

# Have you got what it takes?

Tackling serious and organised crime



# Have you got what it takes?

## Tackling serious and organised crime

### Important facts

#### The UK Serious and Organised Crime Strategy

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the UK's national security. Its effects are felt by individuals, communities, and businesses on a daily basis. To tackle it effectively, we need a strategic, coordinated response operating at every level from community policing through to international partnership.

The **Serious and Organised Crime Strategy** sets out the Government's plan for tackling serious and organised crime. Like other threats to our national security, it requires a coordinated response across the whole of government, close collaboration with the public and with the private sector and with many other countries.

### Background

'**Organised crime**' is serious crime that is planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. It is usually but not always motivated by financial gain. 'Serious crimes' are those that are serious enough to require a national response.

Organised crime costs the United Kingdom at least £24 billion each year, leads to loss of life and can deprive people of their security and prosperity. Organised Crime Groups intimidate people and can have a corrosive impact on our communities. Cyber crime undermines confidence in our communications technology and online economy. Financial crime undermines the integrity and stability of our financial markets and institutions. Organised immigration crime threatens the security of our borders and human trafficking is a pernicious form of modern slavery. Overseas, organised crime undermines good governance and the stability of countries of strategic importance to our national security. Organised Crime Groups overseas can facilitate or engage in terrorism.

UK law enforcement agencies estimate that there are around 5,800 organised crime groups – comprising some 40,600 individuals – causing harm to the UK.

The aim of our **Serious and Organised Crime Strategy** is to substantially reduce the level of serious and organised crime affecting the UK and its interests.

The Strategy uses the framework developed for our counter-terrorist work and has four main objectives:

- **PURSUE:** prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised criminality;
- **PREVENT:** preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime;
- **PROTECT:** increasing protection against serious and organised crime; and
- **PREPARE:** reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

The Strategy sets out how we will take action at every opportunity to prevent people getting involved in serious and organised crime; to strengthen our protection against and responses to it; and, most importantly, to pursue the criminals behind it, prosecuting them and disrupting their activities.

Serious and organised crime requires a response across the whole of government, and close collaboration with the public, the private sector and with many other countries. It demands a coordinated national approach across

Government, law enforcement, security and intelligence agencies.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have a leading role to play in galvanising local partners into action and embedding a multi-agency response into local decision making structures.

## More information

### What is the National Crime Agency (NCA)

The NCA leads the UK's response to serious and organised crime in uniting local, national and international law enforcement with private sector partnership approaches. The NCA is an integral part of the policing landscape, **but it is not a police force**. It is a non-Ministerial Department headed by a Director General (DG) who is appointed by the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary recently appointed Lynne Owens, former Chief Constable of Surrey Police, as the NCA's second DG, following the retirement of its first, Keith Bristow, in January 2016.

The Crime and Courts Act 2013 sets out the NCA's functions and powers (including the two way tasking arrangements and the NCA's unique ability to directly task police forces). While operationally independent, the NCA's Director General is accountable to the Home Secretary and, through the Home Secretary, to Parliament.

On behalf of UK law enforcement the NCA produces an annual **National Strategic Assessment** (NSA), which is a comprehensive assessment of the current threat from

serious and organised crime. The NCA's 2015 National Strategic Assessment identifies the most significant threats as: **cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and abuse, firearms, organised immigration crime, drugs trafficking, economic crime and money laundering**.

### What is different about the NCA?

The NCA is an operational law enforcement agency which leads the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime. It differs from its predecessor in three key ways:

- It has a broader remit to cover the full range of serious and organised crime threats;
- It produces a comprehensive picture of the risk – how serious and organised crime threats affects the UK and its interests; and
- It has a legal mandate to lead and coordinate the law enforcement response to serious and organised crime including, in extremis, the power to directly task a response through Chief Constables in England and Wales.

If you want to find out more information about the NCA, please contact [NCA.Strategy@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NCA.Strategy@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk)

### What role do police forces have in tackling organised crime?

Local police forces conduct most law enforcement work on serious and organised crime. They are supported by local organised crime partnership boards, including local authorities and agencies to ensure all available information and powers are used against

this threat. The focus of local partnerships is shaped by new serious and organised crime local profiles.

At the regional level there are currently ten police Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) in England and Wales, which provide capability to investigate serious and organised crime across police force boundaries in an efficient and effective way. They are an essential part of the law enforcement system approach to serious and organised crime and are the primary interface between the National Crime Agency (NCA) and all 43 police forces of England and Wales.

The Government has invested nearly £100m in ROCUs over the last three years in order to increase and sustain the specialist capabilities required in law enforcement to respond to serious and organised crime. PCCs have also invested heavily in ROCUs, in recognition of the role they have in tackling serious and organised crime on a regional basis across force borders and their continued investment will be key to the efficient and effective delivery of serious and organised crime capabilities, which can enable reduction of duplication at force level.

Serious and organised crime is referenced as a national threat in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), alongside terrorism, a national cyber security incident, public order, civil emergencies and child sexual abuse. PCCs and Chief Constables are expected to plan and prepare, together or in support of national arrangements, to address these threats. The SPR references the role of ROCUs in tackling that threat. Their importance is also acknowledged by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in their recent inspection report.

## Who is responsible for protecting people, communication and businesses from organised crime?

We all have a collective responsibility to take steps to ensure we reduce our vulnerability to organised crime. This is happening already.

The Government wants to encourage more of this by improving knowledge of the threat and fostering better cooperation between law enforcement and communities, voluntary organisations and businesses.

## How do we measure our performance in tackling organised crime?

A range of performance indicators determine how effectively the Government is tackling organised crime. As set out in the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2013, performance assessments are based on a number of indicators including (but not only) prosecutions, other disruption activity, assets and goods seized, recidivism and removal of foreign national offenders.

PCCs have a role to play in assessing performance against organised crime as they are expected to scrutinise force performance in all areas, including their performance tackling the serious and organised crime threats they face.

A detailed assessment of progress tackling serious and organised crime is provided in the [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy Annual Report 2014](#) and the [National Crime Agency Annual Report 2014](#), both published in 2015.

