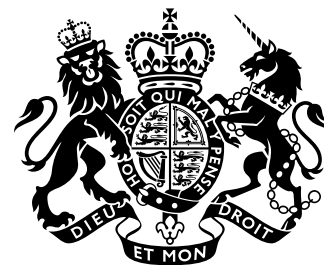




HM Government

No Place to Hide: Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028

December 2023



No Place to Hide: Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of His Majesty

December 2023



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Chapter 1: Ministerial Foreword



Crime destroys lives and devastates communities. Serious and organised crime brings harm on a scale that can threaten national security. It also creates and fosters a self-reinforcing environment of criminality. Corruption and illicit finance undermine democracies and pose a threat to global security. It challenges the legitimacy of the Crown. To further complicate matters, the lines between organised criminals and state actors are sometimes blurred.

Criminal networks are increasingly sophisticated, often concealed, and make full use of modern technology. They exploit the internet, often operating across borders and without concern for human life.

The Government has taken significant action to strengthen the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other law enforcement agencies. But the threats we face have continued to evolve, driven by global events such as the COVID pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, instability in other regions, climate change, and the pace of technological change. We must stay ahead of all these threats.

Our mission is to reduce serious and organised crime in the UK. We will do that by disrupting and dismantling the organised crime groups operating in and against our country. We have continued to strengthen the NCA's ability to combat organised criminals, increasing its budget by 21 per cent to £860 million in 2023-24. And we have increased the number of officers dedicated to tackling serious and organised crime in regional policing. By the end of Spring 2024, we will roll out to every territorial force in England and Wales the Clear, Hold, Build pilot – an end-to-end partnership approach to dealing with serious and organised crime at the local level.

We will strengthen our response to the most serious forms of serious and organised crime. As part of the 10-year Drugs Strategy, we are investing £300 million over three years to make the UK a significantly harder place for organised crime groups involved in drugs supply to operate. The Government will work in partnership with the private sector to implement the Economic Crime Plan 2. It will enable law enforcement and prosecution agencies to take more effective action against kleptocrats, corrupt elites, and serious and organised criminals who launder their funds in the UK. We will implement the new Fraud Strategy, published in May 2023, pursuing fraudsters through a new National Fraud Squad, blocking frauds at source, and empowering the public to respond. We will continue to deliver the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, using the full force of the State to counter the growing scale and impact of child sexual abuse.

We will always support our police. We are equipping law enforcement with the strongest legal powers and are creating new criminal offences in the Criminal Justice Bill, introduced into Parliament in November 2023. It will disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups and those who enable them by banning articles used in serious crime such as pill presses, templates for the 3D printing of firearms, and SIM farms for use in fraud. This Bill will also strengthen serious crime prevention orders so we can better manage and disrupt the highest harm offenders.

Of course, we also need to work internationally. That means strengthening the border as an intervention point and enhancing our international response to organised criminals operating in and against the UK. As part of the Prime Minister's five priorities, we will strengthen the UK border and enhance disruptive activity against the organised immigration crime groups who enable people to enter the UK illegally. Funding for the disruption of organised immigration crime will double in 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the Illegal Migration Act will help break the business model of people smuggling gangs.

We will strengthen our domestic ability to tackle crime with an international dimension through the new Joint International Crime Centre (JICC) within the NCA, working in conjunction with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

The growth in online crime demands that we make sure that law enforcement agencies have the right tools, powers and capabilities to pursue offenders online, whatever type of crime they are engaged in. We will work with the private sector to build protection and with the public to increase awareness of how they can protect themselves. We are delivering the National Cyber Strategy, deterring and disrupting state, criminal, and other malicious cyber actors and activities against the UK, its interests, and its citizens.

This is a team effort. All our agencies must work together. The task is complex yet simple: to identify and stop organised criminals. They never rest, and neither do we.



Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Home Secretary

Chapter 2: Executive Summary

- 1 Serious and organised crime is a major threat to the national security and prosperity of the United Kingdom. It costs lives, blights communities, hampers economic growth, causes financial loss to individuals, businesses and the state and corrodes the global reputation of the UK and its institutions.
- 2 Most serious and organised crime is driven by the relentless pursuit of money, with organised crime groups seeking maximum profit for minimum risk. The profit is often from trade in commodities, such as drugs, firearms or waste, or through the exploitation of people, including the facilitation of illegal migration. Increasingly, the profit comes from cybercrime and online fraud. When the profit becomes harder to extract, organised criminals switch tactics or move to different crime types. The profit is often laundered from the criminal world into the legitimate financial system and is then used to fund further criminal activity. This complex web of organised criminal business operating across borders manifests itself in crime and harm experienced by the public.
- 3 Some serious and organised crime is linked to states which are hostile to the UK. Such states sponsor, enable or allow it to happen or provide a safe haven for criminals. The profit from the criminal activity can flow to hostile jurisdictions with interests counter to the UK's interest and security and can be linked to terrorism. Our response to such criminal activity is part of our wider response to hostile states.
- 4 Most serious and organised crime which directly affects the UK has an international element. This is because either the commodities or people being exploited are from overseas, the criminals are foreign nationals or their criminal activity is based overseas so as to make detection and capture harder. Much of the growing threat from online crime also emanates from overseas, but it has a direct impact on people in this country.
- 5 Organised crime groups seek to hide their activities from detection and disruption. Technology is an enabler of nearly all serious and organised crime, with organised crime groups using technology for concealing communications or financial payments. Trends in technology are likely to make it much harder for intelligence and law enforcement agencies to disrupt groups, gather evidence and bring offenders to justice.
- 6 We know that the threats from many types of serious and organised crime are increasing, despite the concerted efforts of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Many of those threats are affected by changes in the global economic and political situation. Failing states, mass migration and economic uncertainty all help to create the conditions which organised criminals exploit. The UK's approach to these transnational challenges is set out in more detail in the Integrated Review Refresh 2023.

7 This strategy is founded on the growing threat from serious and organised crime and how we expect it to develop in the next five years. Our mission is to reduce serious and organised crime in the UK, using the full reach and power of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies in partnership with the private sector and communities. We will take on the organised criminal groups operating in and against the UK, protecting the public from the harm that they cause. We will keep the public safe by disrupting organised crime groups, dismantling their networks and bringing them to justice. We will outstrip the technology available to organised criminals and thwart their attempts to hide their communications and their money. We will drive down the demand for commodities that fuels organised crime and the supply that feeds it. And we will work with our international partners to ensure that there is no hiding place from which organised criminals can attack the UK.

