

NCA Northern Ireland Performance Narrative

Quarter One (April – June 2016)

1. Summary

The NCA continues to work in close partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other operational partners against the serious and organised threats impacting upon Northern Ireland, with the aim of keeping people safe through preventing crime, protecting communities and detecting offenders.

14 disruptions were recorded in Quarter 1 (Q1), 10 of which were undertaken by our Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Command (CEOP) and were all assessed as having at least a short-term impact on the capability of suspected Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) offenders. Disruptions were also carried out in Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland Investigations (CSEA) and the UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) (Economic Crime). There were a further two UK-wide disruptions which had some impact on the region by the Organised Crime Command (OCC), relating to domain suspension requests for sites selling new psychoactive substances, and by the Economic Crime Command (ECC), relating to the suspension of a website selling fake driving licences.

This is an increase of five disruptions on the last quarter. The exceptionally high figure for disruptions in the equivalent quarter for last year (25) was due to surge CSEA activity in Northern Ireland under Operation JARRA.

There were nine arrests reported in Q1, all by CEOP under Operation FLUTY.

2. NCA Investigations

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 Operations JARRA and PUMPLESS.

- **Operation JARRA** - this significant joint PSNI/NCA investigation into the accessing, sharing and distributing of indecent images of children (IIOC) by individuals within Northern Ireland continued in the reporting period. In Q1, a further seven individuals were charged with offences linked to indecent images of children. One individual was convicted and received a Probation Order and a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.
- **Operation PUMPLESS** - this is an ongoing investigation into allegations of financial irregularities and corruption arising from the purchase of the Irish National Asset Management Agency's Northern Ireland loan book. NCA Specialist Investigations is leading on this activity and has received

important support from PSNI, who have attached a number of officers to the case team.

- **Operation FLUTY** - this is a joint investigation by the NCA-CEOP Command, NCA Northern Ireland office and the PSNI. Following on from the first week of action during February, a second week of action took place in mid-June. Searches were undertaken in Northern Ireland to deal with offenders possessing, making and distributing IIOC. This resulted in the arrest of a further nine suspects. One suspect was charged and following a guilty plea is expected to be sentenced during quarter two (Q2). A total of 18 suspects have been arrested across both weeks of action in collaboration with PSNI.

14 children were safeguarded and a number of child based organisations were made aware of risks surrounding the subjects and safeguarding measures put into place. A total of 30 children have been protected across both weeks of action with PSNI. NCA-CEOP Child Protection Advisors (CPAs) are providing ongoing guidance, support and advice to the operation. The knowledge and support of local policing units were crucial to the success of this stage of the operation. Forensic examination of seized devices is on-going.

- **Operation CONJOINED** - An NCA investigation into the importation of controlled drugs into the UK. In April 2015 NCA and PSNI officers seized 167kg of cannabis resin that had been smuggled into Northern Ireland. Four arrests have been made to date. The investigation is at the case preparation and reporting phase. In February 2016 in joint activity with NCA, Spanish National Police seized 122kg of an amphetamine precursor and dismantled a synthetic drugs laboratory in Alicante. Three UK nationals and a Dutch national were arrested, bringing the total number of arrests to 16. These individuals are believed to form part of the same criminal network as those arrested in Northern Ireland. In June 2016 two individuals pleaded guilty to importation and possession of a class B drug and a third individual is due to stand trial in October 2016.
- **Operation ITALICI** - an investigation into the international trade in steroids and illicit pharmaceuticals - operational activity remains ongoing.

3. 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 referral into cigarette smuggling and other acquisitive crime.
- **Operation WICKED:** A PSNI referral based on a murder, the civil recovery case will go to trial later in 2016.
- **Operation CRINOLINE:** A PSNI referral with drug trafficking as the predicate offence. This has links to a Great Britain-based Organised Crime

Group (OCG). One property in Bangor, Northern Ireland, recovered through summary judgement in April 2016, valued at around GBP 80,000. Trial scheduled for October 2016 in the High Court in London.

There are, in addition, three cases in Recovery: two from HMRC and one from PSNI.

