

**NCA Northern Ireland Performance Narrative****Quarter Three (October – December 2016)<sup>1</sup>****1. Summary**

The NCA works closely with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other operational partners in the fight against serious and organised crime. In addition to its operational role, the NCA provides Investigative and operational support to PSNI activities within Northern Ireland, across the UK and internationally, including the provision of specialist capabilities, advice and guidance.

Seventeen disruptions have been recorded in Quarter 3 (Q3) (two major, three moderate and 12 minor). Five of these (one moderate and four minor) were the result of activity undertaken by NCA officers in Northern Ireland. The moderate disruption relates to support given to PSNI Operation which resulted in the recovery of a substantial amount of Class A and B drugs and a large amount of cash in Northern Ireland. The four minor disruptions all relate to Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) including two convictions for making indecent photographs of children and possession of extreme pornography.

12 further disruptions Impacting on Northern Ireland (two major, two moderate and eight minor) were achieved by other NCA units; Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Operations (two major), National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) (one moderate and one minor), UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB) (one moderate and one minor), Border Investigations (five minor) and Investigations (one minor).

After three quarters of 2016/17, 39 disruptions have been recorded which is an increase on the 35 disruptions at the equivalent stage in 2015/16. Last year's totals included significant operational activity under Operation JARRA which focuses on CSEA activity in Northern Ireland.

There has been one arrest reported in Q3 relating to CSEA (NT/15/0545 - linked to Operation JARRA).

**2. Activity undertaken by Investigations - Northern Ireland**

The NCA has continued to undertake a range of criminal investigations in Northern Ireland in collaboration with PSNI. While such investigations are progressing, priority has primarily been focused on Operation PUMPLESS and Operation JARRA as cases progress to prosecution.

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<sup>1</sup> All data relating to 2016/17 will be subject to year-end validation and so may change.

- **Operation PUMPLESS** - An NCA led investigation into allegations of financial irregularities and corruption arising from the sale of the Republic of Ireland's National Asset Management Agency's Northern Ireland loan book. To date the NCA has interviewed eight people under criminal caution. Seven of the eight remain under investigation and criminal suspects. Two of these people had been arrested and were subsequently released from bail. The NCA has interviewed more than 55 witnesses, conducted eight searches of property and has obtained Court Orders to gather material from public and private institutions. At this time, further arrests, searches, interviews and court orders cannot be ruled out. This complex investigation, with an international scope, is being conducted in a thorough manner, examining events over a five year period. It remains on-going and one of the highest priority operations in the NCA serious and organised crime grid.
- **Operation JARRA** - a significant joint PSNI/NCA investigation into the accessing, sharing and distributing of Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) by 33 individuals within Northern Ireland. A further five offenders have been sentenced in the reporting period bringing the total to eight individuals sentenced. The details are as follows:
  - o **NT/15/0421** - This individual was charged with making and possessing indecent images of children and was sentenced to three years' probation during which time they must complete a sex offenders programme and placed on the Sex Offenders Register for five years.
  - o **NT/15/0423** - This person was charged with making and possessing indecent images of children and voyeurism. He received a three year probation order, a five year Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) and were placed on the sexual offenders register for five years.
  - o **NT/15/0426** - The subject was charged with making, possessing and distributing indecent images of children and was sentenced to six months in prison followed by two years on license. He is also subject to a SOPO, must attend a sexual offenders programme and was placed on the sexual offenders register for seven years.
  - o **NT/15/0431** - The individual was charged with making and possession of indecent images of children and possession of extreme images, he received an adult caution and is subject to a SOPO for five years and has been placed on the sex offender register for five years.

- o **NT/15/0553** - The subject was charged with making, possession and distribution of indecent images of children and was sentenced to a three year probation order, an eight year SOPO and placed on the sex offenders register for 10 years.
- **Operation CONJOINED** - In April 2015 a joint operation between NCA and PSNI officers led to the seizure of 167kg of cannabis resin that had been smuggled into Northern Ireland. In June 2016 two individuals pleaded guilty to importation and possession of a class B drug and a third individual pleaded guilty in October 2016. On 8 November 2016 all three defendants were sentenced to two years four months each at Newry Crown Court. The Judge recommended the three defendants serve 14 months imprisonment and 14 months on licence.