8 The mission of this strategy is to reduce serious and organised crime in the UK. We will achieve this through an end-to-end response with five lines of action:

- i. ***In-country:*** Our first line of action is keeping the public in this country safe. That means disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups operating in and against the UK. We also need to build resilience in local communities, deter and divert individuals, design out crime and raise barriers online. Our target outcomes for this line of action are:
 - increased impact against the highest-priority organised crime groups operating in and against the UK;
 - increased impact against fraud and economic crime, including illicit finance and cybercrime as a key enabler of all types of serious and organised crime;
 - improved criminal justice outputs and outcomes;
 - increased resilience of local communities against organised criminal activity;
 - individuals diverted away from involvement in crime; and
 - reduced vulnerabilities to serious and organised crime online and increasing protections.
- ii. ***UK Border:*** Our second line of action is strengthening the UK border. This provides a unique opportunity to identify and intercept known and unknown individuals and goods who have managed to evade our upstream disruption from entering the country illegally or who are leaving the country and transporting the proceeds of organised crime overseas. Our target outcomes for this line of action are:
 - disruption of organised immigration crime;
 - to stop the boats;
 - a stronger border as an intervention point to stop organised criminals and illicit commodities; and
 - reduced vulnerability of the border to corrupt insiders.
- iii. ***International:*** Our third line of action is overseas, including relentless intelligence-led disruption at source of internationally-networked organised crime groups operating against the UK, raising the barrier to harm reaching the UK. We will also work to improve international information and intelligence sharing and reduce global drivers of serious and organised crime. Our target outcomes for this line of action are:
 - disruption of high-harm organised criminals overseas, reducing impact in the UK as well as its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories;
 - improved information and intelligence sharing internationally to support better investigative and criminal justice outcomes;

- increased political will of decision makers in priority countries overseas to step up the response to serious and organised crime; and
 - reduced global drivers for serious and organised crime, linked to wider Government development goals.
- iv. **Technology and capabilities:** Our fourth line of action is ensuring the best intelligence and data collection, analysis and investigative capabilities are in place to identify and disrupt organised criminals. This is an enabling line of action designed to better deliver the outcomes set out in the first three lines of action. Taken together, this activity will help to ensure that we continue to have effective intelligence and data collection, analysis and investigative capabilities, allowing us to better disrupt and protect against the organised criminals of today and tomorrow.
- v. **Multi-agency response:** Our fifth line of action is ensuring all public and private sector partners are working together as effectively as possible with the right capacity, skills, structures and tasking processes. This is an enabling line of action designed to better deliver the outcomes set out in the first four lines of action. Taken together, this activity will help to ensure the multi-agency response is better aligned, more effective and delivers maximum impact and value for money.

To support the delivery of this mission, the Government will measure success through a clear set of performance metrics on the impact of law enforcement activity on reducing serious and organised crime in the UK.

Figure 1 – Activity by organisation

Organisation	Activity
Home Office (HO)	Responsible for the overall response to serious and organised crime. Home Office Operations have an important role. Border Force leads the operational response to serious and organised crime at the UK Border, working closely with Home Office Intelligence and the NCA. Immigration Enforcement (IE) leads the Home Office response to tackle organised immigration crime.
National Crime Agency (NCA)	Leads and coordinates the UK law enforcement response to serious and organised crime and is responsible for developing a single view of the threat.
Regional Organised Crime units (ROCU)	ROCUs are the operational and intelligence link between the NCA and police forces in England and Wales and lead the law enforcement response to serious and organised crime in their regions.
Territorial Policing	Responsible for the majority of the operational activity against serious and organised crime, working closely with ROCUs and their specialist capabilities.
Serious Fraud Office (SFO)	The SFO is the specialist law enforcement agency which investigates and prosecutes serious and complex fraud, bribery, corruption and associated money laundering.
HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)	HMRC delivers the UK's response to organised criminal attacks on the tax system through a range of criminal, civil and specialist interventions and by targeting the profits, assets and businesses of organised criminals so as to stop and disrupt their operations as quickly as possible.
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)	The FCDO examines SOC direct impacts to the UK as well as on UK interests overseas. It delivers a range of international policy, diplomatic, security, development and programmatic expertise as part of the response to serious and organised crime.
UK Intelligence Community (UKIC)	UKIC leads the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence alongside the NCA, ensuring law enforcement agencies have access to the capability and intelligence needed to deliver outcomes against SOC.
Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)	The CPS, and where appropriate devolved prosecutors, prosecutes cases for the NCA, police and others.
HM Prison and probation Service (HMPPS)	HMPPS and police forces lead a multi-agency response to disrupt organised criminals running their networks from within the prison estate and support the management of their activity when offenders are released into the community subject to conditions.

Chapter 3: Nature of and Harm from Serious and Organised Crime

The nature of serious and organised crime

9 We define serious and organised crime as individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks.¹

10 Serious and organised crime is estimated to cost the UK at least £47 billion annually.² While the crimes covered by serious and organised crime are disparate, the tactics and techniques used have much in common. The aim is almost always to extract the maximum profit with the minimum risk. When the balance between profit and risk shifts, organised criminals change their tactics or move into different crime types, seeking always to exploit vulnerabilities in systems. It is a business model of crime – there is no single ideology across serious and organised crime, just a desire to exploit the markets in goods, people and information in order to extract profit.

11 Organised criminals are often part of deeply-networked groups whose activities are underpinned by the use of technology, either to evade detection or commit offences. These networks are complicated, transnational and rely on trusted and historic relationships. Participants, both voluntary and coerced, are often held within the group through systems of trust and exploitation.

12 Organised criminals often rely on enablers, sometimes shared across organised crime groups, that are complicit to varying degrees and provide specific services or support to the gangs. Some enablers are unwitting, some are negligent, and some are complicit and provide their services on a professional basis. Professional enablers are particularly prevalent in economic crime including in money laundering. But enablers also exist in other crime types, for example the use of corrupt insiders such as port workers who exploit their legitimate

1 The main categories of serious offences covered by the term are: child sexual exploitation and abuse; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; fraud; money laundering and other economic crime; bribery and other forms of corruption; organised immigration crime; modern slavery and human trafficking and cybercrime.

2 The social and economic costs of organised crime to the UK is estimated to be approximately £37 billion in FY 2015 to 2016, based on Home Office, **'Understanding Organised Crime Estimating the scale and the social and economic costs'**, November 2018. This figure is inflated using **November 2023** HMT GDP Deflator which produces a cost estimate of £47bn in 23/24 prices. These estimates are likely to be a lower bound since the contributing estimates (for the separate SOC threats) are generally conservative and in some cases partial. Since the Home Office **'Understanding Organised Crime Estimating the scale and the social economic costs'**, November 2018 report, updated costs have been estimated and published for contact Child Sexual Abuse (**The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse**), Drugs (**Dame Carol Black's Independent Drugs Review**), and Fraud (**Fraud Strategy: stopping scams and protecting the public**). The £47 billion figure does not include these updated published cost figures due to methodological differences.

access to the organisation's assets, operating arenas or systems, misusing their privileged position for unauthorised purposes such as facilitating the movement of prohibited or restricted goods. The availability and reliability of enablers is often a key part of criminals' risk/reward calculation and some offences could not be committed without them.

13 Organised crime groups exploit existing, new and emerging technology to underpin and enable their criminal activity. Organised criminals use technology to target, extort and exploit victims, through cybercrime, fraud and child sexual abuse as well as for communication, financial transactions and to evade detection. Although there are instances of specialists who create bespoke technology and tools for criminal gain, often it is technology that is in use by the general population which is exploited by criminals. This can be for a mix of reasons, such as to hide their activity and communications through secure messaging applications that offer end-to-end encryption, to launder profit or pay for services, or to identify victims or promote criminal services online. Newer technologies such as cryptocurrency or Artificial Intelligence (AI) may also be used.

14 Organised criminals prey on the most vulnerable in society, either as victims, customers or coerced participants and often use violence to fulfil their aims. Whilst child sexual abuse is less often driven by profit, offenders share similar tactics and techniques to other organised crime groups including organised networks and the use of technology to evade detection. Online child sexual abuse offenders are often early adopters of technology and techniques to enhance their offending, such as image alteration and extended reality technology. There are also some child sexual abuse offenders who are not driven by sexual attraction to children but by profit, who carry out and facilitate child sexual abuse for commercial gain.

