



NCA Performance Report: Northern Ireland

Q3-Q4 (October-March) 2024/25

About the NCA

- The NCA was **established in October 2013**. It is an intelligence-led law enforcement agency responsible for gathering intelligence, investigating high-end serious and organised crime (SOC), and leading the operational system for SOC.
- Around **6,000 NCA officers** work in overt and covert sites **across the UK**, with NCA officers in Northern Ireland based alongside the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in **Belfast**. NCA Officers can be designated with the powers of a Police Constable as well as those of Immigration Enforcement and HM Revenue & Customs officers. In addition to the powers granted under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (England & Wales) 1984 (PACE), NCA officers operating in Northern Ireland have additional powers, as they relate to the legislation and orders within the jurisdiction.
- Internationally, the NCA has **170 International Liaison Officers (ILOs) posted in 70 locations overseas** covering over 100 countries.

NCA in NI

- The ambition for the NCA in Northern Ireland is to take action nationally and internationally to **protect communities** from serious and organised crime (SOC). The NCA delivers this by working in partnership with the PSNI under the auspices of the Northern Ireland General Authorisation, as agreed by the NCA Director General and the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice in 2016 (updated in 2021). The DG is also accountable for NCA activity in (or in relation to) Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and less directly to the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice and Secretary of State for NI (SoSNI). The NCA produce this report bi-annually and the NCA DG appears in front of the NIPB, alongside the Chief Constable PSNI (CC PSNI).
- A summary of our compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) within Northern Ireland can be found on Slide 5.

Joint Working

- The NCA works alongside the PSNI to **identify high value targets and tactical vulnerabilities**.
- Intelligence and investigative opportunities are **jointly developed through collaborative arrangements** with the use of **specialised NCA capabilities** being considered as part of this response.

NCA Strategy – Impact on Northern Ireland

Protecting the Public

The NCA has a twofold approach as a national agency protecting the public in Northern Ireland from serious and organised crime (SOC):

1. To take action outside of Northern Ireland – upstream (of senior criminals and their enablers), overseas (in Europe and wider), and online – to best protect the public from SOC before it impacts and harms Northern Irish communities. These capabilities – such as major investigations, the NCA International Liaison Officer network, our 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 take action in Northern Ireland through deploying specialised NCA capabilities in support of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPSNI) to investigate and disrupt serious and organised crime.

NCA Northern Ireland

- The NCA presence in Northern Ireland consists of officers who are involved in Investigations, Intelligence, and enabling operational activity. The current NCA operating model within Northern Ireland is based on the general premise that the NCA will lead its own investigations and provide support to the PSNI when requested with the NCA's specialised capabilities.
- The NCA works in collaboration with the PSNI within the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) to target paramilitary groupings currently on ceasefire. The PCTF is comprised of officers from NCA, PSNI, and HMRC, who are co-located within the PSNI estate.

Working Together

- The NCA work closely with PSNI in areas including criminal investigations into paramilitary-related SOC, the use of civil recovery powers against such criminals, abuse of the Common Travel Area (CTA), the pursuit of Northern Irish fugitives overseas, and the provision of a range of major crime investigative support and specialist capabilities.
- Since the last Board, the NCA has worked closely with the Department of Justice in the creation of the text for the new offences set out under The Northern Ireland Justice Bill Part 2A Organised Crime Groups, specifically the text defining serious organised crime.

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 and Human Rights

Statutory Underpinning and Ethics

All NCA Officers operating/working in Northern Ireland are required to undertake Northern Ireland Ethics training and must adhere to a range of additional standards of conduct and practice, including the NCA's Code of Ethics, NCA values, Civil Service Code, alongside having due regard to the PSNI's code of ethics. Additionally, all officers undergo annual training in First Aid and Officer Safety. This training is comprehensive and ensures their activities, for example in relation to their use of force, complies with the ECHR. Annual e-learning on a range of topics which may be relevant from a human rights perspective are mandatory requirements for all our officers.

The NCA works closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to produce Overseas Security and Justice Assessments (OSJAs) which review the potential impact on human rights and international humanitarian law prior to providing any justice or security assistance overseas. When sharing intelligence internationally, either in relation to an NCA matter or on behalf of PSNI, the NCA adheres to a set of 'Principles' which ensure that the passing and receipt of intelligence is consistent with the UK's Human rights obligations. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) oversee and report on these 'Principles'.

Covert Surveillance

The NCA undertakes covert surveillance in accordance with the Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA), and the Police Act 1997 as do other law enforcement agencies across the UK. Applications are made and authorised internally by an NCA Senior Manager independent to the investigation and must supply detailed evidence that the application complies with UK legislation and guidelines, specifically the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) which brings into direct force the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Reference to HRA/ECHR is contained within NCA policies and operating procedures to minimise, and where possible remove, the risk of non-compliance.

Directed Surveillance in Northern Ireland does not require additional authorisation, but just as with other covert techniques, the Agency must liaise with the PSNI before any surveillance is conducted in Northern Ireland. Oversight and governance of the Agency's use of covert investigating powers is through the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), who carried out five annual inspections in 2024-25 covering specialist areas of compliance with legislation and guidance. Through these reviews, IPCO found the NCA to be acting lawfully and for the correct statutory purposes. The NIPB's Human Rights Advisor (HRA) has viewed the 2024/25 IPCO reports as they relate to the NCA, providing an additional layer of confidence. Moving forward, the NCA will make arrangements for the NIPB's HRA to continue this dialogue and view salient material. Further to this position, the NCA and PSNI have reviewed existing MOUs and the delivery of NCA capabilities to ensure all aspects of human rights, community impact, and environmental factors are properly considered prior to the use of covert tactics.

