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NCA Performance in Northern Ireland

Q1 2022/23 (April – June 2022)

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Introduction

About the NCA

The NCA leads the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime (SOC), a chronic and corrosive threat, affecting UK citizens more often than any other national security threat. The most recent National Strategic Assessment assessed that the overall SOC threat to the UK has continued to increase and has been largely resilient to the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Global networks, the UK border, and current and emerging technology, all play key roles as enablers of SOC offending. The latest estimated social and economic cost of SOC to the UK (approximately £37 billion¹) is assessed to be a significant underestimate of the true cost.

Our approach is to identify and disrupt high-harm, high-impact criminals (and organised crime groups), diminishing their capability, infrastructure and influence. In particular, we target those who:

- Exploit the vulnerable through child sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, servitude, fraud and other forms of abuse.
- Dominate communities, and chase profits, in the criminal marketplace - through criminal reputation and/or the use of violence in the supply of drugs and firearms.
- Undermine the UK's economy, integrity, and infrastructure & institutions, through their criminality.

Meeting the challenges of the changing nature of the SOC threat is a critical objective for the NCA, and wider law enforcement community, where substantial developments in SOC's complexity, scale, and volume, have been observed.

The NCA's 2022/23 Performance Ambitions

The NCA's Senior Leadership Team, and Board, are responsible for setting annual ambitions. These are tracked in our operational and strategic governance forums. To ensure the NCA deliver exceptional services and results across the Devolved Administration during 2022-23, the main objectives are as follows:

1. *Continue to achieve branch-led disruptions in Northern Ireland and Scotland to build on our achievements in 2021/22.*
2. *Maximise the impact of our capability deployments in support of the SOC response in Northern Ireland and Scotland.*

During 2022/23, these goals will be actively pursued with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Police Scotland, and other partners, to demonstrate the NCA's commitment to build even stronger relationships with our partner agencies. The agency will continue to actively pursue these goals for 2022/23 and support wider agency performance ambitions at the high end of high harm in the Devolved Administrations.

¹ Home Office, 'Understanding Organised Crime: Estimating the Scale and the Social and Economic Costs', November 2018.

About this report

The aim of this report is to summarise NCA performance and activities within Q1 2022/23 (April – June 2022 inclusive) related to Northern Ireland and the resulting impact on protecting communities from SOC. This includes the work of the Paramilitary Crime Taskforce (PCTF).

The Agency develops, deploys, and maintains a range of national capabilities and provides them to police forces and other partners. These capabilities create opportunities to identify and take action against those engaged in SOC, as well as providing specialist expertise to support broader law enforcement activity. Examples of support provided to PSNI are included within Annex A and throughout the narrative. The report also considers wider NCA activity where its global nature is likely to have had some impact in Northern Ireland. The OFFICIAL classification of this report prevents the detailed inclusion of live operational activity and tactics.

The PSNI also submit a report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) setting out its performance against SOC during this period. The two reports can be read in conjunction to give an overview of law enforcement activity impacting Northern Ireland. In certain instances, there may be some overlap between cases reported in the two products, reflecting the close working relationship between the two agencies.

We have responded to feedback from recent Board meetings and made NCA and PSNI reports easier to read alongside each other. The structure of the NCA report has further evolved to provide additional clarity to the reader. It now includes extracts from the most recent National Strategic Assessment (Official version, published in 2021), and other relevant documents, in order to provide greater context. We will continue to work alongside PSNI colleagues to ensure that both reports are aligned as closely as possible.