### **3. Other NCA activity within or impacting on Northern Ireland**

#### **3.1. Civil Recovery Team (CRT)**

Current operational activity by CRT relating to Northern Ireland is as follows:

- **Operation DESENSITIZE:** A Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) referral into fuel and cigarette smuggling and other acquisitive crime. The civil recovery investigation into this and other property is ongoing.
- **Operation CRINOLINE:** A PSNI referral with drug trafficking as the principal offence. This investigation commenced in Northern Ireland and rapidly expanded into a civil recovery investigation into more than 30 properties in England and Northern Ireland linked to a Birmingham based Organised Crime Group (OCG).

#### **3.2. CEOP**

PSNI continues to be fully engaged in the strategic governance arrangements to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). In November 2016, PSNI attended when the NCA-CEOP Command hosted a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Victim ID (VID) Day for VID SPOCs; every force in the UK was invited. The event was a key commitment in the context of the plan for tackling Online Child Sexual Exploitation. The aim of the event was to share best practice and highlight new developments both in respect of VID and the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID).

- **Missing Persons Bureau (MPB):** MPB received five missing person referrals from PSNI during the period under review. These included two long-term missing person cases. The MPB has also supported PSNI in a high risk case in which the female is believed to have entered the sea at

Balintoy Harbour. Support in this case includes the loading of forensic material for identification onto national databases.

- **Operation FLUTY** is a joint investigation by the NCA (CEOP Command and NI) and the PSNI targeting those possessing and distributing Indecent Images of Children (IIOC). During Q3 2016 operational activity continued against 20 suspects, 10 of who were arrested under Phase 1 of the operation in February 2016, with the remainder arrested under Phase 2 in June 2016.
- **In addition:**
  - An individual from Belfast was reported to the Public Prosecution Service for making and possession of IIOC.
  - An individual from Limavady has been reported to the Public Prosecution Service for making and possession IIOC.
  - A further seven individuals remain under investigation with charging decisions expected to be made early in 2017.
- **CSE Referrals Bureau (CSE RB):** The CSE RB is the central point within the NCA for receipt of referrals of information relating to online child sexual exploitation from industry, predominantly via the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the USA. NCMEC provides a centralised mechanism for the public and electronic service providers to report suspected IIOC. NCMEC sends all referrals relating to UK suspects to the CSE RB. Based upon referrals from NCMEC and others, during Q3 the CSE RB made 20 disseminations to PSNI, an increase of eight (40%).
- **Education Team:** 49 Ambassadors were trained by CEOP with one new school signing up to the information sharing portal, Parent Info. The total number of trained Ambassadors in Northern Ireland to date is around 140.

### **3.3. National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU)**

- **NTS/16/0508** – Joint working between NCCU and PSNI officers led to a warrant being executed in Northern Ireland in relation to a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack. NCCU is now leading the investigation with support from PSNI.
- **NTS/16/0566** - NCCU received a request from PSNI for financial investigator assistance in response to a network intrusion incident.
- **NTS/16/0385** - NCCU continue to provide technical support to assist a cyber-enabled crime investigation led by PSNI.

As part of a week of action, PSNI supported an NCCU project by carrying out one Cease and Desist visit to an individual suspected of purchasing a tool used to facilitate DDoS attacks.

### **3.4. NCA Specialist Operations Centre (SOC) and Crime Operational Support (COS)**

There has been the provision of support and advice to PSNI on 20 instances in the review period (13 to the Crime Desk and six from the National Injuries Database), including cases of fatal road traffic enquiry where access to experts in fields such as CCTV and car tracking were facilitated.

PSNI requested advice around use of experts for Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) and Major Crime incidents, the policies for which are being reviewed by PSNI. Research was conducted, processes explained and documentation provided to assist the development of strategies.

### **3.5. NCA Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS)**

There were two instances where SCAS provided assistance to PSNI over the reporting period.

- Request to provide additional address/contact information for a suspect who had violently raped his partner and then gone 'on the run'.
- Presentation provided to approximately 60 new detectives in October 2016 and also attended by the PSNI SCAS Contact Officers. This presentation included an input on SCAS and also COS/SOC services available to PSNI.

### **3.6. Anti-Kidnap and Extortion Unit (AKEU)**

There were two kidnap cases and 21 extortion cases relating to Northern Ireland notified to AKEU in Q3. 19 of the extortion cases involved sextortion.