Specific Human Rights issues encountered during this reporting period

No specific issues encountered during this reporting period and there have been no instances referred to the Police Ombudsman NI (PONI)

Measuring NCA Impact in Northern Ireland through Disruptions

High Impact Disruptions

- As part of the NCA's five-year Strategy (2023-28), the NCA prioritises activity that will **degrade the most harmful organised crime groups**. To track progress against this Strategy, the NCA targets High Impact disruptions which are defined as meeting all of the following conditions:
 - 'Pursue' disruptions which are typically related to criminal justice outcomes like arrests or to seizures;
 - A lead disruption. This is where a disruption was led by the NCA, whether at a NCA branch or nationally, and the achieved impact is attributed to the NCA;
 - Assessed as having a major or moderate impact. This is defined as a 'significant and/or long-term' (major) or 'noticeable and/or medium-term' (moderate) disruptive impact on the capability of the OCG, individual or vulnerability;
 - Linked to a high priority investigation – graded as P1-2 on a prioritisation framework of four descending levels (1-4).
- These disruptions are, therefore, **a measure of impact** not a measure of activity or effort and are only recorded when **the NCA can clearly articulate the threat, the action taken, and the resulting impact**.

Direct and Indirect Impact

- The NCA Strategy recognises the critical role of the NCA as a system leader in tackling SOC through providing specialist capabilities, especially within devolved administrations. This ensures that we work collaboratively, supporting partners to tackle the most significant threats facing the public. One way in which the NCA tracks this is through support disruptions which is where the NCA has provided some form of resource or capability to assist another agency in achieving a lead disruption. Therefore, this report covers both NCA 'support' and 'lead' disruptions to show the breadth of NCA impact.
- In line with the NCA's mission to tackle SOC upstream, online, and overseas, the NCA operates across all regions of the UK and overseas. This means the impact on a given devolved administration is both **direct (activity which takes place within the region with an identifiable impact on the region)** and **indirect (activity which takes place outside of the region which has an identifiable impact on the region)**.
- Previous performance reports have not provided a breakdown of these distinctions, but in this report the NCA are **trialling additional analysis** which examines branch-specific activity alongside NCA support to the PSNI as proxies for direct impact. These should be seen as a new baseline rather than the complete picture of direct NCA impact.

NCA Impact in Northern Ireland

This bi-annual NCA performance report documents key trends in operational performance across all threats, identifying the areas of activity with greatest impact on Northern Ireland. The Agency's approach to measuring impact is outlined on slide 6, covering both disruptive activities with a direct or indirect impact on Northern Ireland.

The analysis and insights in this report are produced for the purposes of the Northern Ireland Policing Board to review NCA performance within Northern Ireland.

Key Highlights

- There have been 140 NCA disruptions impacting on Northern Ireland either directly or indirectly in the six-month period covering Q3-Q4 2024/25. This is an increase of 37 disruptions over the same period in the 2023/24 and consists of 96 disruptions where the NCA was the lead agency and 44 in support.
- High impact disruptions have decreased from 11 to 6 when comparing this period with the same last financial year. This is mainly attributable to a drop in drugs-related high impact disruptions (from 4-0).
- Of all disruptions, 40 (28.6%) were related to illicit finance, 23 (16.4%) to drugs, 19 (13.6%) to fraud, and 16 (11.4%) to child sexual abuse. The greatest difference with the national trends is there being proportionately fewer drugs-related disruptions (46.1% nationally).

NCA Impact in Northern Ireland: Q3-Q4 (October 2024 – March 2025)