15 We also know that organised crime groups exploit children and vulnerable young people, coercing them into being 'runners' to transport drugs, money and weapons locally as well as around the UK. County lines offenders continue to adapt, targeting vulnerable individuals and using a variety of control methods including debt bondage, threats of serious violence (including the use of weapons), kidnap and sexual abuse.³

16 They undermine the UK's institutions, infrastructure and legitimate businesses by subverting financial systems and operating a hidden trade in illicit goods. Corruption and illicit finance undermine democracies and threaten state legitimacy, which affects regional stability and poses a threat to global security. Money laundering facilitates and funds organised crime groups and high-harm crimes such as drug-dealing, human trafficking and terrorism. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has highlighted the growing threat from kleptocracies which exploit global financial centres. London remains one of the world's largest and most vibrant financial centres which, alongside the UK's economic stability and open economy, is particularly attractive to those wanting to commit both high-end and cash-based money laundering. Chapter 4 sets out the successes we have had to date in tackling money laundering, including through measures in the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act. Chapter 5 sets out next steps for taking our response further, including the Economic Crime Plan 2 and the upcoming Anti-Corruption Strategy.

3 **Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines** (www.gov.uk).

17 The resilience of organised criminals undermines the safety and security of prisons. Of the 87,864 individuals in custody as of December 2023,⁴ HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) estimates that 10.6% of prisoners are involved in serious and organised crime. Of the 251,926 people managed by probation in the community, HMPPS estimates that 3.9% are involved in serious and organised crime. HMPPS employs a range of risk management and disruption strategies, such as enhanced information and intelligence exchange, enhanced licence conditions, multi-agency sentence management, as well as installing x-ray body scanners and implementing 'No Fly Zones' around prisons. However, experienced organised criminals often find an environment in prison in which they can learn new criminal methodologies, continue to run and extend their networks and continue to extract profit. This activity undermines the safety and wellbeing of other prisoners and causes harm in communities outside the prison estate. It also provides a pathway for other prisoners to become involved in or coerced into serious and organised crime. This is also likely to be true of those on probation in the community.

18 The UK border is an important intervention point against serious and organised crime and the UK has advanced capabilities to identify and prevent people and harmful goods arriving in the UK. However, exploitation of the border can take many forms, including through the use of corrupt staff, the use of fraudulent documents and the smuggling of illicit goods and people. Organised criminal groups facilitate illegal migration across international borders, by any mode of transport or means of entry. These groups are highly exploitative, charging large sums of money for their illegal services and without concern for human safety. Over the past few years, we have seen small boats become a prominent means of illegal entry into the UK, with the overall number of small boat arrivals increasing substantially. This can be partly attributed to the establishment of business models used by organised crime groups to facilitate these arrivals.

19 Almost all serious and organised crime is underpinned by an international element and some is linked to state threats. This can be seen in the illegal commodities market, such as the international supply of drugs and firearms which then fuels offending within the UK. Some illegal drugs, notably cocaine and heroin, cannot be produced in the UK. Equally, the UK manufactures very few firearms in comparison to other countries, meaning that firearms are smuggled into the country which represents a cross-border threat. Waste can also move across borders for economic crime, which has an impact on human health, welfare and the environment where it ends its journey. The international nature of organised crime is also a persistent theme in cybercrime and fraud as well as money laundering. It is equally prevalent in the exploitation of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, child sexual abuse and organised immigration crime. UK citizens or institutions are also the target of crime where there is no physical offender or organised crime infrastructure within the UK such as cybercrime, child sexual abuse and fraud.

20 The international nature of serious and organised crime means that it is exacerbated by events overseas. Geo-political instability can affect the prevalence of serious and organised crime in the UK. Conflict and instability, including events in Afghanistan in 2021 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have created new vulnerabilities exploited by criminals. For instance, instability also increases the number of migrants vulnerable to exploitation by organised crime groups.

21 Internationally, serious and organised crime threatens national security, particularly where states are undermined by criminals involved in corruption, illicit finance and the illegal drugs trade. In these cases, the lines between organised criminals and state actors are

4 **Prison population figures: 2023** (www.gov.uk).

sometimes blurred. State-linked actors can use serious and organised crime as a destabilising force, using proxies to obscure their activity. This can make it harder for the UK to achieve its national security objectives around the world. Our response to such state-linked organised crime groups is part of the UK's response to the wider threat posed by such states.

22 Organised criminals shift their methods and adapt to new vulnerabilities to make profit. Their offending profile can adapt quickly to global events, conflict or instability. The global economic downturn, supply chain challenges and developments in technology will continue to influence the nature of serious and organised crime. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the swift adaptability of organised crime groups, for example the increased use of cryptoassets. While many of these challenges are not new, they are likely to create new opportunities for organised criminals to exploit an increasingly complex global and technological landscape, as will the growing impact of climate change and nature loss.

The harm from serious and organised crime

23 The harm to the UK from serious and organised crime is difficult to measure as there is no single measure or separate criminal offence; it is a range of serious offences committed by organised offenders. The measurement of the harm from serious and organised crime is captured across a range of individual types of crime, just as the criminal behaviour is spread across a range of crime types. This is particularly challenging as, by its very nature, serious and organised crime is often hidden.

24 There are two ways in which we assess the harm from serious and organised crime: through an assessment of the threat and in the published crime figures for offences that are linked to serious and organised crime.

25 The NCA National Strategic Assessment (NSA) of Serious and Organised Crime 2023 estimates that there is an increasing threat from some forms of serious and organised crime, with a minimum of 59,000 people in the UK known to be involved in serious and organised crime.⁵ It assesses that the following crime types are likely to have increased in threat during 2022: illicit drugs, fraud, modern slavery and human trafficking, money laundering, organised acquisitive crime and organised immigration crime. It judges that other threats from serious and organised crime are stable: child sexual abuse, cybercrime and firearms.

26 The main overall trends highlighted in the NSA are that: organised crime groups exploit vulnerabilities created by international conflict, instability and poverty; organised criminals take advantage of people's vulnerability, using the cost of living as a lure for cybercrime and fraud; technology remains a key enabler for serious and organised crime and is increasingly accessible to offenders; and, organised crime groups are highly adaptable to the changing environment, with a disregard for legal boundaries, adapting their operating models in response to EU exit and Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.⁶

27 Below we set out our understanding of the main crime types we associate with serious and organised crime and how they are manifested in the UK.

5 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](#). This figure excludes child sexual abuse offending.

6 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](#).

Organised immigration crime

28 Organised criminals use multiple methods to facilitate illegal migrants into the UK through abuse of immigration rules, supply of false documents, air facilitation and other methods of entry such as concealment in lorries, although this has evolved in recent years to the use of small boats to cross the Channel. Some of these methods are low cost and readily available. For example, small boats are relatively cheap to acquire and can be launched from various points along the northern French coast. They are accessible to organised crime groups and there are no restrictions, such as the need for a licence, to launching a small boat. Since 2020, migrants attempting to enter the UK on small boats have accounted for most of the detected illegal migrants arriving in the UK. Small boat arrivals from July to September 2023 were 34% lower than in the same three months of 2022.⁷ There is evidence that UK and international partners' efforts in the last few years have made an impact. Nearly 33,000 crossings were prevented in 2022, an increase of over 40% on the number of crossings prevented in 2021.⁸ So far in 2023, more than 22,000 attempted crossings have been prevented from reaching the UK and we assess that stronger measures have made the operating environment more challenging for organised crime groups, likely reducing launch attempts.⁹

Modern slavery

29 Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Modern slavery is often interwoven with other forms of criminality, for example, the criminal exploitation of children in drug distribution or the abuse of border controls to traffic migrants into sexual or labour exploitation. The harm caused to victims is profound and long lasting, yet the high profits, particularly from sexual exploitation, provide the motivation for organised criminals to continue to commit this crime.

