



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland

# **Performance Report**

## **Serious and Organised Crime**

**Q3 and Q4 2025/26**  
**October 2025 – March 2026**

**we care**  
**we listen**  
**we act**

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## Introduction

Serious and Organised Crime has an impact at all levels within Northern Ireland, causing significant economic and societal harm. This type of criminality is planned, co-ordinated and frequently targets the most vulnerable.

Whilst the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) leads investigations into Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) in Northern Ireland, we do so in collaboration with partners, including but not limited to, the National Crime Agency (NCA), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF), Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Our Organised Crime Branch operates as a partner in the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF), Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) and the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) in the fight against serious and organised criminality. Through these partnerships, we are committed to targeting those who seek to exploit the most vulnerable and harm society.



## **Organised Crime Task Force**

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) was established in 2000 and provides a strategic multi-agency forum in order to tackle organised crime and reduce the harm it causes to communities, individuals and businesses in Northern Ireland. The multi-agency partnership is between the Police Service of Northern Ireland, central and Northern Ireland Government Departments, the Policing Board, the business community and the community overall.

## **Joint Agency Task Force**

The Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) was set up to tackle organised and cross-jurisdictional crime. Partner agencies work together collaboratively in a concerted and enhanced effort to protect the public from the threat and harm caused by organised criminality. The objective of JATF is to build on existing frameworks and to increase collective effectiveness within existing operational and financial constraints. The Cross-Border JATF continues to provide opportunities for, and promote real time collaboration, between An Garda Síochána (AGS) and the Police Service in their combined efforts to disrupt the activity of Organised Crime Groups. Collaboration results in real time intelligence sharing, co-ordination of investigative support and joint investigations domestically and internationally.

## **Paramilitary Crime Task Force**

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) is a partnership initiative, targeted at tackling paramilitary linked criminality in Northern Ireland. It comprises of officers and staff from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, HM Revenue & Customs and the National Crime Agency, all working as part of one co-located team, sharing capacity, capability, intelligence and analysis.

## **Performance Ambitions**

The Northern Ireland Policing Board, in partnership with the Police Service, has produced a five year policing plan. This outlines our collective policing ambitions for the period 2020-2025. Through activity which has a minor, moderate and major impact, we aim to reduce the capacity and capability of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and paramilitary organisations, ultimately helping us achieve safer, more engaged and more confident communities. We will achieve this in collaboration with our partners.



- On 05 December 2025 Chief Constable Jon Boutcher welcomed Garda Síochána Commissioner Justin Kelly and National Crime Agency (NCA) Director General Graeme Biggar to Police Headquarters, for a high-level meeting focused on enhancing joint efforts to protect communities across the island of Ireland and the UK. The three senior officers, joined by other senior representatives from the PSNI, An Garda Síochána, and the NCA, discussed a range of mutual priorities. These included ongoing cross-border operations, intelligence sharing, serious and

organised crime, and collective strategies to keep people safe. This was a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the strong partnership between the three agencies and to continue building on established cooperation in tackling threats that span jurisdictions, with our main priority being the public.

- Detectives from Organised Crime Branch have taken part in a largescale national effort to target the criminal exploitation of high street businesses.

The national initiative, known as Operation Machinize, is now in its second phase and is led by the National Crime Agency (NCA). Activity was conducted in cooperation with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), involving the collective efforts of police forces and partner agencies right across the UK. The operation targets organised crime groups who exploit cash intensive businesses for illegal purposes and criminal financial gain.

During the month-long intensified period of action, which took place during October 2025, the Police Service of Northern Ireland carried out the following:

- Over £425,000 in cash seized
- Over £41,600 worth of drugs seized
- Over £18,000 worth of counterfeit goods seized
- 20,000 cigarettes seized
- Over £110,000 of suspected criminal finances have been frozen
- 6 searches conducted by PSNI under warrant, leading to 1 arrest made and 2 Community Resolution Notices issued
- Over 60 premises were visited



- On 02 March 2026 Justice Ministers and law enforcement agencies across the island of Ireland come together in Cavan for the 2026 cross-border police conference.



*Jim O'Callaghan TD, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice Northern Ireland, Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly and Chief Constable Jon Butcher*

These cross-border conferences provide a key opportunity for law enforcement agencies on the island of Ireland to come together to discuss and share activities, experience and knowledge building on day-to-day operational activities.

The attendance of Jim O'Callaghan TD, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice Northern Ireland, Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly and Chief Constable Jon Butcher, opening the conference reinforces the commitment to, and importance of, the collaborative and joint cross-border policing approach to disrupt, degrade and dismantle organised crime gangs operating into and across the island of Ireland.

The theme of the cross-border police conference is 'Tackling the Business Model of Organised Crime 'One Threat – Shared Responsibility' and topics that will be explored include 'People', 'Finance', 'Technology' and 'Merchandise'.

Law Enforcement Agencies in Attendance include

- An Garda Síochána
- Irish Revenue Customs
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland
- UK National Crime Agency
- HM Revenue & Customs
- UK Border Control



•PSNI had three winners and a joint award at the second Northern Ireland Blue Light Awards which recognises local heroes that make communities safer and stronger. As well as the winners, the organisation gained two more Highly Commended awards at the event.

The prestigious ceremony took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the evening of Thursday 26th February.

In the words of the organisers the Blue Light Awards aim to: “Honour the bravery,

commitment and professionalism of those working in emergency services. Winners from the regional gala now have the opportunity to advance to the national Grand Final of the Blue Light Awards, which will be held in London in 2027.

“This event not only recognises individual achievements but also fosters community spirit and appreciation for the vital work done by emergency services across Northern Ireland.”

Blue Light Team of the Year – Winner: Navy Team, Organised Crime Branch.

Innovation and Operational Excellence Award – Winner: Assistant Chief Constable Davy Beck.

## About this Report

The aim of this report is to summarise the performance and activity of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in regards to Serious and Organised Crime for Q1 and Q2 2025/26 (April 2025 - September 2025 inclusive).

It can be read in conjunction with the National Crime Agency Performance Report to give an overview of law enforcement activity impacting Northern Ireland, as we seek to disrupt Organised Crime Groups with the aim of protecting individuals, communities and businesses in line with our key purpose of “Keeping People Safe”.

The key areas of focus in this report are overall disruptive impact and the main serious and organised crime types identified in Northern Ireland by the Police Service. These are highlighted in the following table and aligned with the corresponding areas in the National Crime Agency Performance report, to allow for better read across.

## Focus area alignment-

<b>Police Service of Northern Ireland, Serious and Organised Crime Types</b>	<b>National Crime Agency- Serious and Organised Crime areas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paramilitary related criminality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Those that dominate communities and chase profits in the criminal marketplace</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal use of firearms</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child sexual abuse and exploitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exploiting the vulnerable and organised immigration crime</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern slavery and human trafficking</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cybercrime</li> </ul>	<p><b>Undermine the UK's economy, integrity, infrastructure</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fraud</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money Laundering</li> </ul>	

## Performance Summary-

<b>Overall impact – Organised Crime Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 major</li> <li>• 21 moderate</li> <li>• 172 minor</li> </ul>
<b>Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 arrests</li> <li>• 12 people charged/reported</li> <li>• 57 searches</li> </ul>
<b>Drugs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs with an estimated street value of £3,972,645 million seized by OCB</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Use of Firearms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 shooting incident</li> <li>• 6 firearms recovered by police</li> <li>• 534 rounds ammunition seized</li> </ul>
<b>Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 children no longer deemed at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation</li> <li>• 44 Persons of Concern identified</li> </ul>
<b>Modern Slavery &amp; Human Trafficking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 475 National Referral Mechanism referrals received</li> <li>• 8 persons arrested</li> <li>• 7 searches conducted</li> </ul>
<b>Cybercrime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 187 engagements with local victims of cybercrime (businesses and individuals)</li> <li>• 72 Cyber Protect engagements with local organisations</li> <li>• 48 Cyber Prevent presentations and 10 engagement sessions with education institutions and departments</li> </ul>
<b>Money Laundering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash seizures (POCA) totalling £496,189</li> <li>• Account Freezing Orders totalling £1,235,925</li> <li>• 9 Confiscations totalling £411,939</li> <li>• 6 restraints granted with a value of £1,821,500</li> </ul>

## Overall Disruptive Impact

# Overall Impact

## Disruptions Against Organised Crime Groups

6

MAJOR

21

MODERATE

172

MINOR

## Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF)

19

ARRESTS

12

REPORTED/  
CHARGED

57

SEARCHES

## Use of Firearms

9


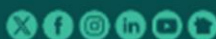
SHOOTING  
INCIDENTS

6

FIREARMS  
RECOVERED

534

AMMUNITION  
ROUNDS SEIZED

 report  
online  [psni.police.uk](https://psni.police.uk)



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland

The Police Service of Northern Ireland currently assesses and records disruptions against Organised Crime Groups (and individuals involved in organised crime) using APMIS on the following levels; Minor, Moderate and Major.

## **Impact**

### **Minor**

Limited disruptive impact on Organised Crime Group or individual with limited or short-term impact on capability, and/or limited positive impact on community, and/or limited positive change in criminal market or vulnerability.

### **Moderate**

Noticeable disruptive impact on Organised Crime Group or individual with noticeable or sustained impact on capability, and/or noticeable positive impact on community, and/or noticeable positive change in criminal market or vulnerability.

### **Major**

Significant disruptive impact on Organised Crime Group or individual with significant or long-term impact on capability, and/or significant positive impact on community, and/or significant positive change in criminal market or vulnerability.

Disruptions are also assessed against the Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare framework, often referred to as the 4Ps.

## **Response**

### **Pursue**

Prosecuting and disrupting those committing Serious and Organised Crime using all legislative powers.

### **Prevent**

Stopping the problem at source, deterring people from commencing or continuing engagement in Serious and Organised Crime.

### **Prepare**

Reducing the impact and harm of Serious and Organised Crime on witnesses and victims where it takes place.

### **Protect**

Increasing protection from Serious and Organised Crime for potential victims, the borders and government processes.

## P Grading

The P Grade is assigned on completion of a MORILE assessment. The grading is assigned following the various selections made across the different assessment areas.

**P1** - A tactical issue that is impacting on an international scale, which presents a very high level of reputational risk to the owning organisation, both within the UK and overseas. It is possible that the tactical issue may have links to terrorist activity, or could impact upon international political relationships as a result of its activity. The tactical issue itself poses a significant risk to the UK and/or UK victims, and is likely to display a high level of criminal intent and capability.

**P2** - A tactical issue that is impacting on a national or international scale, which presents a high level of reputational risk to the owning organisation, both within the UK and overseas. The tactical issue is likely to attract a national or international level of media and/or political interest, should it become known in the public domain. The tactical issue displays a high level of organisation and capability, and is likely to be having a significant impact on UK victims.

**P3** - A tactical issue likely to be impacting on a regional or national level. The tactical issue is likely to attract at least a regional level of media and/or political interest, should it become known in the public domain. The tactical issue displays a degree of criminal organisation, and may be having an ongoing impact on UK victims.

**P4** - A tactical issue that is believed to have had a criminal impact upon the UK, but may not currently be engaged in ongoing criminal activity. Alternatively, the tactical issue may be engaged in ongoing criminality within the UK, but this does not meet the level outlined in the criteria for P1-P3.

## Summary of Activity

As of the beginning of April 2026, the Police Service of Northern Ireland is responsible for investigating 48 Organised Crime Groups and two tactical vulnerabilities.

Since October 2025, the number of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) under active investigation by the PSNI has increased from 44 to 48 reflecting the dynamic nature of organised crime.