Our impact in Northern Ireland

Disruptions impacting on Northern Ireland							
Disruption Assessment	Jul-20 to Jun-21		R12 Total	Jul-21 to Jun-22		R12 Total	▲ ▼
	Lead	Support		Lead	Support		
Major	8	1	9	5	0	5	▼
Moderate	35	1	36	31	7	38	▲
Minor	43	19	62	87	27	114	▲
Grand Total	86	21	107	123	34	157	▲

Figure 1: NCA Disruptions with impact in Northern Ireland June 2020 to June 2022

12 Month Comparison

The NCA continue to focus on tackling the High End of High Harm (HEHH) to disrupt SOC with the most impact. In the last 12 months, the number of reported disruptions impacting Northern Ireland has increased by 46% (50). Although the volume of major disruptions decreased by four, a substantial increase in the number of minor disruptions (52, 84%) has contributed to the overall disruptions total increasing.

Quarter Comparison

Quarter one accounted for a 30% (17) increase in disruptions impacting on Northern Ireland, compared to quarter four. This has been driven by minor disruptions achieved by the NCA which are predominantly influenced by the cyber crime threat area. In one example, the National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) devised a long term strategy in response to the prevalence of network intrusion – enabling law enforcement to glean a clearer picture of the data breach threat and achieving five minor disruptions within one investigation.

The remainder of this report will set out examples of NCA activities that, directly or indirectly, have an impact on SOC in Northern Ireland. Performance figures regarding our wider impact against SOC are contained within Annex A and updates from our specialist support services are provided in Annex B.

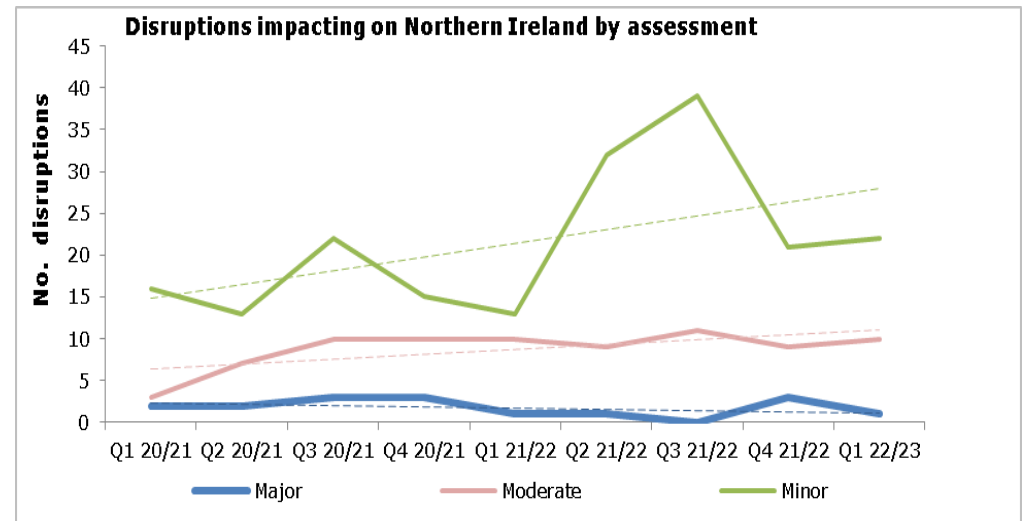


Figure 2: NCA Disruptions with impact in Northern Ireland by Assessment level over time

Those who seek to exploit the vulnerable

Child Sexual Abuse

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) covers a range of offence types occurring online, offline, or moving between the two. Exploitation of the online environment is known to enable offline offending, as seen with the grooming of children online for physical sexual abuse, known as 'contact abuse'. It remains highly likely that despite significant operational and policy responses, the CSA threat continues to grow, exacerbated by rising online activity.
- Platforms allowing children to interact with strangers increase the risk of technology assisted grooming, which can result in both online and contact offending. While some offenders build trust with children, others elicit sexual abuse following minimal interaction, using methods including manipulation, threats and sextortion. The ability for children to be groomed online, even within the safety of their own homes, means vigilance is required from those able to intervene.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) related criminality. First where there is wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland, and then activities with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Wider Impact (UK and International Activity)