30 Modern slavery offences recorded by the police have increased 691% since the year ending June 2016, to 9,694 offences the year ending June 2023.¹⁰ Referrals to the National Referral Mechanism have continued to increase, reaching 16,922 in 2022 – up by 624% since 2014.¹¹ Criminal exploitation occurs when victims are forced or coerced to commit crime. This is the second most-commonly reported form of exploitation seen in referrals to the National Referral Mechanism and victims are often UK nationals. It is likely that offenders are exploiting increased levels of financial insecurity amongst victims to coerce them into drug distribution. Of the almost 17,000 potential victims identified in 2022, 10,095 reported exploitation partly or wholly in the UK.¹² Of potential UK-based victims, 49% were children, with 60% of these reporting criminal exploitation.

7 [Irregular migration to the UK, year ending September 2023 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-september-2023).

8 [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements \(UK Parliament\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/written-questions/written-questions-answers-and-statements/).

9 [Update on government's plan for illegal immigration \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-government-s-plan-for-illegal-immigration).

10 [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/datasets/police-recorded-crime-and-outcomes-open-data-tables).

11 [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2022 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022).

12 [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2022 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022).

Illicit drugs and firearms

31 Illicit commodities are a transnational issue – cocaine and heroin cannot be produced in the UK and are smuggled into the country from overseas, with mainland Europe as the primary source and consolidation point for drugs destined for the UK. Global cocaine production estimates have increased from 1,886 tonnes in 2019 to 2,304 tonnes in 2021.¹³

32 Drugs are a major driver of crime and are associated with approximately half of acquisitive crime and homicides.^{14,15} Drugs and firearms-related crime can often overlap and there is a strong connection between drugs supply and the use of firearms. The independent review of drugs by Dame Carol Black estimated that 61% of known organised crime groups involved in drug supply had some violent capability and 29% had illicit firearms.¹⁶ Whilst firearms offences in the UK continue to be stable and amongst some of the lowest in the world, they have a disproportionate impact within some communities. The key drivers for firearms-enabled serious violence are the drugs trade, ‘turf wars’, criminal debt and feuds.¹⁷ Urban street gang activity accounts for most firearm discharges, including those that result in injury.¹⁸ Firearms are also used as protection or to enact retribution against other organised crime groups.

Organised acquisitive crime

33 Some, but not all, acquisitive crime is driven by organised acquisitive crime, focusing on high-harm and cross-border burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, heritage and cultural property crime, plant and agricultural thefts and metal and infrastructure crime. Organised acquisitive crime often fluctuates in method and is frequently driven by external factors such as the price of metal. The NCA assesses that all areas of organised acquisitive crime are likely to increase due to the increased cost of living.

Child sexual abuse

34 The harm caused from child sexual abuse and other crimes involving exploitation can take an enormous and often life-long toll on victims and survivors, their families and communities at large. In 2021 the Home Office produced a report on the economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse in England and Wales for the year ending March 2019. The cost of contact child sexual abuse was estimated to be at least £10.1 billion (2018/2019 prices).¹⁹ The impacts of child sexual abuse are large and far reaching and the entirety of its impacts on the victim and society cannot be quantified or assigned a monetary value. Additionally, this estimate does not include the costs associated with online and non-contact sexual abuse.

35 With people spending more time online and connecting with strangers, offenders continue to exploit opportunities to find, groom and coerce children, as well as paying others to livestream abuse and creating online communities of offenders. This creates a challenging transnational threat where a victim can be in one country, an offender in another, and the online service provider hosted in yet another jurisdiction. Industry therefore also plays a vital role in the protection of children online but decisions that undermine the safety by design

13 [World Drug Report 2023 \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/).

14 [Homicide in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/).

15 [From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/).

16 [Independent review of drugs by Professor Dame Carol Black \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/).

17 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 - Firearms \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/).

18 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 - Firearms \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/).

19 [The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse - \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/).

principles²⁰ will reduce companies' ability to protect children on their platforms and cause significant issues for law enforcement agencies in being able to safeguard children and pursue offenders.

Fraud and cybercrime

36 Fraud now accounts for approximately 40% of all crime estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales.²¹ Fraud is a persistent threat and is the most common crime type experienced in the UK, but it is still likely to be underreported. Fraud affects the whole of the UK with its social, economic and psychological consequences. Fraud takes many forms in the tactics used by criminals but it is broken down into three categories: fraud against the individual, fraud against business and fraud against the public sector. The total cost to society of fraud against individuals in England and Wales was estimated to be at least £6.8 billion in 2019-20.²²

37 The cybercrime threat to the UK continues to evolve. Cybercrime now accounts for 10% of all crime²³ and cyber criminals are estimated to be responsible for millions more incidents affecting UK businesses and charities.²⁴ The deployment of ransomware remains the greatest cyber threat to the UK. Ransomware attacks can have a significant impact on victims due to financial, data and service losses. Russian-language criminals operating ransomware as a service continue to be responsible for most high-profile cyber attacks against the UK.²⁵ Beyond ransomware, less sophisticated attacks, such as the compromising of social media accounts, continue to be the most reported threats to UK citizens and organisations. The cybercrime landscape continues to be enabled by a dynamic marketplace that increasingly allows easy access to high-end tools and capabilities to a wide range of potential criminals. The UK nexus for involvement in high-level cybercrime is almost certainly in the provision of enabling systems and services, mainly the laundering of criminal proceeds. Further adoption of new technologies such as generative AI, will both increase our vulnerabilities whilst also lower barriers to entry for criminals to become involved in online and cybercrime. Chapters 4 and 5 set out in more detail how we are responding to these threats, including the use of sanctions against cybercrime actors.

Money laundering

38 Most serious and organised crime affecting the UK is motivated by financial gain. Money laundering is continuously evolving, with criminals exploiting new technologies, such as cryptoassets. The NCA estimates that there is a realistic possibility that the scale of money laundering impacting the UK annually is in the hundreds of billions of pounds.²⁶ Money mule networks continue to be used by organised crime groups to launder funds through the banking system and to move proceeds of crime overseas. Over £10 billion annually is estimated by the NCA to be laundered via money mule activity, both cash and non-cash in the UK.²⁷ The public, including children, are at risk as criminal groups recruit at scale into their mule networks.

20 [Principles of safer online platform design \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

21 [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk).

22 [Fraud Strategy: stopping scams and protecting the public \(accessible\) - \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

23 [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk).

24 [Cyber Security Breaches Survey \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

25 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk).

26 [Money laundering and illicit finance \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk).