Numbers of disruptions against Organised Crime Groups is an indicator of demand and performance, however other contextual factors ought to be considered to understand the true impact and importance of interventions.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the activity recorded on APMIS against Organised Crime Groups for the period 01 October 2025 – 31 March 2026

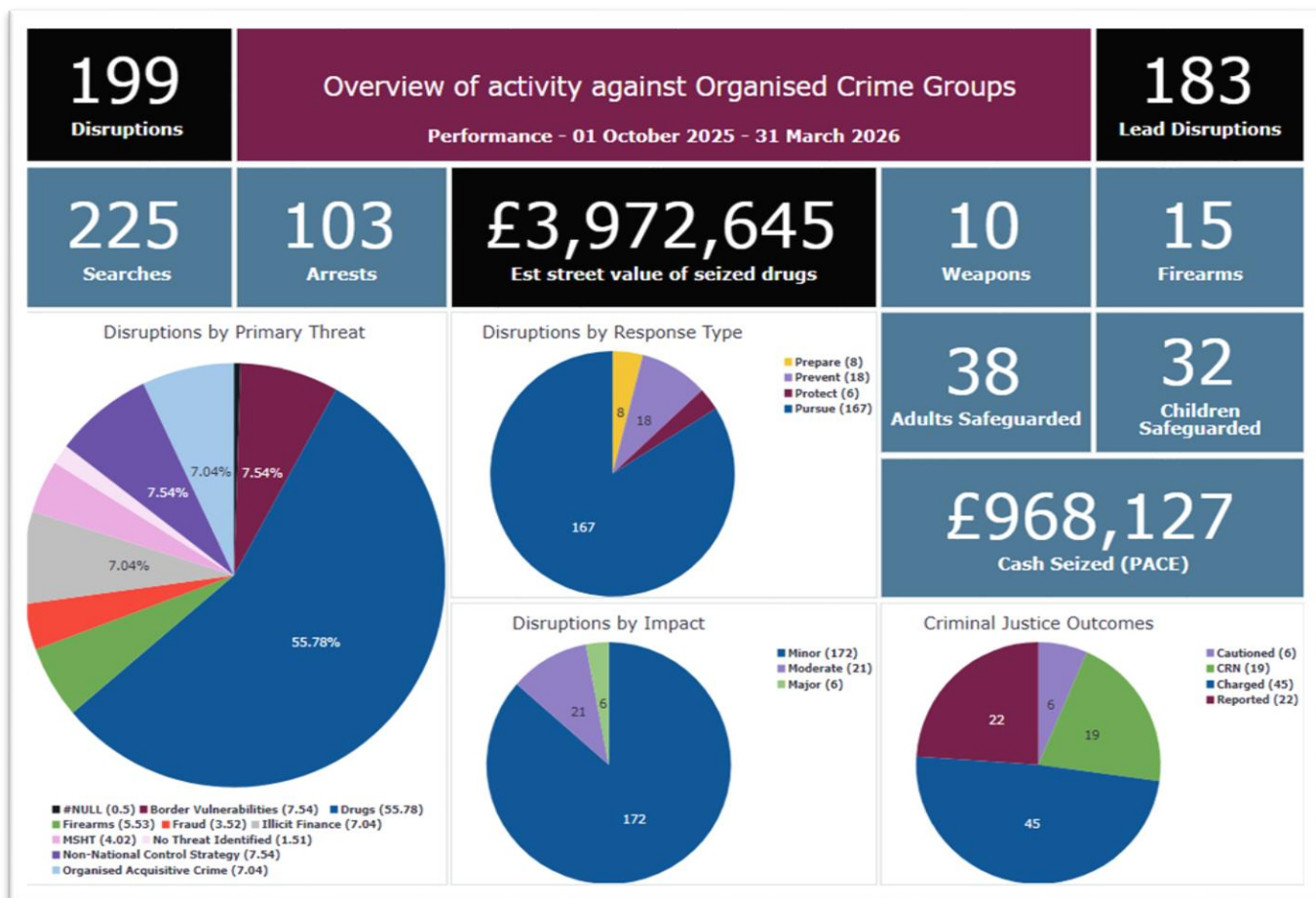


Figure 1

As can be seen in Figure 1 above during this reporting period detectives from Organised Crime Branch investigating Organised Crime Groups conducted the following activity:

- 225 Searches
- Arrested 103 people
- Seized 25 Firearms and Weapons
- Seized drugs with an estimated street value of almost £4 million (£3,972,645).
- Charged or Reported 67 people.
- Recorded 199 Disruptions on APMIS against OCGs.
- Seized almost £1 million in cash (PACE)

Of the 199 Disruptions, 6 were recorded as Major disruption, 21 Moderate and 172 Minor. 167 of the Disruptions were under the Pursue pillar, 18 Prevent, 8 Prepare and 6 Protect.

- On 06 October 2025 detectives from C1 Organised Crime Branch conducted a search of a Nail Bar on the High Street, Portadown during which an electronic communication device and paperwork were seized. Approximately £8,000 cash was seized and one woman was arrested following an admission of being in the country illegally.
- On 06 October 2025 officers from Organised Crime Branch supported colleagues from HMRC during a search in the Newry area. This led to a major disruption of an OCG due to a large scale and elaborate cigarette factory being located. Seven Ukrainian men were also safeguarded as a result of this operation. This was the biggest purpose built factory ever located in Northern Ireland.

# Offender Management

Currently the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) and Organised Crime Units have 18 Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPO) in place. Many of these orders relate to persons who are currently serving custodial sentences, however it is anticipated that they will assist in the management and reduction of repeat offending upon their release.

# Operation FUSION

In order to assess and identify the crime related threats resulting from abuse of the Common Travel Area, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has developed a capability, provided by a partnership approach to current and emerging threats by criminal hauliers and any other emerging crime type.

Due to the scale, sophistication and geography of criminality involved, this multi-agency approach has been implemented within our Organised Crime Branch and partner agencies under the banner of Operation Fusion.

Reportable outcomes for October 2025 – March 2026 are depicted in Figure 2 below;



Figure 2

# Specific Activity

- On 16 October 2025 detectives from Organised Crime Branch carried out searches of a commercial premise, a residential property and extensive out buildings in the Newry area in relation to the supply of drugs by Organised Crime Groups operating on both sides of the border. As a result of the search cash totalling approximately £350,000 in sterling and euros, Class A and Class B drugs worth an estimated street value of over £50,000, a substantial number of illicit cigarettes and a significant quantity of jewellery were seized during the multi-agency operation. Colleagues from Neighbourhood policing, Tactical Support Group, UK Border Force and HMRC all assisted in this extensive operation. Three people are due to attend for interview in respect of a number of offences.
- On 22 October 2025 officers from Organised Crime Branch carried out a number of vehicle searches at Belfast Port. During the operation a positive indication from a

drugs dog led to the seizure of an HGV Lorry. The load of this lorry was searched on 27 October 2025 and revealed 11kg of herbal cannabis, 3,500 pregabalin tablets and a significant quantity of counterfeit designer goods. Enquiries are ongoing.

## Operation PHARMIC update

Operation Pharmic is our response to the international investigation Operation Venetic. This was the National Crime Agency-led UK law enforcement response to the takedown of EncroChat in 2020. This was an encrypted communication channel used by criminals to plan illegal activity, such as drug importations and the movement of cash.



During this reporting period;

- A 40 year old man was successfully extradited from Spain to Northern Ireland on 13 January 2026. His extradition was as a result of years of detailed investigations by both the National and International law enforcement partners alongside detectives from the PSNIs Organised Crime Branch into drugs supply involving the EncroChat encrypted communications platform. He was arrested in relation to 91 offences including supply and conspiracy to supply Class A and B drugs with possessing, acquiring and transferring criminal property.
- A 37 year old man appeared before Belfast Crown Court on 14 November 2025, in connection with drug offences linked to EncroChat, an encrypted phone network used by criminals. The investigation and subsequent sentencing stems from Operation Venetic which, led by the National Crime Agency (NCA), was a collective UK law enforcement response to dismantle EncroChat. He was sentenced to 5 and a half years – half to be served in custody and half on licence. The court has also imposed a Serious Crime Prevention Order.

The defendants arrest followed searches of a property in Crossmaglen in 2019 and 2020 and subsequent investigation by detectives from Organised Crime Branch. He was charged with, and has pleaded guilty to, 16 offences. The list includes criminal property offences, such as conspiracy to transfer criminal property and transferring criminal property. Drug offences relate to Class A, B and C drugs and included offering to supply Class A, namely cocaine and being concerned in the supply of a Class A controlled drug, namely cocaine.

Throughout the case PSNI worked closely with partners, including prosecutors from the Public Prosecution Service and the NCA. The latter collaborated with Europol and French authorities to gather evidence, which was in turn shared with, and used to assist, our Police Service investigation.

It's thanks to such collaborative efforts, backed up by the digital forensic evidence recovered by detectives from the Police Service's Cyber Crime Centre, that we are able to bring the 37 year old before Court.

## Paramilitary Criminality

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force is a Law Enforcement Task Force comprised of officers and staff from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the National Crime Agency and HM Revenue & Customs. This partnership allows each agency to share resources, capacity and capability with the aim of impacting paramilitary organised crime groups through a robust law enforcement response; thereby contributing to making people and communities safer from the harm caused by Paramilitarism.

The remit of the Paramilitary Crime Task Force has been defined to investigate groupings which are assessed to not present a threat to national security, focusing operational activity based on the risk they present to the communities of Northern Ireland, and the criminality in which they are engaged. The identification and assessment of groups which present a threat to national security is made jointly by the Police Service and Security Service. Those groups are investigated by the Police Service Terrorism Investigation Unit, who work closely with the Security Service.

Before a grouping is formally adopted by the Paramilitary Crime Task Force, an assessment is conducted to ensure the level of investigation is proportionate to the criminality, i.e. serious and organised crime.

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force is currently investigating six paramilitary organisations;

- East Belfast UVF
- West Belfast UDA
- Belfast INLA
- North West INLA
- South East Antrim UDA
- North Antrim UDA

These groups are involved in a wide range of criminality including but not limited to; assaults and shootings, supply and distribution of controlled drugs, blackmail (extortion), intimidation, money lending and money laundering.

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force is accountable in line with our Policing Plan, to respond to the scale of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland through a whole system approach. By working together with our partner agencies, we can provide a more effective and tailored response to the increasing volume and complexity of serious and organised crime within these paramilitary organisations.

Phase two of the Tackling Paramilitary Activity and Criminality Programme, coupled with the publication of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Strategy, provides the framework for the strategic and operational delivery of targeted activity against serious and organised crime within Northern Ireland, enabling us to meet the four strategic outcomes of the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy;<sup>1</sup>

- Reduced levels of organised crime affecting Northern Ireland
- Reduction in the level of harm caused by organised crime affecting Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland is a better place to live and do business; and

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<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy 2021-2024

- A sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system for tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland is in place

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force operate under the Pursue, Prepare, Protect, Prevent and Partnership banners, to provide a multi-agency operational response to criminality linked to paramilitaries and the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme. We do this through leadership targeting of high-level figures in Organised Crime Groups, in particular those linked to paramilitary groupings. Through the combined use of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) and taxation powers, maximum use of unexplained wealth orders and proactive and reactive investigations, we can strengthen our criminal justice response and target the group's ability to profit financially.

During this reporting period the Paramilitary Crime Task Force have made a number of referrals to partner agencies, these referrals add to the Protect / Prepare strands of the Police Service Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. Included in this reporting period are three referrals to Social Services regarding children being present at a search, during which drugs were located. By working with other agencies regarding matters, which are outside of the criminal justice response, allows the Paramilitary Crime Task Force to initiate safeguarding where appropriate and also have an impact on those people who are intent on causing harm to our communities.

## Impact

Since the inception of PCTF until 31 March 2026, the following outcomes have been achieved in relation to the specific paramilitary crime type;

- 1,414 searches
- Over £12.3 million (£12,394,236) of controlled drugs have been recovered
- 455 weapons and firearms have been seized
- 570 arrests have been made
- 600 people have been charged/reported for prosecution
- Over £108 million (£108,603,069) in revenue loss has been prevented

This activity has reduced the capability of paramilitary organised criminals to benefit financially from their illegal activity and to use extreme violence to threaten and coerce individuals and cause harm within communities.

Between 01 March 2025 and 28 February 2026, there were no security related deaths. Shootings reduced by 50%, bombings increased by 220%, paramilitary style assaults reduced by 21.74% and paramilitary style shootings reduced by 71.43% compared to the previous 12 months.

