA: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare.

1.7 Additionally, the NCA develops, maintains and deploys a range of national and international capabilities. These are accessible by all UK police forces and SOC LE partners to manage risks.

**1.8 The NCA’s 2022/23 Performance Ambitions**

In the 2022-23 financial year, the Agency committed to targeting the most harmful criminals and the individuals and infrastructure that enable them. The Agency focused on high-complexity and high-impact operations and improved prioritisation to ensure the most appropriate system partner delivered operations. Within Scotland, the ambitions were:

- (i) Continue to achieve NCA-led disruptions in Scotland to build on our achievements in 2021/22
- (ii) Maximise the impact of our capability deployments in support of the SOC response in Scotland

**1.9 The NCA has recently introduced the 2023/24 Performance Ambition.**

The NCA is working with Police Scotland and partners to ensure the Agency’s five year strategy maximises opportunities to tackle SOC. The NCA is taking a geographic approach based on threat, risk and harm within Scotland to focus capabilities. The NCA and Police Scotland have a process to assess the most harmful SOC offenders/groups in Scotland and a route to task action for either the Agency to lead or support tactical activity.

**2 What we do in Scotland**

2.1. There has been a 65% increase in NCA support to Police Scotland in 2022/23, compared to the previous year (33 disruptions). There has also been a 36% (24 disruptions) increase in higher impact NCA lead disruptions compared to 2021/22. This indicates more significant, and longer term, impact on SOC.

**Disruptions impacting on Scotland**

Disruption Assessment	Apr-21 to Mar-22		R12 Total	Apr-22 to Mar-23		R12 Total	▲ ▼
	Lead	Support		Lead	Support		
Major	10	1	11	22	1	23	▲
Moderate	56	13	69	68	24	92	▲
Minor	126	37	163	59	59	118	▼
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>233</b>	▼

*Figure 1: NCA Disruptions with impact in Scotland April*

**NCA impact in Scotland during quarters three and four****2.2. Child Sexual Abuse:**

In Q4, NCA made 557 disseminations to Police Scotland, resulting in 77 arrests and 128 children being safeguarded.

The NCA International Liaison Officer (ILO) Network supported Police Scotland in locating and safeguarding a vulnerable missing child, who had left the UK. This followed allegations of sexual abuse involving family members. The missing child was located in Italy.

The NCA's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Education Team delivered training to professionals from Policing, local councils, education sectors and charities on 'Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse' as well as delivering the 'CEOP Education Ambassadors' course.

**2.3. Organised Immigration Crime:**

Acting on a Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TaCA) Warrant, the NCA expedited the arrest of an Iraqi national in Scotland, who had connections to a suspect wanted by French authorities in connection with the transporting of illegal migrants via lorries. The NCA UK International Crime Bureau liaised directly with Police Scotland to arrest and extradite the suspect after engaging with French authorities.

**2.4. Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking:**

Following a number of unaccompanied migrant children being rehomed in Scotland, NCA provided tactical advice to Police Scotland regarding unaccompanied migrant children, including debriefing.

**2.5. Firearms:**

NCA and OCP Scotland, in conjunction with Police Scotland Armed Support conducted a controlled delivery of a Glock 17 handgun and 100 rounds of ammunition to an address in Scotland, leading to the arrest of a suspect who was remanded in custody.

**2.6. Drugs:**

NCA offers support to the Police Scotland chaired law enforcement and health sector response to risks from the Benzodiazepine group of drugs. The project aims to deliver system wide changes to improve understanding, response and treatment across the UK.

On receipt of intelligence from international partners, NCA tasked an investigation to OCP Scotland which resulted in the execution of search warrants and the arrest of an individual on suspicion of possession and supply of Class A drugs. Further enquiries and examinations are being undertaken in relation to their wider criminal conduct.

**2.7. Fraud & Money Laundering:**

NCA funding provided to Police Scotland was used to finance a fraud investigation into a criminal network based in Portugal. The group were

recruiting Portuguese nationals to travel to Scotland to commit bank frauds using online accounts and cryptocurrency firms. Account Freezing Orders (AFO) for over £200,000 were granted. Enforcement action resulted in seven arrests, nine voluntary interviews, and three Cease and Desist notices being issued.

### 2.8. **Cyber Crime:**

The NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) supported the response to seventeen cyber-attacks which impacted on Scotland. Twelve were ransomware attacks, against a range of victims including members of the public, a Housing Association, and UK Government and Policing agencies. The UK-wide estimated protective impact of these disruptions is in excess of £570 million.

Under Operation AGADE, a major UK bank which was identified as having a large number of accounts holding funds believed to be derived from fraud against the public was required to surrender more than £50m in criminal funds to the NCA. Some of this funded the following Police Scotland Multi Agency Hub projects:

- Academic research to inform Police Scotland's future cybercrime and fraud strategy.
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan, enabling threats being more effectively prioritised and responded to collaboratively.