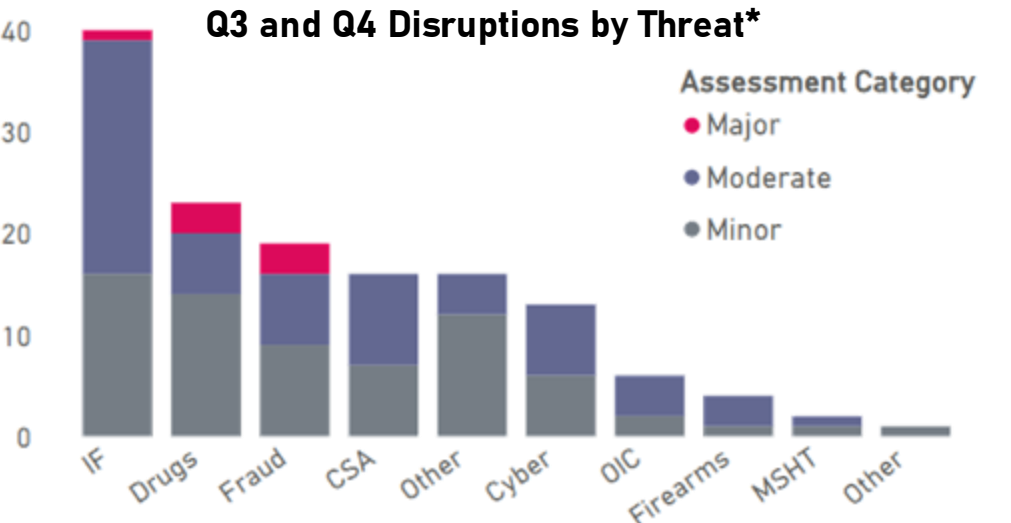
Total Disruptions

- There have been **140** NCA disruptions impacting on Northern Ireland either directly or indirectly in the six-month period covering Q3-Q4 2024/25. This is an increase of 31 disruptions over the same period in the 2023/24 and consists of 96 disruptions where the NCA was the lead agency and 44 in support.
- There is a higher proportion of Major and Moderate disruptions (51%) with an impact in Northern Ireland than there is for Major and Moderate (31%) disruptions nationally.
- High impact disruptions have decreased from 11 to 6 when comparing this period with the same last FY. This is mainly attributable to a drop in drugs high impact disruptions (from 4-0).

Fiscal Year	Q3-Q4 2023/24			Q3-Q4 2024/25			
Impact	Lead	Support	Total	Lead	Support	Total	Change
Major Impact	14	2	16	6	1	7	-9
Moderate Impact	30	11	41	46	18	64	+23
Minor Impact	29	17	46	44	25	69	+23
Total	73	30	103	96	44	140	+31


Disruptions by Threat

- Of all disruptions, 40 (28.6%) were related to illicit finance, 23 (16.4%) to drugs, 19 (13.6%) to fraud, and 16 (11.4%) to child sexual abuse. The greatest difference with the national trends is there being proportionately fewer drugs-related disruptions (46.1% nationally).
- Child sexual abuse (CSA) disruptions have had the greatest decrease across threat areas when compared to the same period last FY, falling from 26 to 16. The fall in CSA disruptions impacting Northern Ireland differs from the national trend (which has seen CSA disruptions remain relatively constant).
- Illicit finance disruptions have had the greatest increase, increasing from 8 to 40. This contrasts with the national trend where illicit finance disruptions have remained relatively stable. This is primarily due to an increase in operational activity linked to Northern Ireland, and a number of asset recovery operations and initiatives. There has also been several referrals from UKFIU to PSNI, as well as numerous disruptions targeting professional enablers of serious and organised crime which impacted the entire UK.
- Drugs-related disruptions as a proportion of all disruptions have seen a decrease since the last FY (18.4-16.4%), though there has been a significant drop in those with a high impact (from 4 to 0).



Stacked column chart showing the number of disruptions attributed to each threat area described by impact in 2024/25 Q3-Q4

*NB: Other covers off a range of threats and some disruptions might not fall in this 'Other' category



NCA
National Crime Agency

Threat Spotlight: Drugs-related disruptions and seizures in Northern Ireland Q3-Q4 24/25

Strategy

- Disrupting and dismantling the organised crime groups and networks that traffic and supply illicit commodities, including drugs and firearms, is one of the NCA's strategic priorities. This slide provides a breakdown of disruptions which have targeted the drugs threat and the relationship with border disruptions.

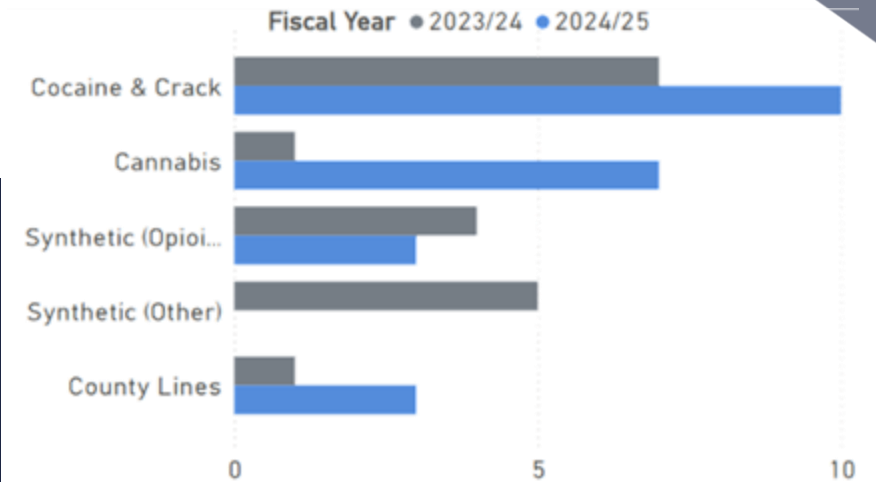
Disruptions

- In the six-month period of Q3-Q4 2024/25 there have been **23** NCA disruptions impacting on the drugs threat in Northern Ireland including border referrals. Of these disruptions **10** were cocaine & crack (**43%**), **7** were cannabis-related (**30%**) and the final 27% were split between **3** county lines and **3** synthetic opioids disruptions.
- Cannabis disruptions have increased as a proportion of overall disruptions from the Q1/Q2 proportion of **20% (5)** and are significantly above the previous financial year which had **3** total Cannabis disruptions.
- In Q3-Q4, cocaine & crack has remained the most disrupted drugs sub-threat since 23/24 with the percentage of disruptions targeting this sub-threat increasing from **37% (23/24)** to **43% (24/25)**.