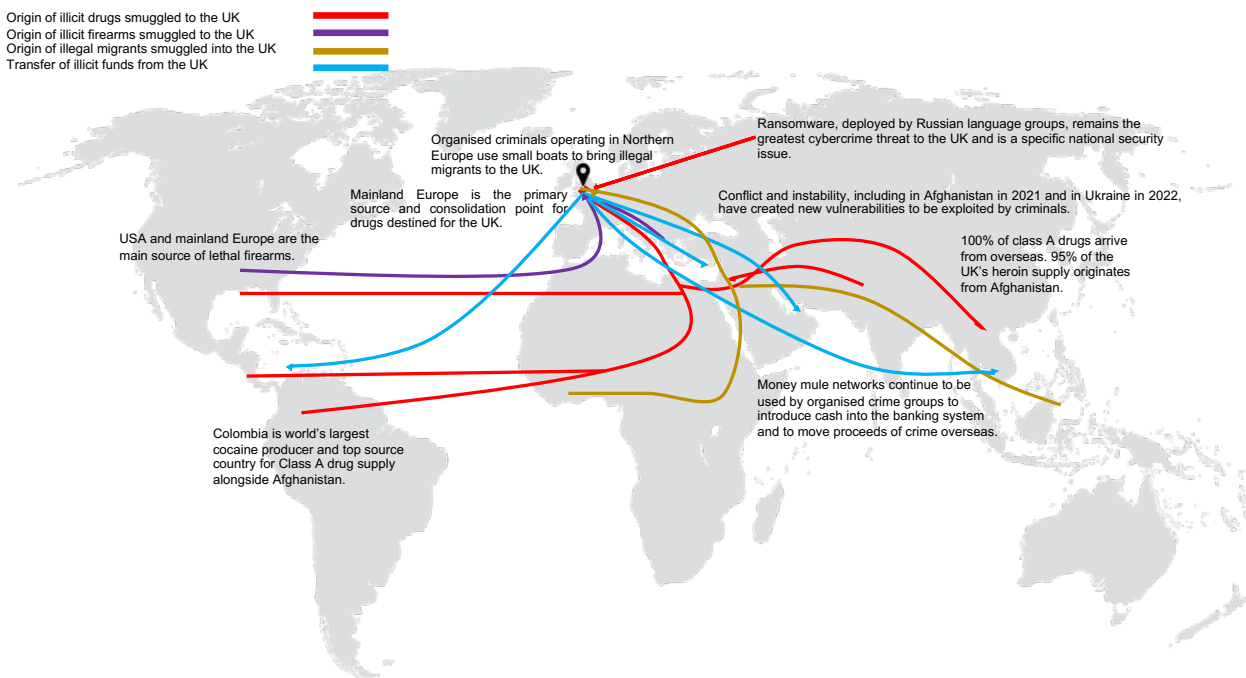
27 [National Strategic Assessment \(NSA\) Campaign 2023 \(nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk\)](https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk).

Conclusion

39 Despite organised criminal activity being present in a range of different types of crime, there are common methods and tactics that underpin the organised criminal business model:

- they are almost always reliant on an overseas element driven by profit, not ideology;
- they are underpinned by technology, either for communications, financial transactions or to evade detection. This trend will increase as once-complex technology becomes easier to use, lowering the barrier to entry;
- they exploit and are often exacerbated by instability and geo-political shifts;
- they rely on a range of enablers, from unwitting participants to professional criminal services; and
- they often adapt quickly and shift their methodology to maximise profit and evade law enforcement.

Figure 2 – Overseas origins of serious and organised crime affecting the UK



Chapter 4: Strategic Approach

Introduction

40 This strategy builds on the approach set out in the Government’s Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018.²⁸ It reflects the Government’s most recent priorities for reducing crime as set out in the Beating Crime Plan 2021²⁹ and for enhancing the UK’s national security, set out in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (2021)³⁰ and the Integrated Review Refresh 2023.³¹ This strategy complements other related Government strategies and plans focused on tackling different types of serious and organised crime. These include: From Harm to Hope: A 10 year drugs plan 2022; Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021; Fraud Strategy 2023; Economic Crime Plan 1 (2019); Economic Crime Plan 2 (2023); National Cyber Strategy 2022; and Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017. It has informed the strategic priorities set for the NCA by the Home Secretary and the NCA’s own strategy.

41 This document sets out activity to be delivered immediately while looking to the future to ensure that we stay ahead of the threat from serious and organised crime.

Strategic approach

What type of threats did we face in 2018?

42 The Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 assessed that serious and organised crime was global in nature, posed a significant threat to our national security and caused major harm to people in the UK. The 2018 strategy noted how much of the organised crime experienced by people in this country was hidden or under reported, such as the exploitation of vulnerable people and fraud. It identified global instability and the rapid development of new technology as growing risks which would continue to enable serious and organised crime.

28 [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy - November 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

29 [Beating crime plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

30 [Global Britain in a competitive age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

31 [Integrated Review Refresh 2023 - Responding to a more contested and volatile world \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

How did the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 seek to deal with those threats?

43 In response, the 2018 strategy emphasised an intelligence-led response, targeting the disruption effort much more on the highest-harm criminal networks and the most dangerous and determined organised criminals, using all the powers and levers available. The 2018 strategy set out investment to strengthen the response to economic crime and illicit finance as a key enabler of most types of crime. The strategy broadened the approach, committing to working with the public, businesses and communities to stop them from being targeted and to intervene early with those at risk of being drawn into crime. The strategy sought to improve the capability of the NCA and the police ROCU network, which were both relatively new at the time, alongside measures to improve joint working across all the relevant Government and other agencies. In support of this, the strategy pledged to improve our ability to commit investment over multiple years.

What have we delivered since the 2018 strategy?

44 The Government has strengthened its response to serious and organised crime in line with the priorities set out in the 2018 strategy and, more recently, the Beating Crime Plan and Integrated Review.

45 We have made significant progress in delivering the commitment to strengthen the NCA so that it can tackle the threats from serious and organised crime. The Spending Review 2021 increased the NCA's budget by 21% to £860 million in 2023/24. This increase in budget and capacity supports the NCA to perform its operational role more effectively, helping it to degrade the most technologically-sophisticated and harmful criminals, those who enable their activities and those who launder the money they make.

46 The Government has increased capacity and capability in policing to tackle serious and organised crime. At the regional level the Police Uplift Programme has increased officer capacity in ROCUs by almost 50%, with an additional 725 officers deployed to a range of specialist capabilities.³² These officers are focused on a wide range of crime, including drugs supply, high-harm fraud, online harms, organised exploitation of vulnerable adults and cyber-facilitated criminality. We have introduced a full time NPCC Lead for Serious and Organised Crime at Chief Constable rank. Through the Strategic Policing Requirement, we have strengthened the Government's expectations of forces and ROCUs. We have also enhanced His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection regime to support better sharing of best practice and identifying areas for improvement needed.

47 Law enforcement agencies cannot tackle serious and organised crime alone. We have continued to support a multi-agency partnership response, involving local authorities, education, health and social care as well as the community, voluntary and private sectors. Together with the NPCC, the Government has piloted an end-to-end approach designed to promote effective local partnership working. This includes reducing crime and building community resilience in hot-spot areas in a sustainable way. Together with the NPCC, we have piloted the flagship Clear, Hold, Build partnership approach in seven forces since 2020 and are now expanding to every territorial police force by Spring 2024. Police forces in pilot areas have reported the positive impact that the Clear, Hold, Build tactic can have at the local

32 [Police officer uplift, final position as at March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/police-officer-uplift-final-position-as-at-march-2023).

level. The approach has been recognised as innovative and good practice by HMICFRS, and the College of Policing has developed Clear, Hold, Build Smarter Practice, published in May 2023.

48 We have introduced combatting drugs partnerships, strengthened community safety partnerships and introduced the new Serious Violence Duty in January 2023. We have worked with local partners to develop serious and organised crime local profiles, homicide reduction profiles and drug market profiles which look at the entirety of the threat within communities. We are working to support the police, local authorities, voluntary, charity and private sectors to apply these as effectively and efficiently as possible, so that they result in sustainable reductions in crime and harm within communities. To support delivery, we have established a new local Serious and Organised Crime Governance Board, chaired by the NPCC serious and organised crime lead, Ministerial roundtables and a partnership action plan designed to set out the roles and responsibilities of national partners. This includes Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the Local Government Association (LGA) and policing leaders in supporting local activity to tackle serious and organised crime.