## **3 Support to partners through specialist capabilities**

- 3.1. The NCA has developed a range of niche capabilities, which are used to support Agency investigations and those held across the wider system. Below are examples of these capabilities being utilised to manage SOC threats impacting on Scotland over Q3 and Q4.

### **Major Crime Investigation Support (MCIS)**

MCIS provides policing with support in relation to major crime and vulnerable / intimidated witnesses of major crimes.

MCIS provided support to Police Scotland on 59 cases, deploying officers on 74 occasions in Q3 and Q4. Cases concerned murder, sexual offences, rape, suspicious/unexplained deaths, missing persons and non-accidental injury (NAI) and included:

- Male arrested and charged with child abduction and sexual offences.
- A missing child investigation, with a suspect identified.
- Two linked money laundering investigations, also involving the Complex Financial Crime Unit.

### **UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU)**

The UKFIU has national responsibility for managing Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs).

SARs from financial institutions and other professionals alert law enforcement to potential money laundering or terrorist financing. Support has resulted in SARs being fast-tracked for Police Scotland, which included:

- 121 related to suspected vulnerable persons
- 73 related to suspected child exploitation
- 14 related to suspected Human Trafficking

Police Scotland being supported in action to deny assets of £35,100 from 1,355 Defence Against Money Laundering (DAML) requests under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002.

### **Anti-Kidnap & Extortion Unit (AKEU)**

The AKEU is the national repository for kidnap, blackmail and sextortion complaints, advising police forces, other partners and commercial enterprises globally in live kidnap matters.

AKEU received 18 requests for support from Police Scotland in Q3 and Q4, providing support for each request. This included five kidnap investigations and six blackmail investigations.

### **UK Protected Persons Service (UKPPS)**

The UKPPS provides and enables protection arrangements to individuals, witnesses and other vulnerable people at risk of serious harm. As part of UKPPS, the NCA Central Services Unit provides operational support to the Police Scotland Protected Persons Unit.

- In Q3, 7 days of training were provided to 40 Police Scotland representatives. The training included the annual UKPPS Continuous Professional Development conference and the UKPPS 'roadshow', which involved training delivered to Police Scotland's Protected Persons team in relation to their specific functions.
- In Q4, 22 days of training were provided to 6 Police Scotland representatives. This training involved the UKPPS 'Supervisors, Managers and DPP' course and the UKPPS 'Protected Persons Practitioner' course.

### **UK National Central Office (UKNCO) for the Suppression of Counterfeit Currency and Protected Coins**

The UKNCO records and analyses all seizures of counterfeit currency in the UK. They also provide expert witness evidence and investigative support to law enforcement partners.

UKNCO processed 28 requests for witness statements for Police Scotland in quarters three and four. Liaison between the UKNCO and Police Officers in Scotland identified a suspect who was travelling to Glasgow and Edinburgh and passing these counterfeit polymer notes. As a consequence of co-ordination activity by the UKNCO a number of the offences were joined resulting in the imprisonment of this prolific offender.

### **The UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU)**

The UKMPU is the UK national and international point of contact for all missing-person and unidentified bodies/people cases. It is the centre for information exchange and expertise on missing-person issues.



In quarters three and four UKMPU supported Police Scotland with the following:

- Offering a report to explore if any other unidentified remains could potentially be a match to a missing person. Following a case specific, tailored search criteria, the highest scoring missing persons from the UKMPU's database were established. Joint working with the NCA's Major Crime Investigative Support team is ongoing.
- Guidance given and specialist research undertaken to support local policing teams following the report of a male missing from a mobile oil rig. The missing person has not been located and the investigation is ongoing. The Agency received positive feedback from Police Scotland on support provided.
- Following reports a missing unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC), NCA officers advised on the collection of biometrics and the National Referral Mechanism. The UKMPU liaised with the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau on behalf of Police Scotland and, supplemented case specific advice with a national overview of policing response to missing UASC.
- A high risk missing person was last seen on CCTV in close proximity to a river. UKMPU issued a Coastal Alert and Maritime Group Circulation to allow for wide geographical coverage. Advice was offered to the SIO and relevant partners.

### **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU)**

The MSHTU supports partners to build the strategic threat picture, enable operational activities and delivering high profile projects, to tackle the threat from Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

The NCA MSHTU received six requests for tactical advice from Police Scotland in quarters three and four. Additionally, Police Scotland were invited to a training session in November to raise awareness of organ tourism/ harvesting. This was conducted by the Human Tissue Authority and the Metropolitan Police. The training was aimed at medical personnel, with law enforcement invited to attend for awareness. Pending the outcome of some ongoing cases in the UK, MSHTU will compile a future training webinar aimed specifically for law enforcement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss this report