- NCA Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) launched two education products and the Summer Safety Campaign. These resources are available UK wide and include; Use of the Dark Web by children and young people (launched in May) and updated website resources for two age groups (4-7, 11-18). Figures available in June indicated over 700 downloads by professionals and over 20,000 website views by children, parents, and carers.
- The Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) is an international alliance of 15 dedicated law enforcement agencies working together to tackle the global threat from CSA. The NCA is the current chair of the VGT. The collaborative approach afforded by the VGT is absolutely crucial when the CSA threat is growing in severity and complexity, and through technology, is increasingly unconstrained by the location of offenders. The VGT was established as a direct response to the rise in offenders targeting children all over the world and through online social interactions, and travelling overseas to commit contact sexual abuse. Law enforcement agencies joined forces, working closely with non-governmental organisations and industry partners, to deliver a program of coordinated activity to help protect children online, no matter where they are in the world.

Northern Ireland Impact

The CSA Referral Bureau (CSA RB) is the central point within the NCA for receipt of referrals from industry of information related to online child sexual abuse, predominantly via the US National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). NCMEC provides a centralised mechanism for public and electronic service providers to report suspected sharing of Indecent Images of children (IIoC) and other forms of CSA offending. NCMEC sends all referrals relating to UK suspects to the CSA RB.

- The CSA Referral Bureau made 121 disseminations to PSNI during quarter one. Amongst those disseminations were a number of high priority referrals that related to self-generated IIoC, which supported the ongoing concerns around the rise in such content. PSNI reported that during quarter one, six arrests were made, eleven suspects attended voluntarily for interview, and 25 children were safeguarded in relation to disseminations to them from the NCA CSA RB.

Organised Immigration Crime

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) involves moving a person across borders without legal permission or documentation with the assistance of an OCG. It can also involve individuals illegally remaining in a country.
- The movement of migrants across the Channel using small boats steeply increased in 2020 and continues to occur. The increase in small boats use is almost certainly a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions affecting freight and air transport, in addition to enhanced security around the UK-operated border controls.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) related criminality. First where there is wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland, and then activities with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Northern Ireland Impact

- During April 2022, arrests were made by the NCA in relation to an investigation involving members of an organised crime group suspected of facilitating the clandestine movement of migrants into the UK via criminal hauliers. Several law enforcement agencies, including PSNI and the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (NIEA), approached the NCA regarding one of the Suspects of Interest (SoI). Members of this group had links to Northern Ireland. A range of offences also include fuel laundering, tobacco and cigarette smuggling.
- On 21st June 2022, a suspect from Northern Ireland, having pleaded guilty, was sentenced to four years in prison for people smuggling. This was the result of a multi-strand investigation into the importation of controlled drugs and organised immigration crime, led by the NCA.
 - One further strand relates to conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration to the UK involving Northern Ireland hauliers. Within this reporting period, the CPS has directed that two further suspects are charged with conspiracy to facilitate the commission of illegal immigration to the UK. This brings the total charged to five with a further suspect under consideration.
- PSNI continue to be active members of the OIC Road Haulage Group. This is a group composed of key stakeholders, to deliver a 4P response, in relation to the Inland Clandestine Threat and the use of haulage to smuggle illegal migrants. How future phases of the Hauliers Communications Campaign can be extended to Northern Ireland is currently under consideration.

SOC Exploitation of the UK Border

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- The international nature of SOC means that the ability to exploit and circumvent the UK Border is a crucial aspect of many OCG operating models.
- OCGs have shown agility and resilience in their ability to move between different forms of transport. Examples include a shift to using small boats to facilitate organised immigration crime during periods of disruption at ports rather than road networks. Some OCGs have also diversified to exploit postal services to move illicit commodities across borders, whilst others have attempted use of private air travel for criminal gain.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against SOC exploitation of the UK Border. First where there is wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland, and then activities with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Northern Ireland Impact

- The NCA continues to lead and co-ordinate a project that risk-tests Roll-on Roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry routes across the Irish Sea. Deployments this quarter focused on routes into Welsh ports which resulted in seizures by HMRC. The operational plans and relationships between agencies are now well established.
- A significant number of law enforcement agencies are involved in these deployments and the North West Joint Agency Group (NWJAG) is being used to ensure that work is aligned under the project. Although partners in Northern Ireland are not official members of the NWJAG (as other Joint Agency Group(s) exist in the region), a recent debrief of the project has highlighted the benefits of working closely, sharing information and collaborating, with partners in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland during this project.

Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- The term 'modern slavery' refers to human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. The most commonly reported form of exploitation in the UK is coerced criminality, where victims are forced to commit criminal offences, with UK nationals as the most commonly identified victim group. Labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude are also commonly identified, but underreported.
- It is likely that at least 6,000-8,000 offenders are involved in the exploitation of people in the UK. This figure is indicative of the complexity involved in recruiting, moving, controlling, and successfully monetising the services of victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT) related criminality. First where there is wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland, and then activities with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Northern Ireland Impact

- Project AIDANT is an intensification program, led by the NCA, consisting of coordinated national activity with participation from police forces and law enforcement agencies across the UK. This activity may include visiting addresses, border checks, community engagement, and awareness raising to identify (and safeguard) victims of MSHT and arrest their traffickers. The most recent AIDANT activity took place in April, and focused on Vietnamese nail bars and massage parlors. PSNI conducted safeguarding visits and multiple searches relating to prostitution offences took place. Criminal investigations have commenced against the owners of each linked premises.
- The NCA Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit received three requests for tactical advice from PSNI in quarter one. This included an operation related to domestic servitude where the NCA was recognised for its assistance with the case in Nigeria, and providing possibilities for a witness to give evidence via video link. The suspect pleaded guilty and has been convicted (awaiting sentencing). In another request, the NCA provided assistance to PSNI by coordinating police subject matter experts to support the identification of victims (in Bradford, Northampton, and Scotland).

Those who dominate communities and chase profits in the criminal marketplace

Firearms

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- High demand for firearms in the criminal market continues. Several investigations led to the recovery of a wide range of weapons, including automatic firearms, which disrupted supply networks linked to OCGs.
- Handguns remain the most common firearm used by criminals. Most shootings are from original lethal purpose firearms, closely followed by discharges from converted, modified and reactivated handguns. Converted models and firearms from lesser known manufacturers with fake premium brand markings have also been increasingly recovered.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Firearms related criminality. First where there is wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland, and then activities with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Wider Impact (UK and International Activity)

- Police Scotland and PSNI will be invited to a conference highlighting the threat from 3D printed firearms. This will be jointly hosted by the NCA and Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP). The first half of the conference will be targeted at law enforcement, outlining the threat, and highlighting investigative and intelligence opportunities. The second half will promote discussions with trade and industry, including social media, online marketplaces, and the 3D printer and software providers. The aim is for the private sector to support law enforcement efforts to address the emerging threat. The NCA are reviewing all known 3D cases to support a revised 3D assessment, alongside an updated Alert to UK police forces. This will support officers in understanding the threat, identifying material, considerations, and forensic opportunities.

Northern Ireland Impact

- Following an NCA led firearms investigation, in partnership with the Paramilitary Crime Task Force, two subjects were arrested who were in possession of a loaded firearm with a quantity of ammunition, 2kg of cannabis, and approximately £20,000 cash. They were subsequently charged in December 2021. During June 2022, as a result of an additional cash seizure, the NCA applied for forfeiture of the cash under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The forfeiture case was adjourned to allow the criminal case to conclude.
- NCA Firearms Threat Leadership engaged with Police Scotland to focus on the threat from firearms smuggled in fast parcels. This led to a number of positive results in Q1, including four arrests all of which are all fully committed for trial. The NCA and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) met with PSNI and Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland with a view to extending this operation into Northern Ireland.