*Latest published NISRA Security Statistics figures published 06 March 2026.*

Figure 3 shows the activity by the Paramilitary Crime Task Force, for the period 01 October 2025 – 31 March 2026

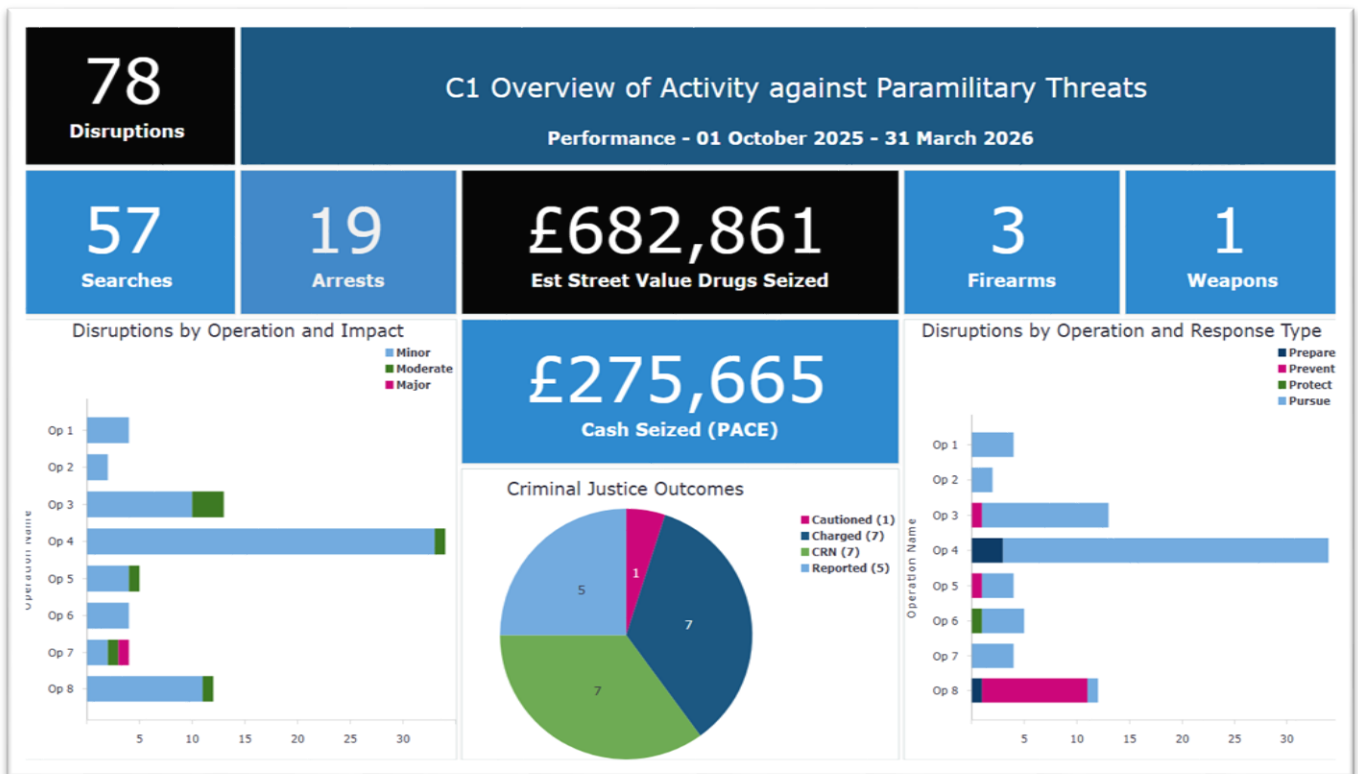


Figure 3

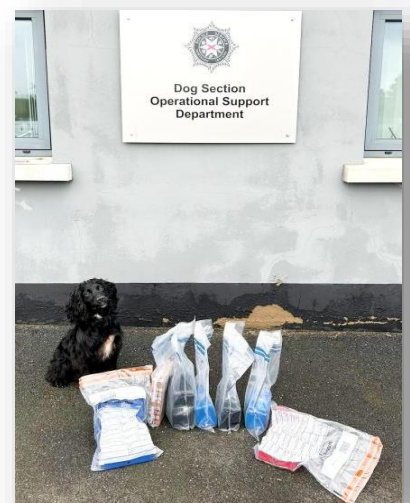
## Illegal Money Lending

Illegal Money Lending is an underreported vicious crime which preys on the most vulnerable in our society. Therefore we must take proactive steps to help victims come forward and have the confidence to engage with police.

- On 15 January 2026 officers from the Illegal Money Lending Team arrested a 50-year-old woman in west Belfast on suspicion of illegal money lending and associated criminality. Enquiries are ongoing in respect of this investigation.
- Officers from the Illegal Money Lending Team conducted planned searches of three residential properties in the Donard Drive and Tirowen Drive areas of Lisburn on Thursday 19 February 2026. Also assisting with the searches was Police Dog (PD) Ice, a cocker spaniel who was instrumental in the success of the operation.

In one property, which appeared in quite a derelict state, PD Ice successfully located cash locked in metal boxes which had been hidden under two sets of floorboards in different rooms. He also found additional cash hidden in an attic of one of the properties. The total amount of cash seized from the searches was £90,000. Designer watches and a small amount of drugs were also seized.

Following the searches, a 36-year-old man and 59-year-old woman were arrested on suspicion of illegal money lending and money laundering offences



under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Both have since been released on bail, to allow for further police enquiries.

- The Illegal Money Lending Team has received additional funding for one police officer; recruitment to source a suitable candidate has commenced and anticipated to be in post early Q1 2026/27.

## Specific Activity

Highlighted below are some examples of our most notable successes during this reporting period in respect of tackling paramilitary activity-

- On 16 October 2025 detectives from Organised Crime Branch investigating drugs criminality linked to the INLA charged a man to court following two searches in the Derry/Londonderry area. The 62-year-old was charged with possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply and two counts of possession of a Class A controlled drug. A 53-year-old man also arrested during this operation has been released on bail to allow for further police enquiries.
- At a hearing at Belfast Magistrates' Court on 7 November 2025, a forfeiture of £20,099 was awarded in favour of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The investigation was led by Economic Crime Unit and linked to the on-going Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) investigation into the suspected drugs-related criminality, money laundering and illegal money lending of the West Belfast UDA.
- Officers from the Paramilitary Crime Task Force carried out a number of searches in properties in Belfast and Holywood on 17 November 2025. The searches are part of an ongoing investigation into suspected drug criminality linked to the West Belfast UVF. These searches resulted in the seizure of a quantity of suspected cannabis and a number of mobile phones.

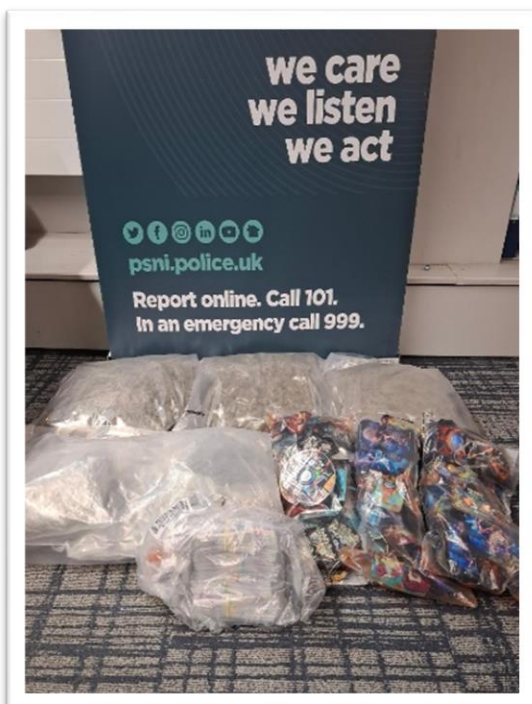
- Police investigating suspected criminality linked to the West Belfast UDA, conducted a search on 03 December 2025 – seizing cash and a number of other items. The operation in north Belfast involved collaboration between several teams within the Police Service, including our Tactical Support Group (TSG), Dog Unit, Auto Crime Team and Paramilitary Crime Task Force. A large sum of cash, a quantity of suspected Class C controlled drugs, tobacco, and electronic devices were seized from the property. The items will undergo forensic examination as enquiries continue.



- On 28 January 2026 detectives from the Paramilitary Crime Task Force investigating West Belfast UDA charged a 22 year old man to court in relation to a number of offences, including possession and possession with intent to supply of Class A, B and C controlled drugs, possessing a firearm and ammunition in suspicious circumstances and possessing prohibited ammunition. He appeared before Belfast Magistrates Court on 25 February 2026.
- On Friday 20 February 2026 detectives from the Paramilitary Crime Task Force conducted a search in the Danesfort area of Belfast, resulting in the seizure of a number of items, including suspected Class A, B and C controlled drugs, drug related paraphernalia, cash, suspected ammunition, firearms and component parts. Three men, aged 25, 37 and 55, and a woman, aged 56, were arrested as a result of these seizures. The 25-year-old man and 56-year-old woman were charged overnight to appear at Belfast Magistrates Court for the offences of possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply and possessing criminal property. The man was further charged with possession of Class A and Class C controlled drugs, possession of Class A and Class C controlled drugs with intent to supply, possessing ammunition and a firearm in suspicious circumstances and using someone to mind a weapon.

The 27-year-old man and 55-year-old man were charged to appear before Belfast Magistrates Court on Friday 20 March 2026. They were charged with possession of a Class B controlled drug and possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply. The 27-year-old was further charged with possession of a Class A controlled drug, possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply and converting criminal property. The 55-year-old man was also charged with possessing criminal property.

- Detectives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) charged two people to court following planned searches at three properties in the north Belfast area on 10 March 2025. This forms part of an investigation into criminality linked to West Belfast UDA.



A 36-year-old woman and 39-year-old man have both been charged with drug-related offences, including possession of a Class A controlled drug and possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply, possession of a Class B controlled drug, and possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply.

Other charges include possessing criminal property, concealing criminal property, evading good excise duty and VAT, and entering into an arrangement to acquire criminal property.

# HM Revenue & Customs



HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) continues to play a central role within the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF), with embedded Fraud Investigation Service (FIS) officers applying civil and criminal powers to disrupt paramilitary-linked criminality. Since December 2023, HMRC’s operating model has been fully integrated, strengthening intelligence sharing and coordination. All activity is delivered jointly with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), ensuring safe and effective operations.

## Northwest INLA

HMRC identified sustained illicit tobacco supply linked to INLA networks. Retail inspections resulted in seizures of cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco (HRT), alongside excise assessments and cases progressing through the courts. A major intervention involving 300,000 cigarettes and 244,000g of HRT, plus a vehicle, prevented approximately £3.5 million in revenue loss. HMRC also supported PSNI activity, contributing to additional seizures in the area.

## West Belfast INLA

Joint HMRC/PSNI operations delivered a high detection rate across INLA-linked retail premises. Seizures included cigarettes, HRT, and cash, with further goods identified through follow-up activity. Excise assessments were issued, and enforcement progressed from earlier cases. A historical case concluded with a suspended custodial sentence, demonstrating the impact of combined enforcement and prosecution.

## West Belfast UDA

HMRC supported PSNI-led operations targeting UDA-linked criminality, resulting in significant seizures of cigarettes and HRT. One major operation alone delivered revenue loss prevention exceeding £2.4 million. Although some searches yielded no HMRC commodities, enforcement remains ongoing. A prosecution case involving large quantities of illicit tobacco is progressing.

## North Antrim UDA

HMRC focused on financial disruption and non-compliant trading structures. A trader declared insolvent was found to be operating through shadow directors, resulting in disqualification action and financial safeguards. Separately, an individual linked to over 589,000 cigarettes and 50,000g of HRT has been reported, with revenue evasion exceeding £645,000. Cash seizures under POCA have been applied, with charging decisions pending.

## **Tier 2 Tobacco Supply Chain**

A significant organised tobacco network involving INLA, UDA, and UVF factions remains under investigation. HMRC has delivered disruption through large-scale seizures, vehicle forfeitures, arrests, and multiple prosecution files.

Operations have targeted both supply chain infrastructure and repeat offenders, including large consignments intercepted in transit. Revenue loss prevented across these actions totals several million pounds.

## **Conclusion**

HMRC's role within the PCTF demonstrates a strong, intelligence-led approach to tackling paramilitary-linked crime. Joint operations with PSNI have disrupted supply chains, removed illicit goods, and protected substantial revenue.

A combined strategy of enforcement, prosecution, and financial intervention—including excise assessments, asset seizure, and director disqualification—ensures a comprehensive response targeting both offenders and the financial structures supporting them.

# **Drugs**

The illegal supply of drugs has a harmful impact on communities, finances, well-being, health services and can exploit societies most vulnerable. The organised criminal activity associated with drugs as a commodity to facilitate and enable crime is of significant concern and provides a high level of financial gain for criminals.