A case that AKEU had been involved with was progressed during this period when a man was charged by police investigating the death of County Tyrone schoolboy Ronan Hughes. The 31-year-old appeared at Bucharest municipal court in Romania, charged with producing and distributing indecent images of children as well as blackmail. He was remanded in custody. Ronan Hughes, a 17-year-old from Coalisland, took his own life in June 2015 having been the victim of what the police call webcam blackmail. PSNI said it had been liaising with a number of agencies in a variety of jurisdictions as part of the investigation, including the Romanian Police, Romania's Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism, the National Crime Agency and Europol.

**3.7. Proceeds of Crime Centre (PoCC)**

The Proceeds of Crime Centre continue to maintain their engagement in providing legislative advice and guidance in PoCC related matters including the monitoring and use of powers in Northern Ireland.

The PoCC Joint Asset Recovery Database (JARD) Team have sent out numerous updates around JARD in Q3 including a revised Code of Connection and revised Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) which was circulated to a range of organisations which included the Northern Ireland Pensions Centre and the Department of Justice and Environment Agency in Northern Ireland.

**3.8. UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU)**

During the period, the UKFIU received 25 requests for a Defence Against Money Laundering (DAML) received under POCA 2002 were allocated to PSNI for advice (based on the location of the suspect, victim or other geographical factors). This is a mechanism which gives law enforcement an opportunity to take action against the proceeds of crime within a statutory time limit whilst providing protection for the reporter. The UKFIU exercised its power under POCA to refuse a DAML in one of these requests allowing NCA CRT Belfast to take action. These figures are out of a total 4,606 DAML requests handled by the UKFIU during this period.

Other activity by the UKFIU in Q3 included:

- two international requests (to Republic of Ireland and Bulgaria) sent on behalf of PSNI relating to money laundering and drug trafficking;
- nine counter terrorist related Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) disseminated to PSNI;
- 11 SARs relating to suspected vulnerable persons and three SARs relating to child exploitation identified for fast-tracking to PSNI.

On 4 October, a Dialogue Team member gave an Anti-Money Laundering update to approximately 300 delegates at the Northern Ireland Credit Unions financial crime conference in Cookstown.

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

The UKNCO continues to provide substantial assistance to PSNI in relation to the provision of evidence for a potential prosecution, including coordination of expert evidence regarding an investigation into banknote counterfeiting equipment found during a search of premises in March 2015.

The UKNCO processed 38 submissions from PSNI in Q3 and two witness statements were provided to support Police prosecutions and investigations relating to counterfeit currency offences.

### **3.10. UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB)**

During this period two new cases have been received from the Crown Service of Northern Ireland (CSNI) in relation to fugitives wanted by law enforcement who are believed to be abroad. We are working with our international partners to track down and locate these offenders.

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

MSHTU maintains a close working relationship with law enforcement partners in Northern Ireland and intelligence support and tactical advice remain available as required. Two tactical advisor calls were received from PSNI during the quarter and three referrals were made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) from Northern Ireland.

## **4. Fresh Start Agreement**

The NCA is a key member of the Joint Agency Task Force which is led by senior officers from the PSNI, An Garda Síochána, the Revenue Commissioners, HMRC, NCA and Criminal Assets Bureau. The delivery strategy for the work of the Task Force includes a Strategic Oversight Group and an Operations Co-ordination Group which meets quarterly. Based on threat, harm and risk it was recommended that consideration be given to adopting six priorities for the Task Force;

- Rural Crime
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Financial Crime
- Illicit Trade
- Excise Fraud
- Human Trafficking

NCA has the joint lead for Financial Crime alongside the Criminal Assets Bureau and as such, is working with all parties to develop activity that meets the key objectives of the Taskforce.

NCA continues to work closely with partners to develop an impactful joint PSNI/HMRC/NCA task force. The NCA bid for £115k in relation to the 2016/17 year was successful and work is under way to prepare for a fully integrated task

force. The joint bid with PSNI and HMRC in relation to the 2017/18 to 2020/21 years was submitted to the Department of Justice Northern Ireland (DOJNI) and is currently under consideration by them.

NCA Planning, Performance and Risk

1 February 2017