49 Since its inception in 2015, Project INVIGOR – a Government funding programme that supports investment and development in UK Government and overseas capabilities to address organised immigration crime – has been involved in more than 1,400 arrests both in the United Kingdom and overseas with, on conviction, sentences collectively amounting to more than 1,300 years in prison being imposed.³³ In the year leading up to March 2023, the NCA achieved a total of 237 disruptions against the threat from organised immigration crime, leading more than 90 investigations into the highest harm people smuggling groups.³⁴

50 We have invested in law enforcement capabilities to ensure that they have the capacity to deal with the increasing volume and sophistication of cybercrime, including through the NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit. At the regional level the Government has established a network of Regional Cyber Crime Units as part of the ROCU network to provide access to specialist cyber capabilities. These units include dedicated Protect and Prevent officers, who work with the relevant police forces to support local partners and local businesses to increase their resilience to cybercrime.

51 In 2018 the Government published an independent review into serious and organised crime in the waste sector, which supported the 2018 Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. Following this, the Government established the Joint Unit for Waste Crime within the Environment Agency. This is a UK-wide, multi-agency partnership (including the NCA, Police, HMRC, fire service and the waste industry) specifically designed to target organised crime groups operating within the waste sector but who are also influencing and committing other crimes.

52 In December 2021, the Government launched a ten-year Drugs Strategy, which set out a whole-system partnership approach to tackling illicit drugs. The Home Office is investing £300 million over three years to mobilise a robust and innovative end-to-end plan that attacks every phase of the supply chain, making the UK a significantly harder place for organised crime groups involved in drugs supply to operate.

53 The Drugs Strategy builds on the success of the County Lines Programme and Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement, Recovery), an intensive approach to tackling drug misuse. This combines targeted and tougher policing with enhanced treatment and recovery services. Since the County Lines Programme was launched in 2019, police

33 [Illegal Migration Bill - Hansard \(UK Parliament\)](#).

34 [National Crime Agency - Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

closed down more than 5,100 lines, made over 15,600 arrests and safeguarded 8,000 people. Since we mobilised the Drugs Strategy in April 2022, we have delivered over 2,000 county lines closures by September 2023 – meeting our published commitment for March 2025 18 months early.³⁵ Since January 2021, Project ADDER has supported 4,500 disruptions of organised crime groups (minor, moderate and major), over £11 million cash seized, 32,000 arrests, and almost 12,000 out of court disposals (community resolutions) for drug possession offences.³⁶ By 2024-25 we expect this whole-of-Government mission to have: reduced drug-related crime and homicide; closed over 2,100 more county lines; delivered 8,800 major and moderate disruptions (a 20% increase), including arresting influential suppliers, targeting their finances and dismantling supply chains; and significantly increased our denial of criminal assets, taking cash, crypto and other assets from criminals involved in drug trafficking and supply.

54 We have delivered the Economic Crime Plan 1 and introduced a new Economic Crime (Anti-Money Laundering) Levy, which will raise around £100 million annually to help fund anti-money laundering measures, including new measures set out in the Economic Crime Plan 2. This will significantly increase financial investigation capability and capacity in ROCUs and the NCA, in addition to the investments already made at the regional tier to establish the first national network of Proactive Economic Crime Teams tackling fraud. Alongside funding allocated in the Spending Review 2021, this means an investment of £400 million to tackle economic crime up to 2024-25. Crime should not pay and criminals should not be able to profit from their illegal activity. Between 2017/18 and 2022/23, £1.6bn has been recovered from criminals using Proceeds of Crime Act powers. We have also brought forward new legislation. The Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act received Royal Assent on 15 March 2022. The Act introduced reforms to improve transparency and provide stronger powers and more information to identify and investigate the illicit wealth of criminals. These reforms, which include the establishment of the Register of Overseas Entities which launched in August 2022, enable law enforcement agencies to take more effective action against kleptocrats, corrupt elites and serious and organised criminals who launder their funds in the UK. In direct response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the UK and partners have significantly increased the use of complex financial and other economic sanctions.

55 The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. Building on the previous Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act 2022, the Act reforms the role of Companies House and will bear down on the use of thousands of UK companies and other corporate structures as vehicles for economic crime, including fraud, international money laundering, illicit Russian finance, corruption, terrorist financing and illegal arms movements. The Act also includes reforms to prevent abuse of limited partnerships, additional powers to seize cryptoassets more quickly and easily and reforms to support more effective and targeted information sharing to tackle money laundering and economic crime. It also includes new intelligence gathering powers for law enforcement and removing regulatory burdens on businesses as well as measures to ensure the legal sector and other regulated businesses uphold the anti-money laundering and wider economic crime agenda. Further reforms include new measures to tackle Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation in relation to economic crime, new failure to prevent fraud offences to hold organisations accountable if they defraud consumers and measures to modernise the identification doctrine for economic crimes. The measures will bear down further on

³⁵ [County Lines Programme data - \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

³⁶ [Project ADDER programme data \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

kleptocrats, criminals and terrorists who abuse the UK's open economy, strengthening the UK's reputation as a place where legitimate business can thrive while driving dirty money out of the UK.

56 We delivered the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022 which included measures to reduce threats to our national security, provide more economic opportunities and increase public trust and confidence in the UK's institutions. The strategy included action to: reduce the insider threat in high-risk domestic sectors such as borders; champion beneficial ownership transparency globally; establish the UK's independent anti-corruption sanctions regime; and publish a review of procurement risks in local government that improves understanding and strengthens our response.

57 The Government continues to implement the actions set out in the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 and the response to the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse 2023. The number of child sexual abuse prosecutions has increased in recent years (8,005 prosecutions in 2022).³⁷ We have invested in a five-year transformation programme for our world-leading Child Abuse Image Database, helping us to increase the efficiency of online child sexual abuse cases. Through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, we have strengthened sentencing for those who seek to arrange or facilitate the abuse of a child, ensuring that the sentencing reflects the seriousness of the crime. We remain firmly committed to supporting victims and survivors. In June 2022, the Home Office launched its Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Fund for 2022-25, providing grant funding of up to £4.5 million to voluntary sector organisations in England and Wales.³⁸

58 We have extended the UK's international reach in tackling serious organised crime. This has included an uplift for Home Office International Operations and the NCA network of international liaison officers who work with law enforcement partners in over 130 countries to leverage local intelligence and law enforcement assets, and, where required, build operational capability against shared threats. We have rolled out globally the serious and organised crime policy network (SOCnet), run by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). SOCnet is a network of policy specialists based in key countries overseas who work to make sure our international response is as comprehensive as possible. It brings together all diplomatic, military, political and development levers to tackle serious and organised crime in a coordinated and cohesive way, with a particular focus on developing political access, influence and commitment. The network works in close cooperation with the Joint Serious and Organised Crime Platforms in over 80 British embassies and high commissions to coordinate the implementation of our international response. We have continued the worldwide delivery of a cross-Government portfolio of international programmes with partner governments worth over £100 million. These programmes combat serious and organised crime threats to the UK and its interests, pursue high-harm organised crime groups and protect the vulnerable.

59 We have equipped UK operational agencies with the cross-border tools they need to detect and investigate crime and bring criminals to justice, whether in the UK or overseas. This has included concluding the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, which delivers a comprehensive (and unprecedented for EU cooperation with a third country) package of capabilities that ensures we can work with counterparts across Europe.

³⁷ [Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2022 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2022).

³⁸ [Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse \(SVSCSA\) Fund 2022/25 \(www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/).

We have continued working closely with EU Member States, for example, in the areas of extradition, mutual legal assistance, exchanges of biometric data on fingerprints and DNA (“Prüm”), and criminal records, as well as operational cooperation via Europol and Eurojust.