The Police Service Drugs Control Strategy and Action Plan, in tandem with our drugs target operating model, sets out our key priorities and how we aim to effectively target the harm caused by illegal drugs, their supply and misuse in Northern Ireland.

## **Priority 1**

- To minimise the number of deaths resulting from the use of illegal drugs or misuse of drugs in Northern Ireland
- To work in partnership with key partners to address the harm and death rates resulting from drug misuse in Northern Ireland

## **Priority 2**

- Enhance public confidence in the policing response to tackling drug related criminality and misuse in communities
- Contribute to reducing the harm caused by drugs supply and misuse
- To maximise Criminal Justice Outcomes

## **Priority 3**

- Approach the problem of drug criminality, activity and harm from a partnership and 'whole systems' perspective; working together to enhance and highlight Northern Ireland's response to tackling drug related activity and misuse

Our key messaging focuses on the impact and harm associated with the issue of drugs, their supply, demand and use, with a strong focus on Prevent, Protect and Pursue.

Recent examples of such activity include:

### **Prevent**

- Police have been actively working with charity Crimestoppers to combat the drug crime involving ketamine in Northern Ireland. This initiative is led by D/Supt Avine Kelly and aims to raise awareness about the dangers of ketamine use and encourages the public to report any information about those dealing the drug. Our efforts include monitoring online stores and tracing the supply chains, which are often hidden behind social media platforms.
- Forensic Science Northern Ireland are expediting examination of pills and powders to provide up to date information on new threats and substances. PSNI are also feeding into Project HOUSEBUILDER, the NCA co-ordinated response to the emergence of Nitazenes in the UK.
- Work is continuing with a range of partners including the Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drugs Alliance (NIADA) Drugs Related Deaths Task force and partners in the Organised Crime Task Force to develop multi-agency approaches. Cross-border partnership work is also ongoing.
- Our Drugs Expert Witnesses received 147 requests for statements from other departments.

### **Protect / Prepare**

- Work has commenced with the Public Health Agency (PHA) around concerts and festivals to make appropriate preparations in an attempt to reduce the risk of drugs at such future events.
- An event was attended by police with Northern Ireland Electricity around the dangers encountered at cannabis grows. Detectives from Organised Crime Branch are working with specialist Police Search Advisors to create relevant best practice guidance.
- The PSNI rolled out a Naloxone programme in September 2021 with 61 officers trained in administering this and 53 officer's currently carrying Naloxone with them. In 2025 Naloxone was administered 15 times. During Q3 and Q4 it was administered 10 times.

## **Drugs Deaths**

In the period 01 October 2025 – 30 March 2026, operational figures indicate that there were 45 deaths suspected to have been related to the use of illicit prescription drugs and/or controlled drugs. This is a decrease of two from the same reporting period the previous year (47 deaths recorded 01 October 2024 – 31 March 2025).

PSNI officers in Belfast have been trained in the use of Naloxone and have administered it, and as a result are actively helping to prevent/reduce drug related deaths on our streets.

*Figure 4 below, trends suspected drug related deaths since 2020*

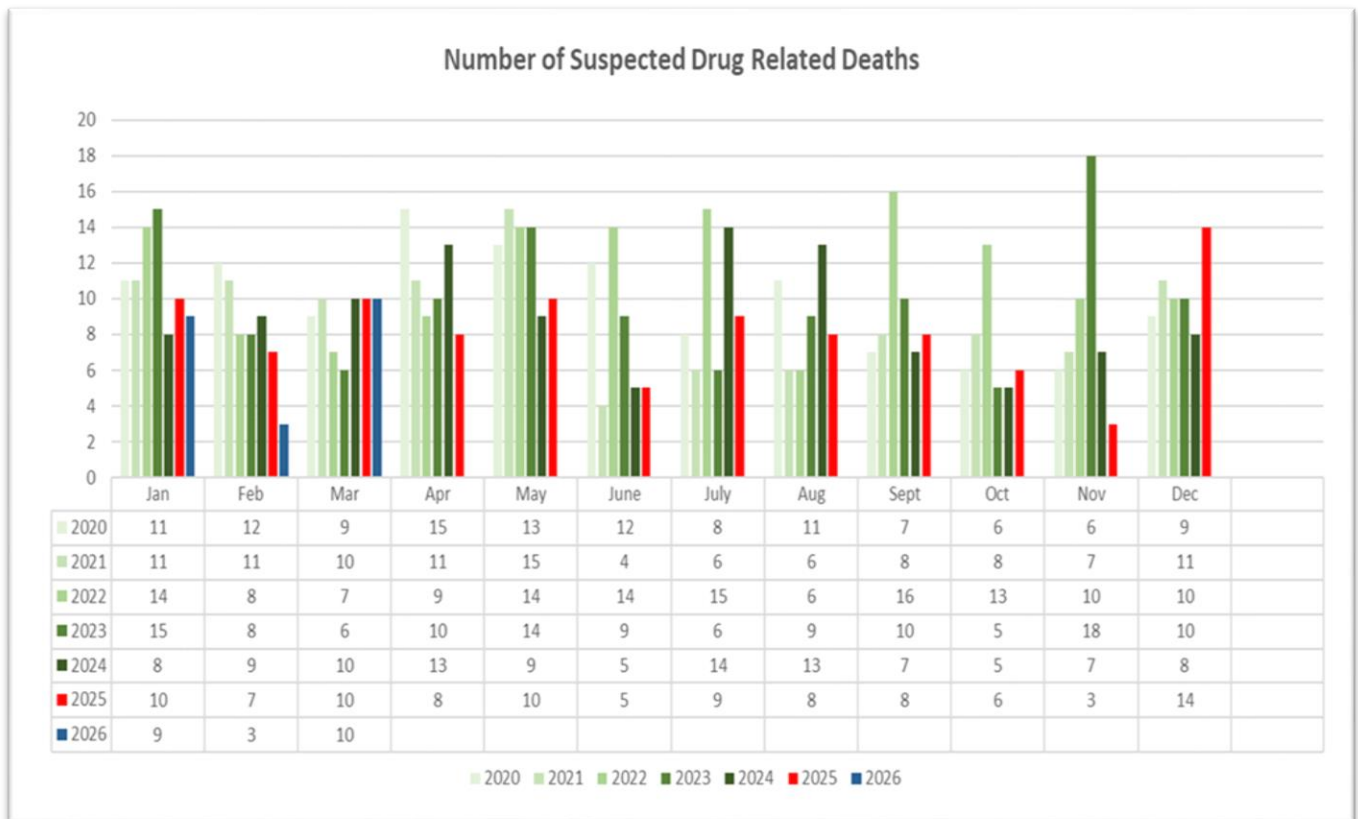


Figure 4

\*\*\* These figures do not include suicide or accidental overdose of prescription medication. \*\*\*

## Drugs Seizures

The number of drug seizure incidents recorded by the police has shown a mainly upwards trend between 2006/07 and 2022/23, and a declining trend from 2023/24 onwards.

Drug-related arrests generally increased between 2006/07 and 2019/20. A fall in each of 2020/21 and 2021/22 was followed by an increase in 2022/23; 2023/24 and 2024/25 has shown a further decrease.

In 12 months from 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025:

- There were 7,388 drug seizure incidents, an increase of 125 (1.7 per cent) on the previous 12 months.
- There was an increase in the number of Class A and Class B seizure incidents and a fall in the number of Class C seizure incidents.
- Cannabis (Class B) was the most commonly seized drug, followed by cocaine (Class A), and pregabalin (Class C).
- There were 3,139 drug-related arrests, a decrease of 165 (5.0 per cent) when compared with the previous 12 months, but remains nearly double the levels seen in 2006.

\*Verified NISRA drugs figures for period ending 31 March 2026 were not available at time of publishing and will be discussed retrospectively each reporting period. Data will be published in May 2026.

Figure 5 below, shows an overview of all Organised Crime Branch activity against the drugs threat during this reporting period.

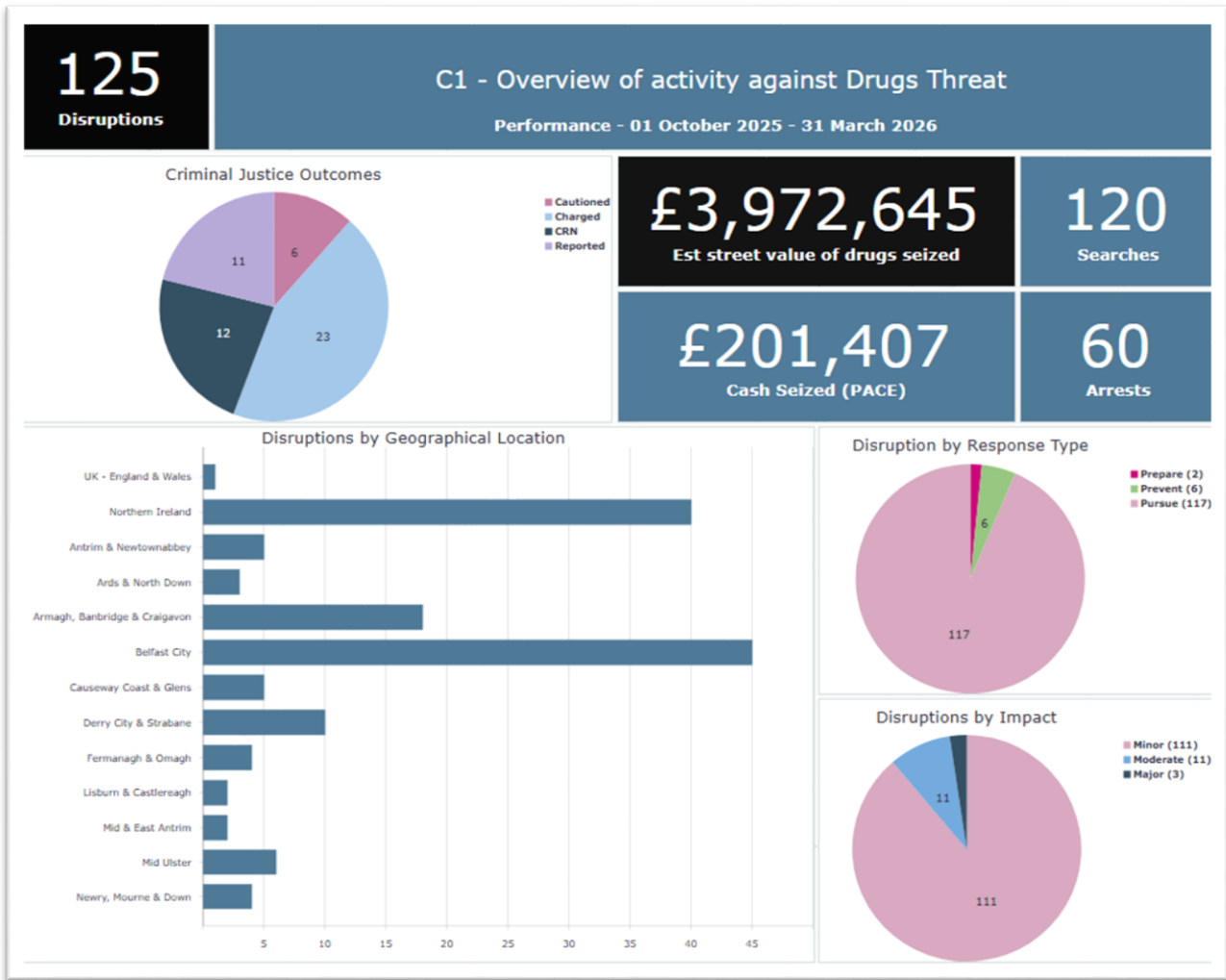


Figure 5

## Specific Activity

The following examples have had an impact across Northern Ireland and the wider UK in respect of drug related activity:

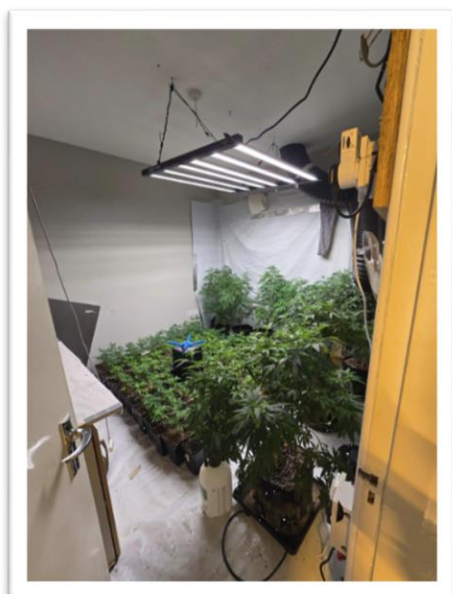
- On 04 October 2025 detectives from Organised Crime Branch carried out a search of a property in the Broomhill area of Portadown, uncovering a sophisticated cannabis factory. 145 cannabis plants worth an estimated street value of £120,000 were seized and a 30 year old man was later arrested and charged with a number of drugs offences including cultivating cannabis, possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession with intent to supply and being concerned in the supply of a Class B controlled drug.