Drugs

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment and recent Home Affairs Select Committee input

- Demand for illicit drugs has remained high during the last two-three years especially for Heroin, Cocaine and Cannabis (which remains the UK's biggest drugs market with an annual consumption of approximately 240 tonnes).
- Previously, Ukraine was assessed as a strategic point in the Black Sea region for the trafficking of heroin and cocaine destined for Western European markets, including the UK. Due to the conflict, it is highly likely that OCGs involved in multi-commodity drugs trafficking will have been displaced to other Black Sea ports.
- Afghanistan remains the main source for heroin entering Europe. The Taleban government has made statements regarding banning drug production, yet the drugs threat to the UK from Afghanistan will highly likely remain stable; previous changes to opium cultivation and heroin production in Afghanistan have not impacted UK demand.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Drugs related criminality; with wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland and/or those with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Wider Impact (UK and International Activity)

- As part of a long running NCA multi-commodity investigation, the Kinahan organised crime group have been significantly disrupted. This saw one of its high ranking members being jailed for 21 years with associates receiving sentences of 19 and 20 years. It is assessed that this disruptive activity has dismantled this UK faction of the wider OCG. The group were responsible for large scale drug shipments, worth approximately £30 million, and the movement of cash and firearms. The NCA has also worked with law enforcement partners, and US Government bodies, to implement international financial sanctions which have rendered their bank accounts frozen and funds inaccessible. A number of partners, including PSNI and An Garda Síochána, worked closely to collate intelligence and evidence to achieve these sanctions.

Northern Ireland Impact

- In April 2022 during an ongoing drugs importation investigation, NCA officers, accompanied by the PSNI, completed an arrest and search operation at the home of one suspect. The suspect was arrested and interviewed by NCA officers for money laundering offences relating to a £30,000 deposit into their bank account from suspects within a linked investigation. The subject has been released on bail until August 2022. The investigation has seized 21kgs of cocaine and, in total, four suspects have been interviewed in Northern Ireland.

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- In May 2022, the NCA disrupted an OCG suspected of supplying class B drugs to Northern Ireland. Two subjects were arrested following an NCA investigation into the group which sought to hide their criminal enterprise by using encrypted communications and were responsible for smuggling cannabis into the UK for onwards distribution.

Undermining the UK's economy, integrity, institutions and infrastructure

Economic Crime

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- The economic and social consequences of fraud affect the whole of UK society, from the public and private sectors to the individual. The cost of fraud to the UK is in the billions, and is assessed to be increasing. Between January 2020 and December 2020, Action Fraud reported £3 billion in losses impacting individuals and organisations. However, providing an accurate figure is constrained by significant underreporting, with much fraud remaining undetected or hidden.
- 2020 has seen money launderers adapt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions on physical movement, new technology and regulation. Measures were adopted to bring crypto assets into the scope of UK Money Laundering Regulations to mitigate the risk of their criminal exploitation. It is highly likely that over £12 billion of criminal cash is generated annually in the UK, and a realistic possibility that the scale of money laundering impacting on the UK (including through UK corporate structures or financial institutions) is in the hundreds of billions of pounds annually.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Economic Crime related criminality; with wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland and/or those with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Wider Impact (UK and International Activity)

The new Countering Kleptocracy Cell, announced in Parliament in February, builds on the intelligence base and wider capabilities of the NCA. These include the International Corruption Unit (ICU), which investigates international Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) involved in bribery and corruption, and the Civil Recovery team who specialise in using civil powers to deprive criminals of their assets.

The new cell is investigating criminal sanctions evasion and high-end money laundering. It builds on the NCA's existing expertise to disrupt corrupt elites and their enablers in the UK. For the first time, this is brought together into an enhanced unit with dedicated funding and sanctions enforcement in its mandate. It seeks to achieve three key outcomes:

- Target corrupt elites, kleptocrats, and hostile states through their assets in the UK;
- Target the key enablers of the above; and
- Support, alongside other Agencies and Departments, criminal cross-HMG sanctions delivery and enforcement.