Border Disruptions

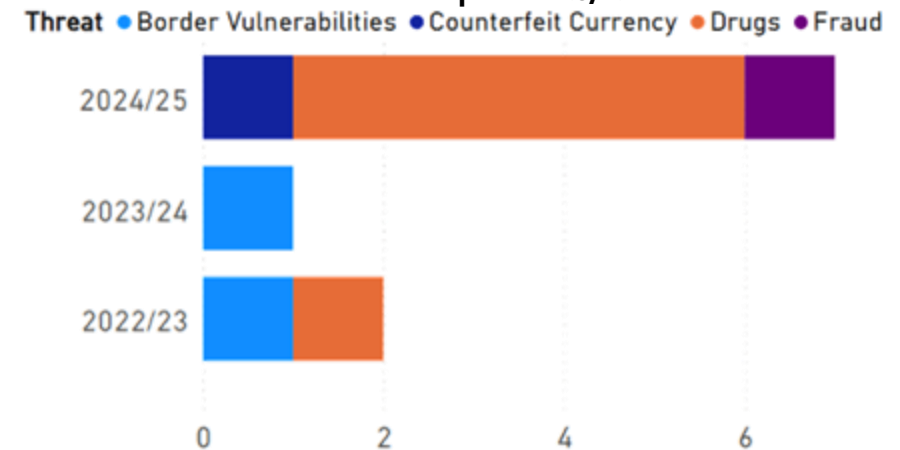
- Border disruptions are predominantly linked to a border referral or a disruption associated with a border vulnerability threat. Border Force make referrals to the NCA for investigation and the NCA may adopt referrals or pass referrals to another law enforcement agency where more appropriate.
- Border disruptions have increased from 1 to 7 in Q3-Q4 since the same period last FY. This reflects the national NCA trend which has seen a 93% increase in border disruptions.
- This increase in border disruptions is **driven by drugs-related disruptions** with 4 of the 7 border disruptions in period being linked to cannabis and 1 cocaine & crack. This is likewise reflected nationally.
- We are aware of cannabis couriers using the CTA routes to try and disguise routings and facilitate smuggling of cannabis in the air passenger mode to Ireland/NI, using Dublin Airport to fly to English airports to pick up luggage left by other passengers arriving from Thailand. We continue to work with partners to mitigate this threat, including upstream to reduce the volume of cannabis being smuggled.

Drugs disruptions by sub-threat Q3-Q4



Clustered bar chart showing the number of drugs disruptions and the drugs sub-threat they fall under

Border Disruptions Q3/Q4



Stacked bar chart showing the number of border disruptions and the border sub-threats they fall under; comparing the Q3-Q4 period over the past 3 years

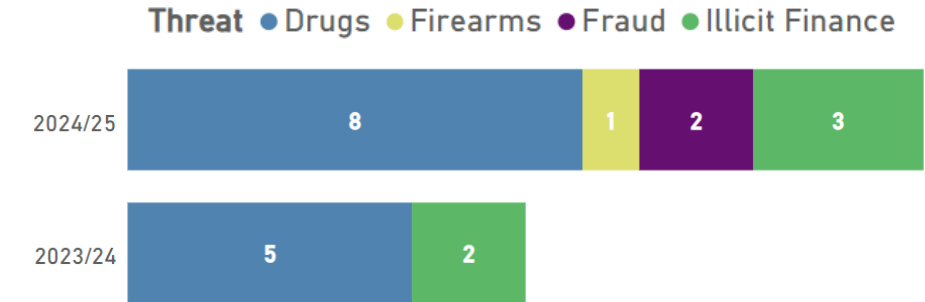
NCA direct impact in Northern Ireland: Q3-Q4 (October 2024 – March 2025)

Northern Ireland Investigations

The NCA's Investigations team within Northern Ireland lead on operational activity working closely with the PSNI and partners to tackle serious and organised crime. The below insights cover activity of this team with an impact on Northern Ireland. This is not all NCA activity with a direct impact but provides analysis of branch operational performance from within Northern Ireland.

- There were 14 disruptions including 3 high impact disruptions which the Northern Ireland Investigations team led in Q3-Q4 2024/25, an increase of 7 in overall disruptions since the same period in the previous FY.
- Of the 14 disruptions, 8 were drugs-related, 3 illicit finance, 2 fraud, and 1 firearms. In the same period in the last FY there were 5 drugs and 2 illicit finance disruptions. The 3 high impact disruptions during this period were split between firearms (1) and illicit finance (2).
- 7 new investigations were opened by the NCA's Investigations team in Northern Ireland and 13 were closed.

Q3/Q4 Disruptions Threat Breakdown



Stacked bar chart showing total disruptions the Northern Ireland Investigations Team recorded in Q3-Q4 compared to the same period in the previous financial year

NCA Support to the PSNI

- The NCA nationally has provided support to the PSNI in 25 disruptions. This is an increase of 6 for the overall disruptions supported by the NCA nationally to the PSNI when compared to the same period last FY.
- The majority (17) of support is provided by the National Extradition Unit which has consistently provided the highest number of support disruptions over the past 3 years to the PSNI. These disruptions included the successful extradition to Northern Ireland of 9 wanted fugitives by the PSNI (supported by the NCA) wanted for serious and organised crime offences including CSAE, drugs, sexual offences and aggravated theft.
- The NCA's UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) recorded 6 support disruptions aiding the PSNI. However, they provided significantly more support beyond these to the PSNI, with 58 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) disseminated to the PSNI and 58 requests for Defence Against Money Laundering (DAMLs) being granted. For more context on this support, please see the subsequent section on UKFIU operational details.