- On 16 October 2025 detectives from Organised Crime Branch carried out searches of a commercial premise, a residential property and extensive out buildings in the Newry area in relation to the supply of drugs by Organised Crime Groups operating on both sides of the border. As a result of the search cash totalling approximately £350,000 in sterling and euros, Class A and Class B drugs worth an estimated street value of over £50,000, a substantial number of illicit cigarettes and a significant quantity of jewellery were seized during the multi-agency operation. Colleagues from Neighbourhood policing, Tactical Support Group, UK Border Force and HMRC all assisted in this extensive operation.



- On 27 October 2025 officers from Organised Crime Branch with the assistance of officers from Operational Support Department stopped a vehicle on the M1 motorway. As a result approximately 1kg of suspected Class A drugs were seized. Two men were arrested and £30,000 cash was seized following this operation. Both were released on police bail to allow for further enquiries.



- Detectives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Branch, assisted by colleagues from Operational Support Department, have arrested a man and seized suspected cannabis plants with a potential street value of £320,000 in Bangor and Magherafelt. The plants were located following searches of properties.

A man aged in his 20s was arrested in the Magherafelt area on suspicion of cultivating cannabis and dishonestly extracting electricity. He was later charged with a number of drug related offences and is due to appear before Londonderry Magistrates' Court on 12 November 2025.

- Two men were sentenced at Dungannon Crown Court on 03 December 2025. The 30 year old and 28 year old both pleaded guilty to cultivating cannabis, possession of a Class B controlled drug and dishonestly using electricity at previous sittings of

Dungannon Crown Court. One of the men further admitted using a motor vehicle without insurance.

The 28 year old was sentenced to two years for both cultivating cannabis and dishonestly using electricity, with half to be served in custody and half on licence. He was also sentenced to three months for possession of a Class B controlled drug.

The 30 year old man was sentenced to two years and eight months for both cultivating cannabis and dishonestly using electricity, with half to be served in custody and half on licence. He was also sentenced to three months for possession of a Class B controlled drug, as well as three months' imprisonment and six penalty points for using a motor vehicle without insurance.

On 27 February 2025 detectives from Organised Crime Branch conducted a search operation of a residential property at Menapien Way in Enniskillen and located 111 cannabis plants growing in four rooms, along with evidence of cultivating equipment such as fans, lighting and watering systems. One man was arrested at the property and, following extensive enquiries, a second suspect was identified. On 11 June 2025, he was arrested at the M22, Antrim. On this date he was also detected driving a motor vehicle with no insurance.

- A 37-year-old was sentenced at Laganside Crown Court on 04 December 2025, after a proactive search of his vehicle led to the discovery of a significant quantity of cannabis. He pled guilty to possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply at an earlier hearing, and was sentenced to 24 months imprisonment.
- Officers from Organised Crime Branch stopped a vehicle after it disembarked a ferry at the port in Belfast on 22 November 2024. The defendant was the driver and sole occupant of the car. When the vehicle was searched, approximately 11kg of cannabis was located in a sophisticated hide within the vehicle.

This sentencing demonstrates our ongoing commitment to bringing those involved in organised crime to justice. Working alongside our partners, we will continue to disrupt the activities of organised crime groups, who bring nothing but harm to the most vulnerable within our communities.

- Officers from Organised Crime Branch identified three persons of interest, and on 06 December 2025, they were stopped in a vehicle travelling on the M2. The vehicle was seized and three men - aged 33, 36 and 37 - were arrested on suspicion of cultivating cannabis, possession of Class B controlled drugs with intent to supply and possession of Class B controlled drugs.

The 37-year-old was charged with cultivating cannabis, possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply and criminal damage. Two other men, aged 33 and 36, who were arrested on suspicion of the same offences, have been released on bail to allow for further police enquiries.

- Detectives from Organised Crime Branch arrested two men, aged 22 and 17 after a planned search of a property in the Draperstown area on Wednesday 28 January 2026. A quantity of suspected Class A and Class B controlled drugs with an estimated

street value of £235,000 alongside fireworks, cash and mobile phones were seized. The 22 year old was arrested in relation to being concerned in the supply of Class A and Class B controlled drugs whilst the 17 year old was arrested for offences including possession of Class A and Class B controlled drugs with intent to supply. Both were released on bail pending further enquiries.

- On 23 January 2026 two men were arrested on suspicion of various drugs offences after detectives from Organised Crime Branch working alongside officers from Newry District Support Team investigated allegations of criminal activity. The two men, aged 36 and 40, were both charged to court for cultivating cannabis, possession of a Class B controlled drug and possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply. Both were subsequently remanded for their suspected involvement in these offences.



- On 26 January 2026, two men age 50 and 38 years, received custodial sentences after pleading guilty to a number of drugs related offences relating to the seizure of an estimated £2.1 million in drugs in May 2024.

Officers from Organised Crime Branch welcomed the sentencing of the 50 year old who received 12 years' imprisonment after pleading guilty for being concerned in the supply of a Class A controlled drug, being concerned in the supply of a Class B controlled drug and possession of a Class B drug with intent to supply. Half to be served in custody and half on licence.

The 38 year old received a sentence of six years and six months imprisonment after pleading guilty to possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply with half to be served in custody and half on licence.

These offences related to a search of a shed in the Annaghnaeboe Road in Coalisland where 210kg of cannabis resin was found. Further enquiries revealed the drugs had been transported into NI on a ferry from Scotland in a trailer towed by a vehicle driven by one of the defendants, with the other travelling in an accompanying vehicle.

- Police searches in Strabane on 12 February 2026 resulted in the seizure of suspected Class A, B & C drugs.

Two suspected imitation firearms, cash, drugs-related paraphernalia, fireworks and a number of electronic devices were also seized during searches in the town that morning.



Involved in the searches were officers from a number of departments including local Sperrin Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), Tactical Support Group, District Support Team and the Dog Unit, with Police Dogs Cooper and Marshall. Enquiries are ongoing.

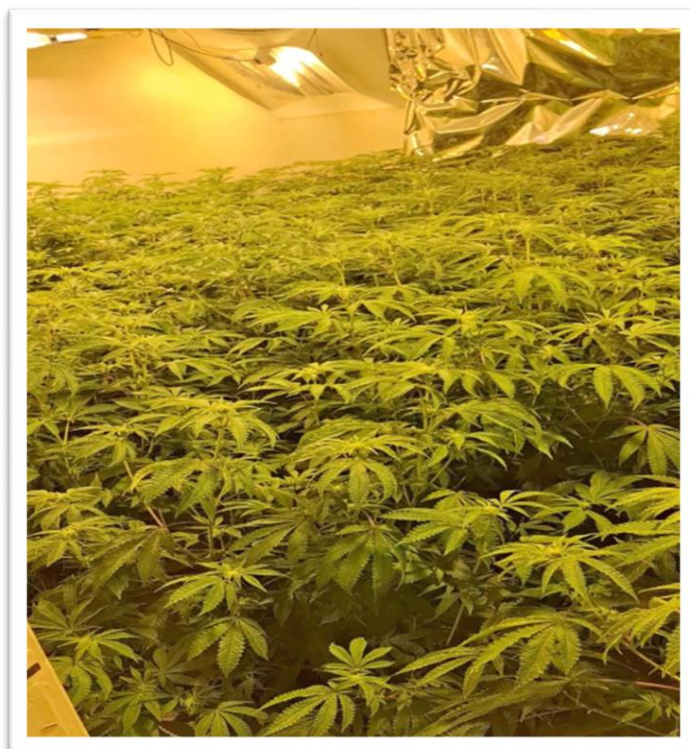
Additionally, police made an arrest while conducting a search, also in Strabane, as part of follow-up enquiries. A man aged 19-years-old was arrested on suspicion of possession of a Class A controlled drug, possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply, possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply, being concerned in the supply of a Class A controlled drug, being concerned in the supply of a Class B controlled drug, and suspicion of possession of a firearm or ammunition in suspicious circumstances.

- On 23 February 2026 a vehicle was stopped and searched in the Marine Highway area of Carrickfergus. The occupants, a man aged 39 and a woman aged 32, were arrested after approximately £12,000 cash was located during the search. During a follow up search at a property in the Dunmurry area detectives from Organised Crime Branch seized approximately 1kg of suspected cocaine, along with designer goods. Both persons were overnight charged to appear before Belfast Magistrates' Court.



- On 26 February 2026 police carried out a house search in the area of Carlingford Street, Belfast. Detectives from Organised Crime Branch seized approximately 1.5kg of suspected cocaine and ketamine, a quantity of suspected cannabis and a sum of cash. A 22-year-old man and an 18-year-old woman were arrested on suspicion of a number of offences, including possession of Class A and B controlled drugs, possession with intent to supply Class A drugs and possession of criminal property. The man was charged overnight to appear before Belfast Magistrates' Court and the woman has been released on bail pending further enquiries.

- Detectives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Branch seized a large quantity of drugs following the discovery of a cannabis factory in Enniskillen. On 20 March 2026, officers carried out a search of a property in the Drumgarrow Court area and uncovered a large number of cannabis plants along with other drug paraphernalia. A 22-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of a number of drug related offences. He was subsequently charged with possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply, possession of a Class B controlled drug, cultivating cannabis, dishonestly using electricity, no driving licence, and using a motor vehicle without insurance.



## **Criminal Use of Firearms**

Police recorded statistics are collated and produced in regards to the security situation in Northern Ireland. See Figure 6 for a monthly breakdown over the past 24 month period. This includes shots fired by terrorists, shots fired by the security forces, paramilitary style attacks involving shootings and shots heard (and later confirmed by other sources).

Latest figures show that there were 9 shooting incidents related to the security situation during the last 12 months, compared to 18 during the previous 12 months.

Figure 6 shows the number of shooting incidents for the past 24 months (March 2024 to February 2026) related to the security situation.

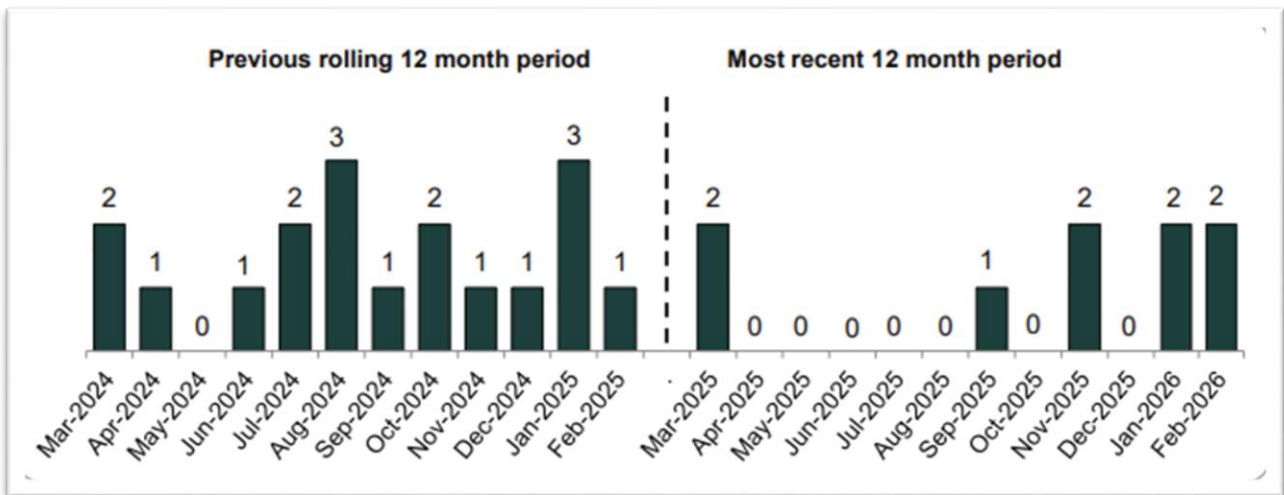


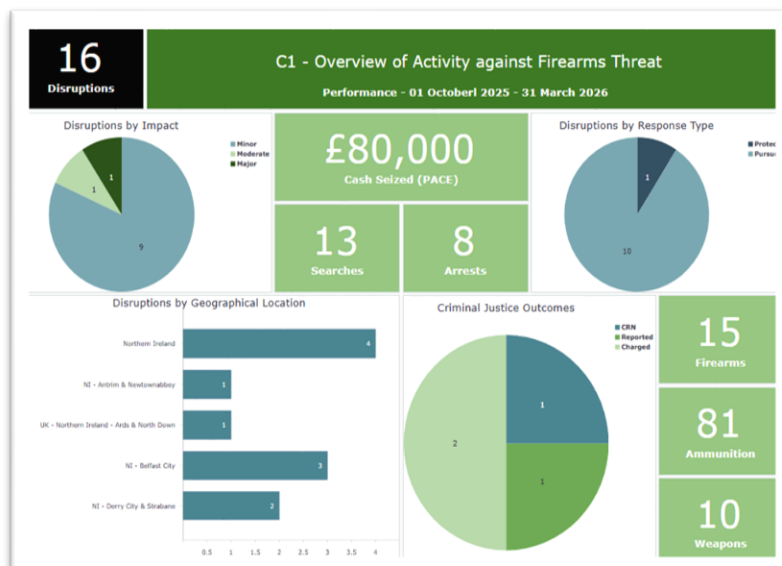
Figure 6

During 01 March 2025 to 28 February 2026:

- There were no security related deaths, as was the case during the previous 12 months. The last such death occurred in January 2024.
- There were 16 bombing incidents, compared to 5 during the previous 12 months and 9 shooting incidents, compared to 18.
- There were 18 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 23 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (8). All 18 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- There were 2 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 7 during the previous 12 months. Belfast and Ards and North Down each experienced one such attack. Both casualties were aged 18 years or older.

Figure 7 below, shows an overview of all Organised Crime Branch activity against the primary threat of firearms during this reporting period.

*Firearms figure include imitation firearms and also non-crime seizures for safekeeping etc.*



## Specific Activity

The following examples have had an impact across Northern Ireland in respect of the criminal use of firearms;

- Detectives from the Terrorism Investigation Unit conducted searches in the Currynierin and Creggan areas of Derry/Londonderry on 14 March 2026. The searches were carried out as part of an ongoing investigation into dissident Republican criminality. A number of items were seized for further examination, including two suspected firearms - enquiries are ongoing.



- On 16 March 2026 detectives from Organised Crime Branch conducted a warranted search at a dwelling in Londonderry. As a result one man and one woman were arrested and a number of items seized from the property including a firearm, ammunition and a significant amount of controlled drugs with an

estimated street value of over £561,000. The woman was bailed pending further enquiries and the man was subsequently charged with the following offences; possession of a firearm in suspicious circumstances, possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply, possession of a Class A controlled drug, possession of a Class B controlled drug with intent to supply, possession of a Class B controlled drug, possession of criminal property. He was later remanded into custody.



## Child Sexual Exploitation

### PREVENT

During this reporting period 10 new Persons of Concern were identified by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) officers and 15 were no longer assessed to be a Person of Concern due to successful intervention activity.

Escalation processes are now in place to ensure that those children most at risk in the community are appropriately facilitated to safeguard and prevent further offences against the children. During this quarter the Escalation Process was used regarding 2 vulnerable young persons.

### PREPARE

During this quarter the CSE team along with the PSNI Illegal Money Lending Team and local neighbourhood officers were invited to the closing event of Bangor Alternatives SAFE (Safer Alternatives For Everyone) Exploitation Awareness on 10 March 2026. The event was held at the Clandeboye Lodge sponsored by the Communities in Transition programme from the Executive Office. Bangor Alternatives delivered a learning programme to pupils from

Strangford College, Glastry College and Nendrum College over a 4 week period. During the closing event police participated in a panel discussion regarding Criminal, Sexual and Financial Exploitation of Children, how it manifests in Northern Ireland and the importance of raising awareness to improve the resilience of communities and protect children from harm.

**PROTECT**

At the end of this reporting period, 37 children are currently identified as At Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

During this period, there were 12 children identified as being no longer “At Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation”, as a result of successful interventions and other actions against Persons of Concern (POC) attached to these individuals.

**PURSUE**

At the end of this reporting period, 44 Persons of Concern are currently identified as suspected of posing a risk to children in relation to CSE, which is the most there has ever been.

Proactive investigations are ongoing in respect of all these individuals. In addition to the investigations, all will have been visited by Police Service of Northern Ireland, Child Sexual Exploitation officers and received advice and warning in regards to their interactions with young people. Eight of these individuals are currently on remand for various offences, six are currently subject to court imposed bail conditions and three are subject to police bail conditions. During this period Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) have been served on three Persons of Concern in respect of five children at risk with 11 Persons of Concern currently subject to Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs).

Figure 8 below shows the number of Persons of Concern (POC) identified in each Trust area for the past six months (01 October 2025 to 31 March 2026).

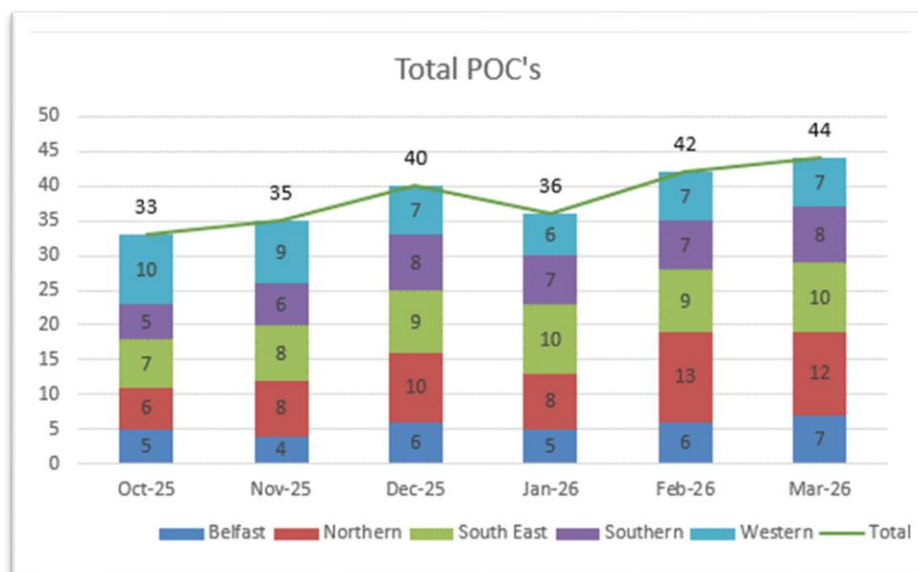


Figure 8

# **Child Internet Protection**

Figure 9 below highlights the number of intelligence referrals received by the Child Internet Protection Team (CIPT) over the reporting period Q3 & Q4 2025/26.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>New NCA referrals received</b>
October	2025	73
November	2025	76
December	2025	68
January	2026	69
February	2026	88
March	2026	83

## **PREPARE**

We are working closely with the PSNIs Digital Forensic Unit and Information & Communications Services to upgrade investigative technology and software. This will aid in upskilling investigators tackling Child Sex Abuse Material offending. This will enhance speedy identification of children at risk of online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.

## **PREVENT**

We are continuing to work with partner agencies within the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and the Online Safety committee. This ensures the right messages are getting to the right people at the right time.

## **PURSUE**

At the end of the reporting period the Child Internet Protection Team had 132 investigations at the post-search stage and 160 cases currently pre-conviction passing through the criminal justice system. CID are currently carrying out further investigations.

CIPT are progressing investigations into sexual communication with children where a decoy rather than a child has been involved. For this reporting period there have been 42 cases reported, 24 of which originated from Online Child Abuse Activist Groups

Intelligence development and risk assessment is currently ongoing with 341 referrals.

Throughout this reporting period, there were 457 new Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) referrals received by intelligence unit. Compared to the 555 referrals received during the same period last year. CIPT officers conducted 52 searches, during which 22 arrests were made and 21 files submitted to the PPS over this period.

The Victim Identification and Image Grading (VIIG) team completed the review of 188 packages of images extracted from suspect's devices. These packages contained circa 19.4 million

images. Around 76,000 indecent images were recovered from the 129 packages which were found to contain IIOC to varying degrees. 66 victims were identified.

## **PROTECT**

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders continue to be applied for in cases where people have been found guilty of Online CSAE offences. These allow the PSNIs Offender Investigation Units to take active steps to protect the public by preventing and detecting any recidivism.

## **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking**

During this reporting period, 475 referrals were received regarding Potential Victims of Human Trafficking (PVoT) from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Numbers increased by 77 referrals when compared to the same period last year.

Of the 475 people referred through the NRM there were:

- 25 male children
- 16 female children
- 34 specific details were not known
- 241 men
- 159 women

Of the 475 referrals received, 47 related to allegations of exploitation within Northern Ireland, and the rest alleged exploitation overseas.

During January 2026 a significant operational shift occurred with the launch of the devolved NRM decision-making pilot. Marking a pivot towards localised, faster identification of trafficking victims rather than relying on centralised UK systems.



### Perceptions of Modern Slavery – Northern Ireland telephone survey results

- More than nine-in-ten (92%) respondents felt modern slavery is present in Northern Ireland, unchanged from 2021/22, also 92%. Sexual (89%) and labour (85%) exploitation were again viewed as the most prevalent types.
- The proportion of respondents who felt they would recognise the signs or indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery has increased, from 40% in 2021/22 to 45% in 2023/24.
- The vast majority of respondents, 93%, indicated they would report their concerns of someone being a victim of modern slavery, a slight decrease from 94% in 2021/22. Remaining consistent with 2021/22, findings showed respondents would be most likely to report their concerns to the police (87%).

- Just under half of respondents, 48%, felt the courts and police were effective at dealing with modern slavery, down from 52% in 2021/22.

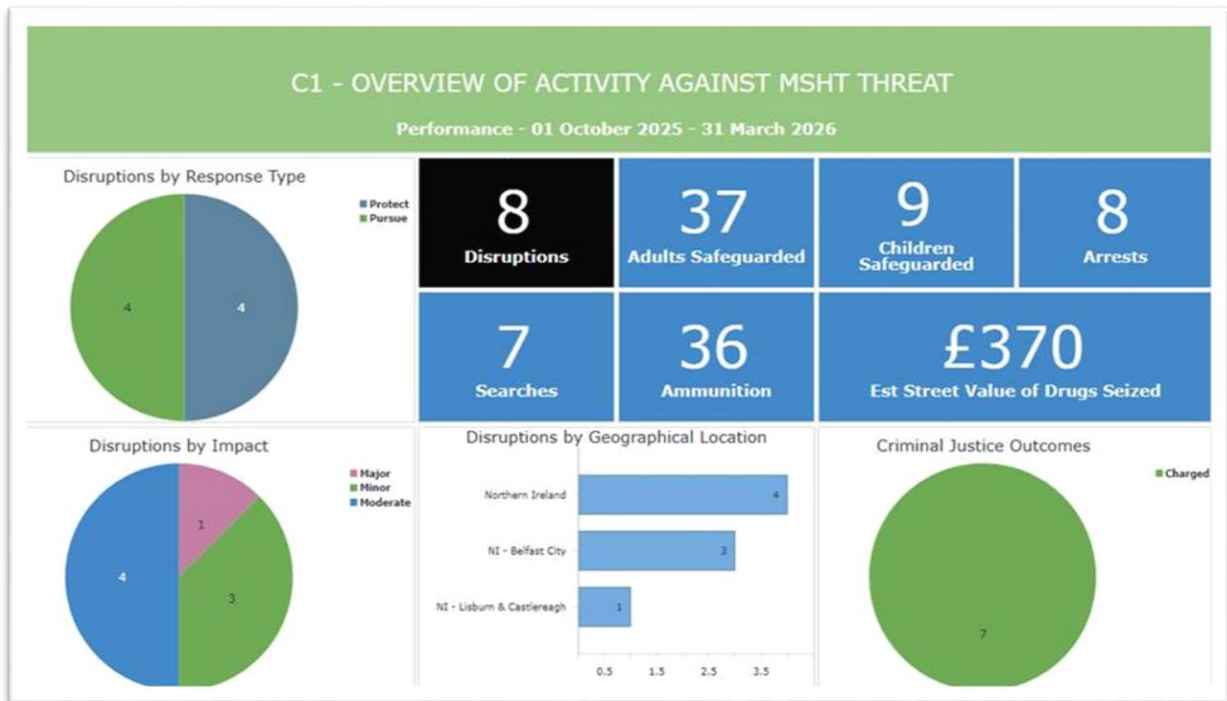


Figure 10 shows the activity against the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking crime type, for the period October 2025 – April 2026

## Specific Activity

- On 07 January 2026, following an extensive large scale human trafficking operation detectives from Organised Crime Branch charged a 72 year old man with a further 14 related offences. The 72 year old, produced from Magilligan Prison was charged with rape and human trafficking offences in respect of three further female victims.
- During 2025 police developed a positive working relationship with Belfast based homeless support charity 'The Welcome Organisation'. This arose as a result of the recent investigation into the sexual exploitation of young, vulnerable women with substance addiction. Staff at the Welcome Organisation have been trained to recognise the signs of potential exploitation and can contact MSHT detectives directly with concerns.
- A number of other investigations were commenced by PSNI during the reporting period, mainly in relation to S.22 defence / Criminal Exploitation cases arising from proactive drugs operations such as Cannabis production. Officers have been mindful of the recent ruling in respect of the VCL & AN case and have proactively sought to safeguard the individuals and investigate their accounts.
- **Local National Referral Mechanism Panel Pilot:**  
A local Panel for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Process for Northern Ireland began receiving referrals from 1st January 2026 initially as a three month pilot that has now been extended by a further 12 months.