Northern Ireland Impact

- The NCA has previously supported the Home Office in enacting the Criminal Finances Act 2017 in Northern Ireland which was ratified via legislative process in June 2021. This Act amends the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and increases law enforcement's ability to prevent money laundering, tax evasion and corruption, combat the finance of terrorism, and recover the proceeds of crime.
- The first Account Freezing Order (AFO), since the introduction of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 in Northern Ireland was obtained in quarter one. The AFO was granted under Part 5 of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). The subject is linked to violent paramilitary activity, the supply of controlled drugs, and illegal money lending. The Frozen Funds investigation is ongoing and is being conducted under the auspices of the Paramilitary Crime Task Force. The individual is also the subject of a Bankruptcy Petition by the NCA for an unpaid tax debt of £199,000.
- The first Unexplained Wealth Order (UWO), since the introduction of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 in Northern Ireland, is being sought. The UWO was lodged with the High Court in Belfast in relation to a Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) investigation. The subject is suspected of fraud offences, money laundering and the fraudulent evasion of excise duty.
- The NCA led on Prevent activity to provide expert advice on delivering Money Mule awareness campaigns in the UK. The aim is to prevent overseas students, coming to study in the UK, from being successfully targeted by criminals seeking to engage in money laundering activities.
- An ex-Dublin airport police officer, who was the main subject of an NCA investigation, was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment in May 2022. He was found guilty of smuggling €180,000 in cash through Belfast airport. The NCA, working with our law enforcement colleagues in the Republic of Ireland, established patterns of routine travel from airports in RoI and the UK. It is expected that this sentence will have an impact on linked criminal associates utilising this method of exporting cash. A number of NCA capabilities, including the Expert Laundering Evidence team, were involved in this arrest.

Cyber Crime

UK Threat Picture derived from the National Strategic Assessment

- The estimated cost, both direct and indirect, to UK victims ranges from the several hundreds of millions to billions of pounds per year. Despite an obligation to report data breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office, underreporting and inaccurate estimates continue to impact our ability to understand the true scale and cost of cyber crime to the UK. This is partly because of low rates of awareness, monitoring and understanding of the costs associated with cyber breaches. In some cases victims are reluctant to report because of potential reputational damage or uncertainty over what needs reporting and to which agencies.
- Ransomware continues to dominate law enforcement and media attention due to the financial, data and service losses incurred by victims. This year has been notable for the increasing use of an accompanying threat to publish stolen data by ransomware operators. Industry partners estimate that over 50% of all ransomware activity includes this additional threat.

The updates below incorporate our most significant operational and partnership activities (from Q1) against Cyber Crime related criminality; with wider impact (UK and International) that is likely to affect Northern Ireland and/or those with a direct Northern Ireland link/impact:

Wider Impact (UK and International Activity)

- The NCA seized 15 server infrastructures, across the globe, during an NCCU investigation into a ransomware attack. This supported EUROPOL's international operation tackling a criminal Virtual Private Network (VPN) platform used by cyber criminal to conduct criminal activity.

Northern Ireland impact

- The NCA collaborated with PSNI to support the investigation of a compromised public body IT system with over 200,000 members. The National Cyber Crime Unit's Triage Incident Coordination and Tasking (TICAT) conducted immediate research across NCA and NCCU systems to assess the extent of the risk and inform the appropriate response, which was in this case the tasking of the investigation to PSNI. NCCU offered continued support to PSNI throughout in managing this risk.
- The NCA assisted PSNI by carrying out deconfliction checks and sharing intelligence relating to an ongoing ransomware investigation against a construction company. NCA activity resulted in identifying five physical servers running several virtual machines which were encrypted, along with seven other workstations in the business premises. This allowed PSNI to share the intelligence with the victim to determine the ransomware strain and stop the victim from engaging with the threat actor.