NCA Operational Updates: Cases of Note (October 2024 – March 2025)

Drugs

- During this period, an NCA investigation regarding several fast parcel seizures destined for the Rathcoole and Newtownabbey areas resulted in the seizures of Cocaine (1.96kg), Ketamine (1kg), MDMA (5.53kg), Cannabis resin (2.23kg), herbal Cannabis (0.56kg), Amphetamine paste (5.36kg), and 31 Class C capsules. The main subject was imprisoned for a connected offence by the PSNI.
- On October 2024 at Sheffield Crown Court, a resident from Northern Ireland asked to be re-arraigned and entered a plea of guilty to Possession of a Controlled Class B Drug namely Herbal Cannabis with intent to supply. The subject had been stopped by police on the A1 near Doncaster in May 2024. A search of the trailer uncovered 73KGS Herbal Cannabis concealed within the flooring of the trailer. It is suspected the drugs were destined for the Northern Ireland market. Subject is currently awaiting sentence. So far, through our work within the Joint Agency Task Force, NCA joint action with Border Force and PSNI has resulted in the seizure of 399kg of cocaine (with an estimated street value of approximately £40M), 574kg of herbal cannabis – female flowering heads, with an estimated street value of approximately £14.5M. £127,000 in cash have been seized by the NCA and partner Agencies.

Firearms

- The NCA has launched an investigation after 13 firearms and 300 rounds of ammunition were seized from an Irish-registered vehicle at the port of Dover. The vehicle had initially travelled from Ireland to the Netherlands, via Scotland and England, before returning to the UK. Border Force officers stopped and searched the SUV in February 2025 as it entered the UK from France.

Asset Denial

- As part of an ongoing Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) civil recovery investigation, a case with assets valued at **approximately £350,000** is now being assessed as a potential hybrid civil recovery and tax investigation under Parts 5 and 6 of POCA 2002. This follows Disclosure Interviews with the defendants in October 2024 and the subsequent analysis of banking material, whereby tax offences were identified in addition to strong evidence of fraud offences.
- In March and April 2025, disclosure interviews were conducted with the two defendants in an ongoing PCTF civil recovery investigation into assets valued at **approximately £250,000**. The defendants are suspected of being engaged in money laundering and the interviews were conducted following a Disclosure Order that was previously granted by the High Court.

Illicit Finance

- The NCA's National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) provided the PSNI with funding to facilitate their participation in a four-week fraud intensification campaign. PSNI activity resulted in five arrests and one voluntary interview. Additionally, over £213k in cash was seized, with a further £235k subject to account freezing orders. The PSNI received further funding from the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) to facilitate their participation in a money mule intensification campaign. PSNI achieved seizures of £348k and five account freezing orders totalling £140k.

OIC

- In February 2025 two British Nationals – one of whom was a resident of Northern Ireland – were convicted for their involvement in the conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration. This outcome came about as part of an international NCA investigation into people smuggling. In March 2020, the defendants had been caught trying to smuggle 10 Vietnamese nationals (including 8 children) into the UK from France. As part of the wider NCA investigation, there have been 29 arrests across the UK and in Belgium and approximately £350,000 (sterling & euro) seized. 2 firearms were also seized and multiple property searches and seizures of HGV trailers used in the commission of the offences. 10 Vietnamese nationals were also safeguarded – 8 of which were children.

Cyber

- A Northern Ireland based company became victims of a ransomware attack, which subsequently resulted in significant data lost. International partners were able to trace and secure the exfiltrated data. The NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) supported engagement with international partners via Europol Cyber Liaison Officers, thereby securing the transfer of the exfiltrated data back to the PSNI for analysis.
- As part of an investigation involving Fraud offences and subsequent theft of cryptocurrency from a victim in Northern Ireland, the NCCU, utilising the NCA International Liaison Officer network, supported the investigation team with international enquires to gain further information and a confirmed location on an overseas individual.