The devolved child decision making pilot, shifts NRM decisions for child victims from the central Single Competent Authority (SCA) within the UK Home Office to local multi-agency panels. These panels in Northern Ireland consist of decision makers, from police and health and social care services, handle Reasonable Grounds and Conclusive Grounds decisions for children under 18.

## **Cyber Crime**

Cyber Investigation, Protect and Prevent Tasking's October 2025 – April 2026: **301**

Activity includes:

- 187 Cyber Protect engagements with local victims of cybercrime (businesses and individuals),
- 56 Cyber Protect engagements with local organisations,
- 48 Prevent presentations,
- 3 Prevent engagements with individuals,
- 7 Prevent engagements to various educational establishments.

### **Protect and Prepare**

Over the reporting period, the Cyber Protect Officer had **187** contacts with local victims of cybercrime (businesses and individuals) who were referred by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) as the result of a report to Report Fraud, the Cyber Pursue Team or those identified through protect partnerships with local organisations.

Examples of Cyber Protect engagements:

- Cyber Protect support provided to 'All Island' victim organisation through the delivery of table top exercises in Northern Ireland followed by joint delivery in Dublin with AGS National Cyber Crime Bureau,
- Support from our Cyber Protect Officer also included **56** engagements with local organisations and partner agencies with over **2,800** people taking part in Cyber Protect sessions which included:

-Cyber Escape Room sessions delivered in partnership with CyberFirstNI to pupils at local post primary schools including: Strathearn School (Belfast), Shimna Integrated (Newcastle), Down High (Downpatrick) and St Kevins (Lisnaskea),

-Cross Border panel session held by PSNI Cyber Protect Officer and AGS National Cyber Crime Bureau counterpart at Dublin cyber security business event,

-Delivery of Cyber Protect CPD session to Belfast Solicitors Association,

-Ongoing Cyber Protect awareness training delivered in partnership with local Health Trust and Government Departments,

-Support to local government elected representatives in partnership with Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Councils and PSNI,

-Support to ScamwiseNI Partnership with delivery of Cyber Escape Room at Annual Conference,

-Cyber Protect awareness presentation delivered to 100+ local business representatives in partnership with Ulster Bank,

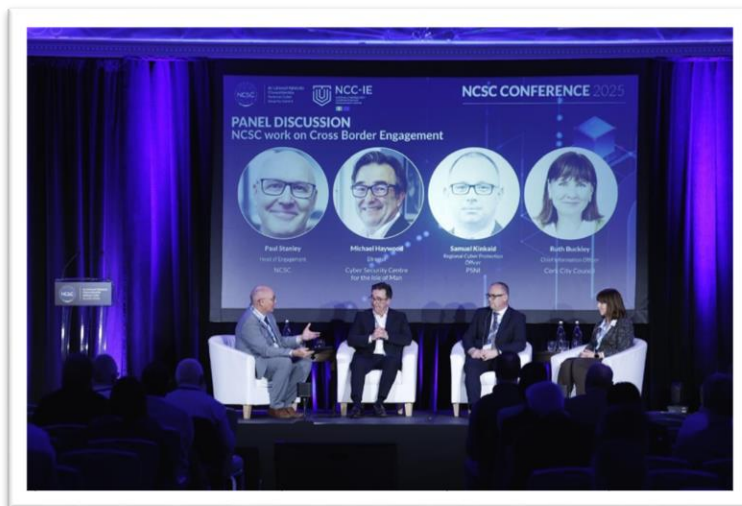
-Cyber Protect support to NICSC CyberNI week in the form of: Presentations delivered to SMEs and Charities, Escape Room delivery at CyberFirstNI North West Schools event and panellist at private sector cyber security session.

Participation as invited speaker at cyber security events including:

- Cross Border panellist at National Cyber Security Centre (Ireland) Annual Cyber Security Conference,
- Cross Border panellist at Irish League of Credit Union Compliance Connect Cyber Conference in NI,
- Cyber Security sector panellist at Holyrood Connect NI Public Sector Cyber Security Conference.



*Cross Border Panel session held in Antrim for Northern Ireland Credit Unions. Attended by PSNI Cyber Protect Officer and AGS NCCB Counterpart.*



NCSC Ireland

Conference –  
Cross Border Panel at NCSC Ireland Annual Conference

## Cyber Protect – Phishing

Thanks to reporting by a number of local organisations, Cyber Protect has been made aware of a phishing campaign currently circulating in NI. As with other recent campaigns, Threat Actors have been utilising compromised email accounts to phish trusted inbox contacts, raising the prospect of end users interacting with emails as they know the senders.

As shown opposite, in this particular campaign, the email contains an Excel file within which is a **Review Document** link with the potential to compromise credentials.


**Subject Line Format:** Reference – Senders Company / Domain Name – NDA  
e.g. Subject: 12345 – J Bloggs – NDA or Subject: AB12345 / J Bloggs / NDA

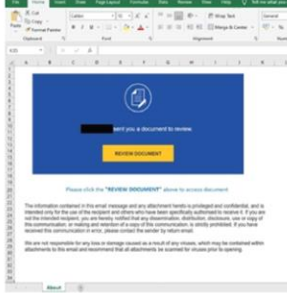
**Advice:**

- Ensure staff are aware of the current campaign, the use of Excel and how to report.
- Utilise phishing proof MFA and Conditional Access to minimise risk of authorised access.
- Monitoring for email subject lines referencing 'NDA'.

**Reporting:**

- If subject to an email compromise, reports can be made to [Report Fraud](#).
- Details (screenshots) can also be shared with [cyberprotect@psni.police.uk](mailto:cyberprotect@psni.police.uk)





Report online. Call 101. In an emergency call 999 [psni.police.uk](https://psni.police.uk)

*Phishing Alert – Example of alert issued to Protect Partners*

## Prevent

Over the reporting period October 2025 - March 2026, the Cyber Prevent Officer had a total of **48** individual presentations, **3** Prevent engagements with individuals and **7** engagements to various educational establishments at different levels as well as increasing awareness with community groups and internal staff which include the following:

- Attendance at the Belfast ICC for EMPOWER GIRLS event - Cyber First event where 700 Year 8 girls from 24 different schools were in attendance from across the province,
- Engagements and presentations with Belfast Metropolitan College and South Eastern Regional College,
- Numerous other presentations to primary and secondary/grammar schools across Controlled, Maintained and Integrated education sectors in Northern Ireland as well as Cyber choices presentations at numerous parents events within schools,

- Prevent attendance at the 'Our Modern Troubles' event in The Guildhall Derry which was attended by Deputy Chief Constable Singleton, Justice Minister MLA Naomi Long and other MLAs as well as Mayor Of Derry. Also in attendance were representatives from local secondary school pupils and teachers,
- Attendance at the Smartphone free childhood event in Newtownards chaired by MP Jim Shannon and attended by local North Down and Ards primary and secondary school principals,
- Meeting with MLA Michelle Guy, Stormont Online Safety Committee in conjunction with PSNI Strategic partnerships and provided Cyber Choices information,
- Cyber Choices presentations with Girls Brigade/Boys Brigade and Guides groups,
- Cyber Prevent engagement and presentations with the ROC charity - Redeeming Our Communities in Larne.

## **Pursue**

Over the reporting period, **Cyber Investigators** continued with core Cyber Dependant crime including Ransomware (including live mitigation support), Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and Unauthorised Access-Hacking. The Cyber Crime Investigations Team have also absorbed further Cyber Enabled investigations, including Cryptocurrency hacking/fraud and COM Group offending.

- **Cryptocurrency-** Cyber Investigations have witnessed a rise in Cryptocurrency investigations, including operational assistance referrals. In February 2026, Cyber Investigators assumed an investigation into the recovery of a significant Cryptocurrency hack and theft from a victim in NI amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds. Extensive track and trace analysis and liaison with law enforcement partners has established evidence of a suspect in England who has been arrested. Enquiries are ongoing.
- **Ransomware-** Ransomware remains the most prominent Cyber Dependant crime which impacts organisations, businesses, sectors and individuals. Since January 2026, Cyber Investigations have mitigated several attacks, including the targeting of a Construction company, a Technology Group and Fuel supply subsidiary.
- **COM Offending-** In April 2026, Cyber Investigators and Digital Forensics officers completed a search and arrest disruption in respect of swatting attacks internationally and Indecent Images of Children. Relevant digital devices have been seized and evidence has been captured. Cyber Investigators are investigating several similar incidents.
- **Sadistic Online Exploitation (SOE Offending) –** Cyber Crime Investigation Team have taken the organisational lead in respect of this risk – this captures COM (Community Online Networks) offending, a dangerous phenomenon involving online groups who collaborate to cause high-level harm.
- **Education Authority, Network Intrusion and Data Exfiltration -** In April 2026, Cyber Investigators became aware of a reported network intrusion at the Education Authority. This involved the access to over 400,000 user accounts. This was followed by a protect

mitigation tasking to complement ongoing internal analysis and review of threat actor access. Following resolution of attack pathways and suspect access to relevant accounts, a suspect was detected and a relevant search and arrest operation actioned. The investigation continues.

- **Dark Web Investigation** - In January 2026, Cyber Investigators developed information in respect of illicit Dark Web activities involving online fraud and hacking. Enquiries are ongoing.
- **Unauthorised Access (Hacking cases)** - Cyber Investigators have assumed several network intrusion cases over the reporting period. Such cases can involve the use of malicious tools by suspects to access and cause disruption. Motivations vary from financial gain to intrigue.

Officers from Organised Crime Branch launched a sequenced approach to our Cyber Transformation project with the rebranding and restructuring of teams to better support frontline policing. This will help deliver improved service through new tools, technologies and team structures introduced incrementally through late 2025 and beyond.

All rebrands and reorganisations form part of an overall Cyber Transformation project. The launch of the new Digital Forensics Portal and the new unit name signal the beginning of the transformation of digital forensic services in PSNI. Incremental changes to team structures will occur from late 2025, with full implementation expected in February 2026, intended to improve service delivery to frontline officers by hosting examination clinics at selected operational stations and increased on scene support.



## **Fraud and Money Laundering**

In the past six months, Economic Crime Unit (ECU) have continued to focus on the Prevent, Protect, Partnership and Pursue themes contained within the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. ECU teams provide support to Organised Crime Branch and the wider organisation by providing advice and taking Restraint and Confiscation matters to Court as well as conducting their own investigations (both proactive and reactive) along with providing internal and external engagement.

## PROTECT

On Thursday 6th November 2025 colleagues in Northern Ireland from across policing, finance, communications and other partner agencies came together at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim to discuss Fraud. The partnership is presently known as ScamwiseNI and is now entering its 10th year in 2026. As part of its growth, it is now entering a phase of rejuvenation and is about to embark on a brand refresh.