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- The NCA is leading on a long term Thematic Project, tasked in response to the prevalence of network intrusions, which has identified a number of SOIs in linked operations (in Northern Ireland). The NCA have disseminated packages to the wider SOC system network for executive action. This has led to five Protect disruptions this quarter - increasing the protection in Northern Ireland, and the rest of the UK, for corporations and individuals from becoming victims online. This thematic project spanned multiple investigations into credential stealing malware including a One-Time Password (OTP) agency which enables the bypass of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).

ANNEX A: Our wider impact against SOC performance

Our wider impact against SOC

The NCA’s work is aligned to threat, risk, and harm, and is agnostic of geography. The criminals NCA target operate across the UK and internationally. Aside from our work in Northern Ireland, the NCA continues to lead other activities which we assess will have an impact on protecting communities in Northern Ireland. Examples include removing dangerous content from the internet, shutting down distribution channels for drugs and guns, creating a hostile environment for SOC criminals to operate in, raising public awareness, and driving policy changes to provide greater resilience to fraud.

The table below presents headline figures incorporating both NCA-led activity and activity in support of our Law Enforcement (LE) partners, working together to tackle SOC in communities across the UK and further afield.

Total NCA Disruptions							
Disruption Assessment	Jul-20 to Jun-21		R12 Total	Jul-21 to Jun-22		R12 Total	▲▼
	Lead	Support		Lead	Support		
Major	94	56	150	113	73	186	▲
Moderate	578	326	904	769	663	1432	▲
Minor	1469	957	2426	1481	1172	2653	▲
Grand Total	2141	1339	3480	2363	1908	4271	▲

Figure 3: Total NCA Disruptions, July 2020 to June 2022

- The total number of NCA disruptions between July 2021 and June 2022 (4271) is 23% (791) higher than in the preceding 12 months. The number of higher impact disruptions has increased over the last 12 months by 53% (565), which includes a 24% (36) increase in major disruptions and 58% (529) increase in moderate disruptions.
- The Agency’s aim to achieve higher impact disruptions has been supported by improvements in the volumes of major and moderate disruptions within Fraud (263%, 50), Drugs (70%, 202) and CSA (22%, 59) threats.
- NCA International recorded 558 disruptions in quarter one. These represent disruptions led, or supported by, the International department of the Agency. This is a continuance of strong performance where we have more than doubled the three year quarterly average (of 239) for the past two quarters. Over half of all international disruptions relate to three threat areas; Drugs 29%, CSA, 13% and Fraud 10%. NCA International resources contributed to a combined total of 47 tonnes of Class A drugs (heroin and cocaine) seized.

ANNEX B: Supporting partners with our Specialist Capabilities

The NCA leads the UK SOC response through a combination of intelligence development, enforcement and investigation. Within this, the Agency has developed a range of niche capabilities - from advanced analysis to technical solutions - that service both our investigations and those of our partners. A snapshot of how these have impacted the SOC threat in Northern Ireland are provided below.

Support Area	Significant Q1 Updates
<p>Major Crime Investigation Support (MCIS)</p> <p><i>The team provide advice and support to PSNI in twelve instances; deploying officers into force on 27 occasions. These cases included murder, sexual offences and non-accidental injury (NAI).</i></p>	<p>The NCA's Major Crime Investigative Support (MCIS) provided advice and support to PSNI on 24 cases, and deployed officers on 5 occasions. Cases included murder, sexual offences, non-accidental injury (NAI) and suspicious deaths.</p> <p>MCIS have provided support through the use of Forensic Medical Advice Team (FMAT), National Senior Investigations Officer Advisor (NSIOA) and Crime Investigation Support Officer (CISO) on an investigation following media footage from an undercover reporter revealed apparent widespread fraud and inappropriate intravenous administration of prescription drugs including steroids to women seeking help regarding fertility. The investigation team are currently engaged with over 100 victims, with the expectation this will reach 500.</p>
<p>UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU)</p>	<p>UKFIU continues to conduct work that directly impacts Northern Ireland. Assisting PSNI with disseminating Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) and requests for Defence Against Money Laundering (DAMLs). During quarter one, UKFIU assisted with the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six international requests issued on behalf of PSNI (relating to drugs and terrorism). • Eight disseminations, related to counter terrorism SARs, sent to PSNI. • 13 counter terrorism search requests conducted on behalf of PSNI. • 21 SARs relating to suspected vulnerable persons were identified (six relating to suspected child exploitation and one relating to suspected human trafficking). • 204 DAMLs received under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002 were allocated to PSNI and NCA CRT Belfast for advice (based on the location of the suspect, victim, or other geographical factors).
<p>Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)</p>	<p>We continue to deliver training to professionals working in an education setting across Northern Ireland. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) team trained two professionals working in an education setting including schools and charities in Northern Ireland on the new 'Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse' course and one on the updated 'CEOP Education Ambassadors' course.</p>