4. NCA NI partner support

The NCA continues to provide investigative and operational support to PSNI activities within Northern Ireland, across the UK and Internationally. The nature of this support has included:

- providing specialist advice and guidance;
- acting as an intelligence conduit;
- brokering the operational support of other UK partners;
- obtaining the support of international partners;
- conducting operational deployments;
- training and continued professional development; and
- intelligence collection and exchange.

PSNI has also provided NCA with support, such as:

- intelligence collection and exchange;
- premises searches;
- custody facilities;
- arrest activities;
- operational deployments; and
- training and continued professional development.

5. CEOP

Missing Children Team (MCT)

MCT is currently supporting the case of a high-risk missing child that is believed to have travelled from Great Britain into Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. A force alert has been issued and MCT is engaging with both forces to establish his travel movements and potential location.

Education Team

During Q1, the NCA-CEOP Education team delivered Ambassador training in Northern Ireland. This saw 58 new professionals trained in the nature of online offending against children, how young people use the internet, including risk taking behaviour and school/organisation responses and policies to this threat. Additionally during Q1, two new schools in Northern Ireland signed up to the information sharing portal Parent Info.

CSE Referrals Bureau (CSE RB)

- The CSE RB is the central point within CEOP Command for receipt of cyber tip referrals, predominantly from 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 Q1 the CSE RB made 20 disseminations to PSNI. The majority of these cases involved offenders uploading IIOC onto the Internet. There was also one case of contact abuse and one of blackmail.

6. Development and joint working

Joint working activity remains ongoing to further develop the following investigations:

- Eastern European criminal organisation (**NCA NT/15/0230 / PSNI Operation BERNARD** – an investigation concerning a multi-jurisdictional Eastern European criminal syndicate with a Northern Ireland presence (reported in quarter three 2015/16 (Q3)); and
- Intelligence development work ongoing in relation to abuse of the Common Travel Area (**NT/15/0395**) concerning illegal migration and making use of false identity documents (reported in Q3).

7. National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU)

- NCA NCCU and PSNI have met in Q1 to explore how the capabilities each has can be used in a more collaborative way. It was recognised that there is already strong operational collaboration, further activity was agreed to enhance this.
- Better communication between the NCCU and PSNI will enable full use of NCCU's external reach internationally, through the International Liaison Officer (ILO) network. This is a key area where the NCCU can provide valuable contacts and support to PSNI.
- More effective engagement between PSNI and the NCCU will help to facilitate capacity building and inter-operability. There are some instances of this already happening, for example the recent powers course run by PSNI for NCCU officers has enabled them to operate in the NI context and also build operational relationships.
- Across PSNI there is access to a broad range of different technical tools, but the NCCU is generally perceived as having the highest technical capability. Increased engagement presents an opportunity to explore the potential for sharing techniques and tools commonly required across the cyber network.

- **NTS/16/0280** - NCCU carried out intelligence and technical assistance in respect of a cyber-enabled crime investigation led by PSNI. NCCU assistance remains ongoing.
- **NTS/16/0323** - NCCU were contacted by PSNI in respect of a cyber-dependent crime. NCCU are providing five officers for technical and investigative assistance.

8. NCA Specialist Operations Centre (SOC) and Crime Operational Support (COS)

- Provision of support and advice to PSNI on 15 instances in the review period, including cases of murder and attempted murder where access to experts in fields such as voice comparison, clothing, Facebook, CCTV and knots was facilitated.

9. Anti-Kidnap and Extortion Unit (AKEU)

- Two kidnap cases in Northern Ireland were notified to the AKEU in Q1.

10. Proceeds of Crime Centre (PoCC)

- PoCC provided a Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) delivery (PoCC policy and the financial investigator) upon request to the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) Northern Ireland.
- PoCC delivered a Senior Appropriate Officer course to the NI Environment Agency (NIEA) to increase their resilience. Additionally NCA provided advice and guidance regarding the new Section 195 powers and implications for the NIEA. NIEA have been accepted to receive the new powers under the proposed new Statutory Instrument due to be laid before parliament in September 2016.
- NI Social Security Agency (NISSA) - now Department of Communities - advice and guidance given by PoCC regarding the presentation of particular restraint applications to the Public Prosecutors Service.
- The NCA Regulator for NI has ongoing liaison with all POCA-enabled NI agencies to address any POCA related enquiries which address an individual's accreditation under the Act (and which the NCA regulates). This includes providing advice and guidance relating to active operations which impact on their POCA considerations, i.e. money laundering, cash seizures, confiscation, restraints, and particularly for the NCA, their civil recovery applications.

11. UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU)

- The UKFIU received 28 consent requests under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 which were allocated to PSNI for advice. Consent was denied in one of these requests. The Unit identified 19 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) relating to vulnerable persons and fast-tracked these to PSNI. They also identified one SAR relating to human trafficking and one further SAR relating to child exploitation which were disseminated to PSNI. UKFIU sent nine FIU requests, two Asset Recovery Office (ARO) requests and two Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (CARIN) requests on behalf of PSNI. In addition, the UKFIU gave a SARs presentation to the National Association of Estate Agents in Belfast.

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

- The UKNCO received 45 submissions from PSNI in Q1. These submissions were subject to analysis to identify how they were printed and to identify particular threats and the region(s) affected.
- Seven witness statements were provided by the UKNCO to support Police prosecutions / investigations relating to counterfeit currency offences.

13. UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB)

- The UKICB facilitated requests with Interpol partners on behalf of PSNI. These were business as usual concerning the facilitation of compassionate messages, fraud enquiries, obtaining statements and intelligence requests on subjects of interest. There have been numerous requests this quarter concerning firearms and weapons, namely Tasers, stun guns and pepper spray, focusing on obtaining details of purchasing parties and suppliers.
- European Arrest Warrant (EAW) granted in April 2016 relating to a subject accused of alleged historical child sex offences in the 1970s, believed to be residing in Ireland. The NCA Fugitives Unit circulated the subject on SIRENE as well as transmitting the EAW to Ireland. The subject was arrested in The Republic of Ireland in June 2016 and is due to be extradited back to Northern Ireland in July.
- EAW granted in August 2015 relating to a subject previously convicted of possession and supply of Class B drugs in Northern Ireland. The NCA Fugitives Unit circulated the EAW to partner countries via Interpol and SIRENE. Although believed to be residing in Ireland, the subject was located and arrested by police in Madrid on 25 June 2016 and was successfully extradited back to Northern Ireland.

14. UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)

- The UKHTC received 11 requests through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) during Q1. There were no PSNI requests for tactical advice during this period.
- Under operation HORNSMAN the NCA-coordinated the UK contribution to cross-EU activity to combat human trafficking relating to labour exploitation. The operation was contributed to by 33 partners in the UK and PSNI played a key role. Alongside Immigration Enforcement (IE), Health and Safety and HMRC, and as part of a wider operation, PSNI conducted multiple safeguarding surveys. Safeguarding materials were passed to workers to help them seek support if required.
- UKHTC supported PSNI Operation RIZARDO which started before HORNSMAN. Under the week of activity, six car washes were visited and 28 employees were screened as potential victims. Whilst none came forward to be added to the NRM, safeguarding material was distributed to them, alongside PSNI Human Trafficking Unit contact information.

15. UK Protected Persons Service (UKPPS)

- The NCA Central Bureau provides, as a part of UKPPS, operational support to the PSNI Protected Persons Unit which is aligned to the UKPPS. For security reasons it is not appropriate to detail the nine occasions on which support concerning protection arrangements was provided.

In addition to operational and investigative work to counter the threat from serious, organised and complex crime to the communities of Northern Ireland, the NCA also contributes on a more strategic level. The NCA remains a contributor to PSNI's multi-agency Crime Ops Tasking and Coordination Group; Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) groups and sub-groups; PSNI training and continuous professional development sessions. The NCA continues to produce and share strategic assessments and threat updates to Northern Ireland law enforcement partners to ensure they are aware of new and emerging trends, criminal modus operandi and the strategic context of UK serious and organised criminality.

NCA Planning, Performance and Risk

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