The event itself focused on developing practical approaches to protect the public from fraud, enhance awareness of new trends and support staff in responding effectively.

Following an address by the keynote speaker, Dr Elizabeth Carter, attendees were then split into syndicates. These teams then took part in a Cyber Escape Room challenge, Serious Games with Ofcom in respect of Romance Fraud and were jointly presented to by the Bank of Ireland and Danske Bank in relation to the work they are doing to protect their customers. The partnership is ever-growing and the Ulster Farmers' Union were welcomed to it at this event.



## Prepare

Economic Crime Branch have developed a bespoke Money Laundering Course that is delivered at an enhanced level. Money laundering is recognised as being a key enabler of crime and this forms part of the robust approach PSNI strives to take in this area. The course delivery addresses crime of this nature within the local Northern Ireland context, whilst maintaining a national and world view. This training has been provided to two cohorts of Economic Crime Specialists with 25 Detectives and Financial Investigators upskilled to date. This area is now being developed further and workshops have been delivered to those who deal with such matters outside of the core specialism of Economic Crime as Financial Intelligence Officers. Wider delivery through Continuing Professional Developments (CPD) for the organisation is in development for 2026/27.

The Economic Crime Unit have also provided training to external partners, both private and public, in relation to professional enablers and how company structures may be abused by organised criminals to launder money. PSNI recognise that partnership and information sharing is key in this area to tackle Organised Crime and protect those vulnerable in society. Key themes have been Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, as well as business activity without an economic rationale as this can be a red flag.

## PARTNERSHIP

Members of Economic Crime and Cyber Investigation Teams were hosted by South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SWROCU) detectives based in the South West Regional Economic and Cyber Crime Unit (SWRECCU) in Bristol. The purpose of the visit was to learn about their innovative approaches to tackling financial crime and improving investigative practices.



## PURSUE

Organised Crime Branch Economic Crime Unit (ECU) play a critical role in identifying, investigating, and disrupting serious and organised crime. The reactive and proactive teams work collaboratively across the service, drawing on intelligence and investigative expertise to target those who profit from criminality. Through close partnership with internal and external partners such as the National Crime Agency (NCA), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Companies House, financial institutions, and also other law enforcement partners, we adopt a proactive and intelligence-led approach to dismantle criminal networks, recover illicit assets, and reduce the harm caused to communities across Northern Ireland.

Some key examples of work by the Unit are as follows:

- Economic Crime Unit played a key role in Operation Machinize 2 which is a National intensification operation designed to disrupt organised crime groups using cash-intensive businesses to launder criminal proceeds, evade tax, and facilitate wider criminality including modern slavery and illicit goods distribution. The teams worked in partnership with internal partners and external partners including HMRC and Home Office Immigration Enforcement in carrying out searches and visits to premises and this resulted in - over £425,000 in cash being seized, over £110,000 in funds being made subject to Account Freezing Orders, approximately £41,600 of controlled drugs seized and counterfeit goods valued at over £18,000 seized, approximately 20,000 illicit cigarettes were also recovered and during the intensification period 6 search warrants were executed, 1 person was arrested and 2 Community Resolution Notices were issued.



- Economic Crime Unit provided support to a suspected illegal money lending and money laundering investigation linked to West Belfast UDA. An account freezing order to the value of £20,099 was successfully obtained following application to the Courts and following investigation this was successfully forfeited.
- Local Policing Teams were supported during an investigation into suspected drugs supply and this led to cash seizures of £76,405, €900 and \$4,400. These seizures are being progressed under Proceeds of Crime Act legislation and the investigation into the source of the funds has led to one of the suspects also being investigated for benefit fraud.
- The Asset Confiscation Enforcement team secured compensation of just under a quarter of a million pounds following a complex fraud investigation into the sales of motor homes. The successful investigation ensured that pro rata compensation will be shared among the 15 victims.
- A complex investigation into a number of suspected “shell companies” being used for the purposes of money laundering led to the identification of bank accounts being used by the network. Applications were made for Account Freezing Orders and subsequently the forfeiture of over £140,000 of suspected criminal property.
- The Asset Confiscation Team obtained a Restraint Order on assets valued at approximately £120k connected to blackmail and illegal money lending investigation.
- Seized criminal property linked to drugs criminality was sent to auction raising £63,492. Three seized vehicles were sold on foot of Forfeiture Orders for £1,572 and a large quantity of items seized during Operation Sonny (a proactive investigation into drugs criminality and money laundering), were sold to part pay a Confiscation Order - the value of these combined assets was £58,363. A Rolex watch seized as a listed asset was forfeited and sold for £3,556.80.

Overall in this reporting period, detectives from Economic Crime Unit continued to investigate fraud and money laundering investigations, and have interviewed numerous suspects for fraud or under POCA legislation. Through Cash Detention or Account Freezing Order investigations, approximately £1,844,950 was forfeited by officers in Economic Crime Unit, in this reporting period.

Also, in this reporting period, ECU have successfully applied for 41 Account Freezing Orders, totalling approx. £1,235,925 and 19 cash seizures to the value of approx. £496,189, and enquiries are ongoing to establish the origins of the money prior to forfeiture applications.

## Sentencing

- An investigation into a Belfast man for organising or managing prohibited gaming, and possessing criminal property resulted in him being sentenced to a 10 month custodial sentence suspended for 12 months. He further pleaded guilty to possessing criminal property totalling £51,537. The defendant ran an illegal bingo operation from his home

during the period of the COVID lockdown and the offences came to light when PSNI officers on patrol in February 2021 observed a large gathering of people, which potentially breached COVID lockdown restrictions. They spoke to members of the public who said they were buying bingo tickets and then spoke to the defendant who stated that he started selling bingo tickets to facilitate the local community to play online.

## **Restraint and Confiscations**

ECU Confiscators successfully secured 9 Confiscation Orders in this reporting period (totalling £411,939) against organised criminals engaging in fraud, money laundering and drug offences. There were also 6 Restraint Orders granted for a total sum of £1,821,500 which the Asset Confiscation Enforcement Team will pursue by way of confiscation if those involved are convicted

To date in this financial year PSNI has received over £1,674,624 from the ARIS scheme, £1,467,238 from Cash and Account Freezing Order forfeitures, and £207,386 from Department of Justice as a result of confiscation investigations. The total value of funds received by PSNI from the Department of Justice for confiscations in 2025/26 was £207k which exceeds the preceding 3 years performance of £52k, £165k and £120k respectively for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

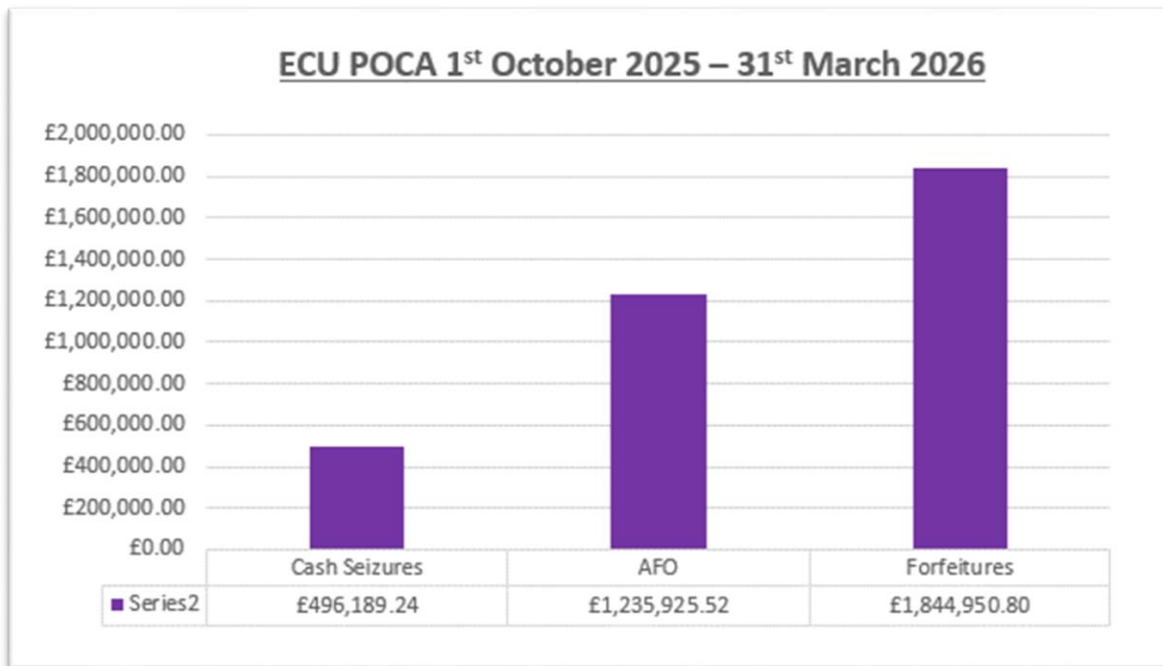
### **Some significant examples are:**

In December 2025 a Confiscation Order was granted for £234,561 to be used as compensation for 15 victims of fraud. The criminal investigation established that the suspect had entered into an agreement to sell motorhomes for the victims however they did not receive the funds due to them. Once the Confiscation Order has been paid the funds will be used to compensate the victims.

In February 2026 a Restraint Order was obtained totalling approximately £120,000 in connection with an illegal money lending investigation being undertaken by the PSNI Illegal Money Lending Team. A report had been received via the dedicated predatory lending email address where the victim allegedly borrowed £50,000 from an illegal lender and was being subject to threats when unable to maintain payments. Other potential victims have been identified and if prosecution is successful this will progress to confiscation.

The Asset Confiscation Enforcement Team provided support to a Trading Standards (TSNI) investigation involving counterfeit goods. The ACE team were successful in obtaining a Restraint Order for £989,000 and should a prosecution result in conviction, this matter will progress to confiscation

### **Operational Figures for POCA are included below:**



Report Fraud is the new national service developed and operated by the City of London Police to improve how cyber-crime and fraud are reported, analysed and supported across the UK. This service replaces the previous Action Fraud platform and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) systems, creating a modern, streamlined and intelligence-driven approach to fraud reporting.

**Call us on 0300 123 2040**

The aim of the new service is to empower victims to take positive action, ensure police receive more detailed and accurate information, and strengthen the UK's overall response to fraud and cyber-crime. It will also support us and other forces with improved data quality, enhanced analytical capabilities and a more cohesive victim care pathway.

**What does the new service include?**

Report Fraud Contact Centre and Reporting Tool - a new, more accessible, trauma informed digital reporting tool allows victims to submit reports of fraud and cyber-crime efficiently. The redesigned Contact Centre provides support throughout the reporting process, helping to reduce barriers and improve user experience.

National Crime Analysis Service (N-CAS) - this new analytical function replaces the backend systems previously used by Action Fraud. N-CAS provides enhanced crime analysis capabilities, allowing reports to be processed more efficiently and enabling better dissemination of intelligence to police forces across the UK, including PSNI.

Report Fraud Victim Service - this service continues the work previously undertaken by the National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit. It remains a dedicated specialist resource, ensuring victims receive appropriate guidance, updates and support, helping to reduce harm and increase public confidence.

## **Why this matters for PSNI?**

The introduction of Report Fraud strengthens the national fraud-reporting framework and enhances the intelligence shared with PSNI. Benefits will include:

- Improved data accuracy and availability for operational use,
- Faster and more detailed analytical products from N-CAS,
- Greater consistency in victim support across the UK,
- A more intuitive reporting experience for members of the public.

## **Glossary**

AGS	An Garda Síochána
CAWN	Child Abduction Warning Notices
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CIPT	Child Internet Protection Team
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DEW	Drug Expert Witnesses
DOJ	Department of Justice
ECU	Economic Crime Unit
FYTD	Financial Year to Date
GLAA	Gang Masters Labour Abuse Authority
HMRC	His Majesty's Revenue & Customs
JATF	Joint Agency Task Force
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
MSHTU	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCMEC	National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OCG	Organised Crime Group
OCTF	Organised Crime Task Force
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
PCTF	Paramilitary Crime Task Force
PFYTD	Previous Financial Year to Date
PoC	Persons of Concern
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PVoT	Potential Victims of Trafficking
ROSHO	Risk of Sexual Harm Order
SOC	Serious and Organised Crime
SOPO	Sexual Offence Prevention Order
UKBF	United Kingdom Border Force
YJA	Youth Justice Agency



For further information visit:

**[psni.police.uk](https://psni.police.uk)**



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