60 We have contributed significantly to improving shared law enforcement tools, such as INTERPOL, which has a global reach across 196 countries, and on which we agreed ambitious and unprecedented G7 commitments during the UK’s presidency in 2021. The UK has announced that it will host the INTERPOL General Assembly in 2024 in Glasgow. This builds on our ongoing investment into the organisation through expertise, funding, and secondments, to ensure that INTERPOL, the international police organisation, supports UK law enforcement efforts to tackle international criminality. As part of this we are also rolling out real time connections to INTERPOL databases to UK territorial police forces and at the border through the International Law Enforcement Alerts Platform (I-LEAP).

61 The Joint International Crime Centre (JICC), which was launched in April 2023, brought together what was the International Crime Coordination Centre (ICCC) in the NPCC, and the NCA’s International Crime Bureau, consolidating and enhancing the UK’s capabilities to respond to the growing threat from transnational criminality, including serious and organised crime. The JICC will drive, coordinate and support the response of UK policing and law enforcement to international crime through a multi-agency approach. It is integrated with the NCA’s specialist international capabilities, such as its International Liaison Officer (ILO) network, and houses, amongst other things, the UK’s National Extradition Unit, the Europol National Unit (ENU), and functionality on Prüm biometric exchange with EU countries under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. It is also the home of the UK INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB), who facilitate the exchange of intelligence and operational coordination on a police-to-police basis on behalf of UK law enforcement.

What has changed in global serious and organised crime?

62 The financial motive behind much serious and organised crime remains unchanged. Some trends, particularly economic and geo-political, have increased the opportunities for criminals to exploit and affect the supply of commodities as well as demand for their services such as to facilitate illegal migrants into the UK. Other trends, in particular the development of technology, are allowing criminals to operate differently and are posing new problems for the law enforcement response. Taken together, all these developments contribute directly to the crime people experience on a daily basis across the UK.

63 Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, coupled with ongoing international instability and failed states, exacerbates these threats further and highlights the close overlaps between state threats and serious and organised crime and the use of serious and organised crime as statecraft for the pursuit of strategic objectives. In some countries, transnational criminal networks targeting the UK have already infiltrated societal, commercial, and political structures, often through corruption and illicit finance. The Government has launched a number of initiatives in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine to protect the UK from Russian state and state-linked organised crime groups, such as the Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) in the NCA. This has helped to enhance our understanding of the way state actors can be complicit, directive or tolerant of organised criminality to advance their objectives and, in doing so, undermine the UK’s national security. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also led to economic uncertainty and pressures, with people more likely to be drawn into or become the victims of crime.

64 The global Covid-19 pandemic changed the nature of crime as it drove an increase in online crime as more financial transactions went online and the opportunities for the physical movement of people and commodities reduced. Another example is the rise in gangs involved in immigration crime who adopted small boat crossings to the UK as their primary business model during the pandemic, which is thought to have been because of a reduction in the availability of other ways to enter the UK. We will continue to see organised criminals adapt their methods and techniques as circumstances change.

65 More broadly, the trend for rapid technological change is likely to continue over the next five years and beyond, providing both challenges and opportunities. Online crime is increasing, with criminals exploiting technology and the online environment, such as decentralised banking systems, to commit fraud, launder money, sexually abuse children and deploy ransomware. New technologies will continue to lower the barriers to entry for criminals. Criminals are now increasingly buying the support or technology they need from 'professional' suppliers of dedicated criminal services. Mainstream technologies such as messaging applications offering end-to-end encryption risk blinding law enforcement to most online child sexual abuse. It will become increasingly difficult for law enforcement agencies to identify and get access to evidence – which is increasingly digital and high volume – analyse it and use it in legal proceedings.

How will our response change in turn?

66 The 2018 strategy emphasised the importance of relentless disruption and targeted action against high-harm organised criminals and keeping pace with the activities and methodologies of organised criminals. With organised criminals exploiting new opportunities to make criminal profit at the expense of people in the UK, our domestic response needs to be smarter and more robust, disrupting and dismantling criminal groups operating in or against the UK. While action in this country is the first priority, it needs to be part of an end-to-end response, alongside disruption at scale, online, at the border and overseas so as to reduce serious and organised crime in the UK.

67 **Our first line of action is in-country.** It will be a strong domestic response to disrupt and dismantle the organised crime groups operating in and against the UK. While most of the serious and organised crime we see in this country has links to or originates overseas, the damage is done here in the UK. We need the right long-term capabilities to get ahead of the challenges we will face, maintaining the ability of law enforcement agencies to gather evidence and investigate crime effectively in an ever more technology-enabled world.

68 To support effective in-country disruption, we need to deal with the impact of serious and organised crime in communities across the country, building resilience and working to divert more of those involved in organised criminality away from a life of crime and deter committed criminals. We must also do more to respond to the growth in online crime, much of which emanates from overseas, but has an impact on people in this country. This means making sure that law enforcement agencies have the right tools and capabilities to pursue offenders online and making it much harder for criminals to operate online in the first place. We will work with the private sector to design out crime and work with the public to increase awareness of how people can protect themselves.

69 **Our second line of action is at the UK border.** It will focus on the border as both a potential vulnerability and a critical intervention point against organised criminals. This includes protecting the UK border, intervening to cut off the supply of illegal commodities, detecting

and intercepting criminals moving through the border and any proceeds of crime they may be transporting and disrupting the criminal gangs behind small boat crossings, supporting the Prime Minister’s priority to stop small boats.

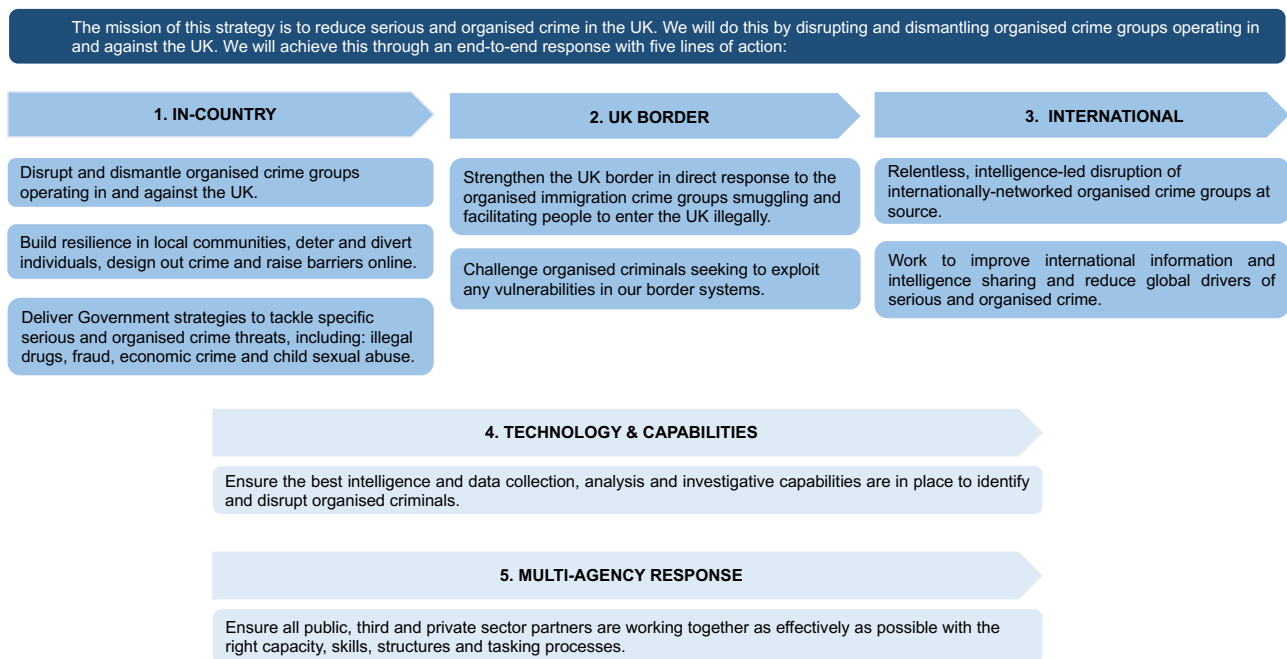
70 The third line of action is international. This means intelligence-led, upstream disruption, cutting off supply at source and reducing the incentives for criminals based overseas to target the UK, as well as its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, while building stronger bilateral and multilateral partnerships to deliver the benefits we can only get through joint working, such as data sharing. This includes coordinating with wider activity to stem the flow of illegal migration to the UK. International collaboration is at the heart of our interventions to significantly reduce numbers of small boat arrivals. We will take swift action to intercept the supply chain of small boats, to prevent criminals from profiting from human suffering on our shores. More broadly, this means supporting international partners in disrupting serious and organised crime, reducing the harm it causes and addressing its underlying drivers. It also involves shaping the international order to help protect our national security, particularly in relation to countries and regions where endemic organised crime makes it harder for us to protect our national security.