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Anti-Kidnap & Extortion Unit (AKEU)	AKEU received 11 requests for support from PSNI in this reporting period. AKEU provided appropriate support for each request, including proactive assistance in one kidnap investigation, and post-incident support for other operations.
UK National Central Office (UKNCO) for the Suppression of Counterfeit Currency and Protected Coins	The UK National Central Office (UKNCO) for Counterfeit Currency processed and analysed a total of ten counterfeit and currency seizures that were submitted by the PSNI. The Northern Irish Issuers confirmed the withdrawal of their paper £20 notes will take place at the end of September 2022. No withdrawal date has been set for the NI paper £50 pound notes.
UK Protected Persons Service (UKPPS)	The NCA Central Services Unit provides, as a part of the UK Protected Persons Service (UKPPS), operational support to the PSNI Protected Persons Unit which is aligned to the UKPPS. In this quarter, the UKPPS has provided ten new instances of support to PSNI, and two days of training through the annual CPD event.
UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB)	UKICB received two cases from PSNI. The National Extradition Unit (a team within UKICB) arrested two suspects and completed one surrender.
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU)	<p>The NCA MSHTU received a total of three requests for tactical advice from PSNI, compared to two in Q4.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion and debrief(s) took place regarding an operation related to domestic servitude. The suspect pleaded guilty and has been convicted (awaiting sentencing). The NCA was recognised for its assistance with the case in Nigeria, and providing possibilities for a witness to give evidence via video link.2. The NCA provided assistance to PSNI by coordinating police subject matter experts to support the identification of further victims (in Bradford, Northampton, and Scotland) in an MSHT operation.3. Intelligence packages were circulated regarding an operation involving MSHT for an address within Northern Ireland. Tactical advisors liaised with Belfast NCA and MSHT intelligence desk.

ANNEX C: Data by Threat Area

Figure 4: Breakdown of NCA Disruptions impacting on Northern Ireland by SOC threat, April 2022 to June 2022²

SOC Area	Threat	Q4 2021/22				Q1 2022/23				R12 Total	R12 Total	Trend
		Major	Moderate	Minor	Total	Major	Moderate	Minor	Total	Apr 20-Mar 21	Apr 21-Mar 22	
Those who exploit the vulnerable	Child Sexual Abuse	0	3	3	6	0	7	1	8	31	29	▼
	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	0	0	3	3	0	1	4	5	15	26	▲
	Organised Immigration Crime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	▼
Those who dominate communities and chase profits in the criminal marketplace	Drugs	0	1	2	3	0	0	3	3	9	14	▲
	Firearms	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	7	◀▶
Those who undermine the UK's economy, integrity, infrastructure and institutions	Cyber	1	0	2	3	0	0	6	6	28	33	▲
	Bribery, Corruption, Evasions & Sanctions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	◀▶
	Fraud	2	2	2	6	0	1	1	2	2	14	▲
	Money Laundering	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	6	▲

² Note that this reflects disruptions against the main SOC threats; there are additional disruptions not shown in this table, categorised as 'other'.