NCA wider support to Northern Ireland: October 2024 – March 2025

Drugs

- As noted in the NCA National Strategic Assessment 2025, OCGs continue to innovate and evolve their smuggling methodologies to evade detection, diversifying methods such as through at-sea drop offs. As a result, the NCA is working with law enforcement partners, including the PSNI and An Garda Síochána to tackle these increasingly popular methodologies in order to prevent drugs reaching the streets of Northern Ireland.
- There remains a significant threat from synthetic opioids across the UK. Between the beginning of June 2023 to the end of March 2025, there were at least 494 nitazene-related deaths in the UK with 5 of these in Northern Ireland. This reflects how the global synthetic drugs market is rapidly evolving and is a growing concern in the UK. The NCA coordinates the UK-wide operational response to the threat from nitazenes, fentanyl, carfentanyl, and xylazine, and has had good engagement from Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) from the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The NCA has developed guidance to keep officers and the public safe from these highly potent drugs and worked closely with the PSNI and other law enforcement partners to focus enforcement on stemming the supply of these drugs through the exchange of intelligence and best practice. As a result of joint working, an exponential rise in synthetic opioid-related deaths, as has been seen in some other countries globally, has so far been prevented.
- Results from the 2023/24 wastewater testing programme were recently published by the Home Office showing an increase in cocaine consumption and a significant increase in ketamine consumption in England. It is likely that Northern Ireland is experiencing broadly similar trends.
- A significant number of NCA minor drug-related disruptions are via Border Force referrals (as noted above). During this period there were seizures at Northern Irish sea- and air- ports of entry including 31.5kg herbal cannabis (street value £315,000), 16.63kg cannabis (street value £165,000), and 5.73kg cocaine (street value £400,000).
- As noted in the NCA National Strategic Assessment 2025, OCGs continue to innovate and evolve their smuggling methodologies to evade detection, diversifying methods such as through at-sea drop offs. As a result, the NCA is working with law enforcement partners, including the PSNI and An Garda Síochána to tackle these increasingly popular methodologies.
- The NCA contributed to the seizure of a total of 140 tonnes of drugs internationally in Q3/Q4 2024/25 which compares to a 3-year average (Q3/Q4) of 212 tonnes.

NCA wider support to Northern Ireland: October 2024 – March 2025

Child Sexual Abuse

- The PSNI are key and active members of CSA Governance Mechanisms providing regular submission of management information to the Online CSA PURSUE Board as well as regular attendance at this board and the Strategic Governance Group (SGG). The data provided supports insights and understanding into the scale and prevalence of CSA across NI and in comparison to the UK.
- A NCA social media campaign to raise awareness of Financially Motivated Sexual Extortion (FMSE) ran for a month in March 2025 aimed at 15-17 year-old males. All nations disseminated the campaign via their own channels. Work has been conducted with the PSNI to develop a tailored version of the parents and carers guidance that accompanied the campaign - co-branded with Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and the PSNI. In the UK and internationally there has been significant increases in the reporting of FMSE, often referred to as 'sextortion', over the last few years.
- The NCA's CSE Referrals Bureau (CSERB) is the central point within the NCA for receipt of referrals from industry of information relating to online child sexual abuse with a UK nexus, predominantly received via the US National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Any reports containing an offence, that have a Northern Ireland nexus, are disseminated to the PSNI accordingly with a dissemination URN. The detection of CSA through industry reports has doubled roughly every 5 years. This trend is likely to continue. In 2025, the NCA expects to send an average of 800 total referrals per week to police forces across the UK.
- The NCA continues to coordinate and drive the national response to Financially Motivated Sexual Extortion (FMSE), Livestreaming and 'Com' groups ('Com networks') have been identified grooming, blackmailing, and threatening victims into carrying out extreme acts, including sharing sexual material and self-harming. Vulnerable young victims are targeted and groomed online, and controlled through fear and manipulation to extort imagery and cause harm. These networks typically attract young males promoting nihilistic and misogynistic views, who attempt to gain status with other users by committing or encouraging harmful acts across a broad spectrum of offending.) Com groups continue to attract significant interest from government, media and the general public, and is an area under increasing scrutiny. The NCA issued an alert for law enforcement in March 2025, ahead of the release of the NSA, to inform and raise awareness of the emerging threat in addition to signposting to further guidance and operational advice. This alert was issued to all Chief Constables, including the PSNI. The PSNI have been invited to join the working group looking at the strategic and operational response to this threat and help inform the national picture. In addition, an NCA representative will be providing the keynote speech, focusing on the Com group and youth extremism, at the National Organisation for Tackling Abuse (NOTA) conference held in Belfast in May 2025. The PSNI are regularly involved and updated on this work through the various governance mechanisms in place.

International

- The NCA's Joint International Crime Centre (JICC) includes a specialist biometrics team who manage international intelligence exchanges following verified biometric hits via the Prüm channel. The biometrics are either DNA or Fingerprints. The connection via Prüm assists in the notification of hits and subsequent sharing of intelligence. During this period, JICC Biometrics have assisted the PSNI with obtaining intelligence on **fingerprints** in 10 relevant cases covering murder, sexual offences and offensive weapons/threats to kill; **DNA** in 25 relevant cases.
- JICC Biometrics assisted the PSNI in gaining International intelligence from Germany related to a subject who has been involved in violent and sexual offences since arriving in Northern Ireland in 2023. JICC Biometrics approached Germany following a biometric hit and gained intelligence in relation to the subject's offending. This included sexual coercion and rape, sexual harassment, theft, fraud. JICC Biometrics conducted intelligence development work and shared with PSNI.

