

OFFICIAL



NCA

National Crime Agency

NCA – Report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board

Date: 28 March 2019 (v0.1)

OFFICIAL

Report from the National Crime Agency to the Northern Ireland Policing Board

The NCA has been fully operational in Northern Ireland since May 2015.

Policing and criminal justice are devolved matters in Northern Ireland. As a UK-wide organisation, the NCA ensures its activity takes full account of the specific and differing legislative, operational and political requirements of Northern Ireland. The NCA respects the primacy of the PSNI, while maximising its ability to operate with them and others to tackle serious and organised crime.

The delivery of the NCA's functions in Northern Ireland is governed by memoranda of understanding with the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). A general authorisation agreement with the Department of Justice is also in place. The NCA designates appropriately trained and qualified NCA officers with the powers of a Northern Ireland constable.

NCA Annual Plan 2019/20

The NCA's Annual Plan for 2019/20 is still in draft at the time of writing. The draft NCA Annual Plan sets Agency activity for the year ahead. It includes specific commentary on how the NCA will work in Northern Ireland, including through the Paramilitary Crime Task Force. The Director General - Operations will update the Board on the Annual Plan at the forthcoming meeting on 4 April 2019.

NIPB MOU with the NCA

- The NCA has prepared all NCA Annual Plans with regard to the Policing Plan for Northern Ireland.
- The NCA has always obtained the consent of the NIPB and the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland Plan on the NCA Annual Plan as it relates to the NCA's activities in Northern Ireland.
- All NCA officers exercising functions in Northern Ireland must complete ethics training on the PSNI Code of Ethics (NICOE) and pass an examination before they are allowed to function in Northern Ireland. The definition of NCA 'functions' within the MOU is taken from the Crime and Courts Act 2013 and 'functions' means all functions of any description including powers and duties. As of 28 March 2019, 1,244 NCA officers have completed this requirement (NI Code of Ethics training and read the relevant Annual Plans and MOUs), of whom 73 have been designated with the powers of a Northern Ireland Police Constable.
- The NCA maintains a central record of compliance detailing officers who have passed the NICOE training and/or are designated with the Powers of a

Constable. This database is used to ensure the Agency adheres to the agreement under the MOU.

- The NCA has provided the NIPB with all quarterly performance narratives setting out how the NCA has exercised its functions in Northern Ireland.

Relationship with PSNI

The NCA maintains a very close working relationship with PSNI and continues to identify new opportunities for greater collaboration.

The NCA is also aware of the impending NIPB consultation on Strategic Priorities for Policing 2020 – 2024 and the subsequent development of annual policing plans. The NCA welcomes this opportunity to comment and will support the consultation exercise, particularly in relation to those areas where it works closely with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

NCA Operation Activity - Northern Ireland

The NCA currently has 99 staff located in Belfast. Of these, 71 work on operational activity and 28 on non-operational / enabling functions. 33 officers in NI are focused solely on NI-based activity. The remainder focus on UK-wide activity.

The NCA in Northern Ireland continues to work in partnership with PSNI on several pieces of activity. Two long-running joint operations to tackle online CSAE drew to a conclusion this year.

In Operation JARRA, a total of 25 offenders were convicted, with custodial sentences amounting to 15 years and eight months. Probation orders totalling 35 years and six months were also been imposed.

In Operation FLUTY, 19 people were charged with offences related to the making, possession and distribution of indecent images of children. During the investigation, further serious sexual offences were revealed against some of the subjects, and additional charges brought, including voyeurism; possession of a paedophile manual (only the second time this offence has been charged in Northern Ireland); and engaging in sexual activity with a child. 30 children were safeguarded.

The quarterly performance narratives reflect the more detailed operational activity and the positive and continued progress being made.

Northern Ireland also has access to a number of NCA specialist capabilities and functions as and when they are required. These are listed below:

- Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP)
- Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit
- Economic Crime Department
- National Intelligence Hub
- National Cyber Crime Unit
- International Department

- E&W-based Investigations teams
- Serious Crime Analysis Section
- Major Crime Investigative Support
- UK Protected Persons Service Central Bureau
- Central Authorities Unit
- Anti-Kidnap & Extortion Unit
- HUMINT (Human Intelligence)
- Forensic services
- National Injury database

Paramilitary Crime Task Force

The NCA in Northern Ireland continues to work in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as part of Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF), with the aim of tackling organised crime linked to paramilitary activity. The NCA's focus within the PCTF is on activity which delivers the best result in terms of harm reduction, disruption and dislocation. More specifically, the NCA's unique ability in Northern Ireland to pursue Civil Recovery and Tax interventions under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, can target the proceeds of crime where the criminal process is perhaps unable to or, as with the Task Force, as part of a collaborative law enforcement response to the activities of paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland. Operational activity led by the NCA under PCTF in 2018/19 included:

- In April 2018, a civil recovery investigation related to an alleged senior member of the paramilitary group 'Action Against Drugs' resulted in the recovery of a four bedroomed property in Newtownabbey under the Proceeds of Crime Act. This property has since been sold by the NCA.
- In June 2018, four search warrants were executed on four properties in the Carrickfergus, Ballycarry and Larne Areas of Antrim associated with senior members of the South East Antrim Ulster Defence Association with a view to identifying and recovering property which may have been funded through the proceeds of crime. The investigations relating to these searches are ongoing.
- In February 2019, the three-bedroomed Carrickfergus home of an alleged senior member of a paramilitary group was recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.