NCA wider support to Northern Ireland: October 2024 – March 2025

UKFIU

- The NCA's UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) continues to conduct work that directly impacts Northern Ireland and assists the PSNI by disseminating high-risk Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) and requests for Defence Against Money Laundering (DAMLs), alongside making all other SARs relating to Northern Ireland available to accredited financial investigators and intelligence officers.
- SARs are reports from financial institutions and other professionals alerting law enforcement to potential instances of money laundering or terrorist financing. During this period, the UKFIU disseminated 58 SARs to the PSNI.
- A DAML can be requested from the NCA where a reporter has a suspicion that property they intend to deal with is in some way criminal, and that by dealing with it they risk committing one of the principal money laundering offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA). During this period, 234 requests for a DAML were received under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002 and were allocated to the PSNI for advice (based on the location of the suspect, victim or other geographical factors). This is an increase of 101 requests (up from 133) during the same period last financial year. 58 DAMLs were granted and 17 DAMLs were refused leading to £130,963 of funds being restrained. The above DAML figures are out of a total 28,411 DAML requests handled by the UKFIU during this period. Of the remaining DAML requests, some will have been closed due to not meeting DAML criteria, be within the 7-day notice period, or not been expressly granted.
- Providing system leadership in financial intelligence, UKFIU regularly attends and facilitates key industry and professional events to raise awareness and drive innovation. During this period, the SARs Exploitation team (SET) attended the Northern Ireland Intelligence Sharing Expert Working Group (ISEWG) at the Law Society of NI building in Belfast, and members of the Reporter Engagement Team and SET met with representatives from Citibank Northern Ireland.
- The NCA's Proceeds of Crime Centre (POCC) continue to have ongoing liaison with the PSNI to discuss the future use of certain Part 8 POCA Orders in more widespread ways and exploring the possibility of utilising the administrative process with courts to obtain these Part 8 Orders. They are also having ongoing discussion surrounding restraint matters regarding the Department of Communities working in Northern Ireland.

UKNCO

- The NCA's UK National Central Office (UKNCO) for Counterfeit Currency have provided support to the PSNI on 20 submissions they made to the UKNCO relating to counterfeit currency seizures during this period. Of these, there were 6 witness statement requests submitted by the PSNI to the UKNCO.

NCA wider support to Northern Ireland: October 2024 – March 2025

MSHT

- As part of NCA-coordinated Op AIDANT 38, the PSNI along with other UK forces provided data in support of an analytical exercise by TOEX. The exercise was designed to identify high level targets and professional enablers that touched on multiple parts of the UK for further investigation. This covered activity relating to the sexual exploitation of victims from Eastern Europe. A number of potential subjects of interest were identified and packages disseminated to the relevant forces who are considering next steps.

Cyber

- The NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) regularly provides ad-hoc support to PSNI, addressing operational needs and offering guidance on cyber-related inquiries within their jurisdiction. There continues to be effective collaboration between the PSNI and NCCU on major operations, alongside regular ad-hoc support provided by the NCCU on PSNI operational requirements; including de-confliction checks as well as advice regarding ongoing cyber-dependant and cyber-related enquiries within PSNI's jurisdiction.
- In July 2024, PSNI arrested a high-profile Northern Ireland-based cyber actor suspected as being the administrator of the world's largest DDoS-as-a-Service platform - DIGITAL STRESS. Since then, the NCCU continues to support the PSNI investigation with the analysis of the wider dataset with assistance from NCCU Data Science and NCCU Ops Support. The purpose of the analysis is to identify further offenders and to assist our understanding of this platform and its impact on the cyber-crime landscape. Any information on UK based offenders will be disseminated via the Regional Cyber Network and the Europol/NCA ILO network for those based in reachable overseas locations.

Asset Denial

- The NCA continues to utilise Civil Recovery and Tax powers under Parts 5 & 6 of POCA 2002 to disrupt individuals and organisations who are engaged in serious crime and recover the proceeds of their criminal offending. These powers are used by both the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) and the wider Agency operating within Northern Ireland to target individuals who are engaged in a range of criminal offending, including fraud, drug trafficking, illegal money lending, extortion, money laundering, excise duty evasion and tax evasion.
- In March 2025, an Account Forfeiture Order was granted over £5,000 held in a bank account following a "Frozen Funds" investigation by the NCA's Civil Recovery and Tax team. The subject of the investigation is suspected of being involved in the supply of controlled drugs.
- Two further investigations with a Northern Ireland nexus - both being conducted under the auspices of the Joint Agency Task force - remain ongoing.

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Firearms

- The NCA's 2025 NSA assessed that there is a 'realistic possibility' (40-50% likelihood) that 3D-printed firearms will become more popular as technology improves. The NCA (as part of Project INTERKNOW) accordingly developed an alert, with support from the Northern Ireland Department of Justice and the Department for the Economy, to be circulated to higher education institutions within Northern Ireland. The alert details the threat of 3D printed firearms, and the risks associated with misusing 3D printing technology.
- The NCA continues to target the threat of diversion from the lawful to the unlawful supply of firearms and firearms components in the UK (under Project BROMHYDRIC). The NCA has made three referrals to the PSNI relating to firearm parts that are not illegal themselves but are indicative of possession of, or interest in, firearms that the named individual did not have authority to hold.
- The 'Know your Certificates' poster (under Project RUTIC) was shared with PSNI firearms licensing contacts with a view to distributing to licence holders to raise awareness and highlight fraudulent firearms documents when engaging in the private transfer of firearms.

Illicit Finance

- **The NCA's Operation DESTABLISE** disrupted two Russian-speaking global money laundering networks, who laundered billions annually and posed a substantial threat to the UK and international partners. The networks took cash from drugs gangs and other OCGs, as well as crypto-currency from ransomware groups, providing it to Russian sanctioned entities and other threat actors in return. Through doing this, they provided a service that was truly local to global. The networks operated in over 30 jurisdictions, providing services to transnational crime groups such as the Kinahan OCG.
- A significant number of NCA minor disruptions are via Border Force referrals (as noted above). During this period, illicit finance referrals included: the seizure of £26,000 from 2 Chinese nationals stopped at Belfast International airport (forfeiture order issued for seizure of £15,850); and the seizure of £15,000 from 2 Romanian nationals at Belfast International Airport (forfeiture order issued for seizure of £15,000).

Borders

- The NCA has been working with several partners, including the PSNI, to identify opportunities to mitigate exploitation of the Common Travel Area (CTA). This strategic response is being coordinated through the National Borders Strategic Governance Group. CTA abuse continues as seen in the recent the detection of 14 migrants in December 2024 at Loch Ryan, who arrived in a livestock trailer from Belfast Seaport.
- There have been 7 border referrals relating to detections at the Northern Irish airports/ports/postal depots, of which 4 met the criteria for adoption by the NCA (3 referrals being rejected). Of the 4 adopted, 1 referral was related to a class A seizure in the air passenger mode, 2 were related to class B seizures in the air passenger mode, and 1 was related to a class B seizure in the Ro-Ro freight mode. There were a further 2 referrals made at other UK ports/airports with links to Northern Ireland, but none met the criteria for adoption by the NCA.

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National Investigative Capabilities

- The NCA's National Investigative Capabilities (NIC) delivers niche capabilities and specialist resources to UK law enforcement partners including the PSNI through the provision of strategic, operational, and tactical advice, guidance, and support in relation to major crime investigations. NIC includes several specialist units which are generally not replicated within Police Forces and include Major Crime Investigative Support (MCIS) (incorporating the Research Team, Crime Team, and Forensic Medical Advice Team), Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS), UK Missing Person Unit, Expert Evidence Team, Specialist Witness Team and Witness Intermediary Team.
- Between October 2024 – March 2025, MCIS have provided support to the PSNI in **37 investigations, in which NCA specialists have engaged 149 times** with members of the PSNI. The NIC's specialists provide support, guidance and advice to Senior Investigating Officers and their investigation teams to develop investigative strategies. They also provide tactical and practical support through specialist advice in relation to behavioural science in respect of unknown offender and forensic psychology in relation to known offenders, identification of external expertise across a range of disciplines, and sharing of learning and best practice that exists across the UK. This is delivered through in-person deployments, online meetings, telephone calls, and the provision of verbal and written specialist advice and reports and guidance documents focussed on investigative strategies and active/key lines of enquiry. These investigations cover murder, rape, child protection, missing persons, and acquisitive crime. They have involved the deployment of a range of specialist resources including National SIO Advisers, Crime Investigation Specialist Officers, Behavioural Investigative Advisers, Forensic Clinical Psychologist, Interview, Family Liaison, Digital, Search and Forensic Medical Advisers.
- The NCA's Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) received 28 actionable submissions from the PSNI during this period. 10 cases were indexed onto the SCAS database, detailing the victim accounts and the associated SCAS criteria offence against them and offender/suspect details. 11 reports (covering 12 cases) were provided, with 4 cases being proactively analysed. 3 of these included a line of enquiry providing details of potentially linked cases and/or potential suspect details: 2 related to other PSNI cases, and 1 included details of a case from a different force. Additionally, 1 PSNI case was included in an analysis report for a case analysed from another force area, based on behavioural similarity. During this period, SCAS received positive feedback in relation to 2 investigations supported through the provision of external database searches. The support was deemed useful with regards to providing a line of enquiry, as well as closing a line of enquiry.
- The NCA's UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU) is the UK national and international point of contract for all missing persons and unidentified bodies. It is public-facing and advises both police and families of missing persons. During this period, the UKMPU received 43 new missing persons reports and 4 unidentified remains cases relating to Northern Ireland.

UKPPS

- The NCA Central Services Unit provides, as a part of the UK Protected Persons Service (UKPPS), operational support to the PSNI Protected Persons Unit which is aligned to the UKPPS. During this period, the UKPPS has provided 5 new instances of support to PSNI.

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AKEU

- The Anti Kidnap & Extortion Unit (AKEU) provides strategic and tactical advice to police forces, law enforcement, government agencies, and commercial enterprises across the world in live kidnap matters. The AKEU is responsible for deploying incremental, operational support and coordinating NCA assets to aid the investigation of crimes in action. Over this period there have been **9 referrals for kidnapping and 7 for blackmail** to the NCA's AKEU from the PSNI. There were no referrals for Product Contamination during this period.

Organised Immigration Crime

- Additional funding received as part of the newly established Border Security Command (BSC), will bolster the UK's border security and disrupt the criminal people smuggling gangs. A top priority for the Government, this investment will further strengthen efforts to tackle OIC across all regions of the UK and abroad. In Northern Ireland, this includes collaboration through the Joint Fusion Cell (JFC), enabling intelligence coordination and developing more effective targeting across all tiers of the OIC threat. Engagement across a range of multi-agency forums such as the Common Travel Area (CTA) Steering or Tactical Group; and co-chairing the Inland Clandestine OIC Group ensures strategic alignment.
- The NCA are currently leading a proactive investigation concerned with organised criminal group OIC facilitation exploiting the Common Travel Area.