71 To support our response in-country, at the border and overseas, we need to make sure all agencies have the right capabilities in place and are working together as effectively as possible.

72 Our fourth line of action is on technology and capabilities. It will ensure the best intelligence and data collection, analysis and investigative capabilities, including cross-border capabilities, are in place to identify and disrupt organised criminals.

73 Our fifth line of action is a multi-agency response. This will ensure all public and private sector partners are working together as effectively as possible with the right capacity, skills, structures and tasking processes.

Figure 3 – Serious and Organised Crime Strategy framework



Chapter 5: Our Response to Serious and Organised Crime 2023-2028

1 In-country

Our first line of action is keeping the public in this country safe. That means disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups operating in and against the UK. We also need to build resilience in local communities, deter and divert individuals, design out crime and raise barriers online.

Disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups

74 Pursuing the organised crime groups operating in and against the UK is central to our aim of reducing serious and organised crime in the UK. We will ensure that law enforcement agencies can disrupt organised criminals and bring them to justice. We will ensure that they can disrupt the enablers and networks that support their activity, deny them access to their criminal profit and dismantle the criminal infrastructure that underpins their offending and causes harm to the UK.

75 As outlined in Chapter 3, there are challenges to the law enforcement response to organised criminals. These are determined and adaptable individuals and networks who are skilled at evading detection, often altering their methods in pursuit of profit and who are supported by expert professional enablers. There is often an international component that challenges our ability to achieve sustained impact through traditional pursue and disruption techniques, as these networks demonstrate resilience above that of non-networked criminals.

76 We need a multi-agency approach, with the appropriate level of intervention carried out where it can have most impact by the appropriate law enforcement agency. This will allow us not only to disrupt but to dismantle criminal networks identified as high priority for the harm they cause, as efficiently as possible, and with lasting effect. That multi-agency approach has three main layers: the NCA, which leads and coordinates the UK law enforcement response to serious and organised crime; ROCUs, which provide the operational and intelligence link between the NCA and police forces; and local police forces, which carry out most of the operational activity against serious and organised crime.

77 The NCA will focus on the disruption of high-harm organised crime groups. The NCA will prioritise tackling the threat and its facilitators at the top of the criminal chain, at the border and online, focusing on the people, places and technology that support and enable organised criminality. The NCA will identify the groups which are causing the most harm in the UK, identifying and removing high-value target individuals, infrastructure and finances that are critical to their criminal operations.

78 Alongside the disruption of serious and organised criminals, we will intensify activity against cross-cutting enablers of crime. The NCA will increase its impact against professional services and other key enablers of organised crime, such as accountants or solicitors, those who exploit a position of authority, such as corrupt insiders, logistics providers and international financial controller networks and cryptocurrency dealers. The NCA will increase its focus on the criminal use of advanced technology and hardened secure communications, building on ongoing work to disrupt the platforms that criminals exploit and investing in innovative tools to anticipate and mitigate the risk. As set out in Economic Crime Plan 2, the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) is establishing and implementing a cross-system strategy for tackling professional enablers, with an emphasis on collaborative working and information sharing. This is being supported by a number of public sector bodies, including and not limited to the Home Office and the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision.

79 The NCA will increase its response to economic crime by leading a system-wide response through the NECC to reduce fraud and end the era of the UK as a safe haven for dirty money. The NCA will take on – for further intelligence enrichment, investigation, or disruption – high-value targets and enablers, particularly those based overseas or online, whose removal will significantly degrade the threat of fraud to individuals and businesses in the UK.

80 We will continue to strengthen the regional and local policing response to the serious and organised crime that people experience online and in communities. Much of the impact of serious and organised crime is felt in local communities, with the response mainly led by police forces identifying and managing the threat in response to national priorities. ROCUs are the principal link between the NCA and police forces in England and Wales with specialist capabilities to disrupt serious and organised crime, delivered regionally but accessible to all police forces. We have grown capacity dedicated to tackling serious and organised crime in ROCUs and in London forces by almost 50%, through the Police Uplift Programme, with an additional 725 officers deployed to a range of specialist capabilities.³⁹ This marks a significant increase in policing's capacity to tackle the most serious forms of serious and organised crime in communities across the UK. With the support of policing we will continue police officer growth into ROCUs and in London serious and organised crime functions.

81 The Government will continue to invest in ROCUs to maximise the unprecedented uplift in officer growth and build and strengthen a range of specialist capabilities which enhance the ROCU network's increased capacity and capability to tackle and disrupt diverse serious and organised crime threats. We will also continue to invest in undercover online officer capability within ROCUs to target and disrupt the highest-harm child sexual abuse offenders and we will further bolster the ROCU network and local policing to tackle middle-market drugs supply and to support the investigative capabilities to identify and disrupt the highest-harm threats.

82 Police forces will implement a new performance framework which will report on the increase in capacity and, working in partnership with policing, PCCs and HMICFRS, we will strengthen the governance, inspection and accountability of ROCUs to provide greater assurance on their operation. We will also review the effectiveness of the ROCU funding model to provide longer-term funding stability to the network.

39 [Police officer uplift, final position as at March 2023 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Government action in support of the operational response

83 The Home Office will continue to invest in improving the criminal justice response to modern slavery through funding £1.3 million to the NPCC Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit in 2023/2024. This will build on the national policing capability and bring consistency across police force areas to help drive up prosecutions and provide better outcomes for victims.

84 The Government published the Economic Crime Plan 2, which builds on the foundations of the first Economic Crime Plan. Through these plans we will continue to transform the UK's response to economic crime by delivering three key outcomes. Firstly, we will reduce money laundering by limiting abuse of corporate structures, increasing effectiveness of our supervisory and regulatory regime, combating criminal use of cryptoassets, reforming the operation of Suspicious Activity Reports, delivering a cross-system response to money laundering and recovering more criminal assets. Secondly, we will combat kleptocracy by improving financial sanctions design and implementing, enforcing and strengthening our response to kleptocracy. Thirdly, we will cut fraud through delivery of the Fraud Strategy and new Public Sector Fraud Authority. Key outcomes will include: 475 new financial crime investigators dedicated to tackling money laundering and asset recovery; a new Crypto Cell combining law enforcement agencies and regulators to pool expertise and enforcement tools to tackle the criminal abuse of cryptoassets; and new state of the art technology, using tools such as advanced data analysis to stay ahead of criminals and give law enforcement agencies the intelligence they need. We will also deliver a new approach to public-private prioritisation, including joint priorities to maximise public and private resources to prevent, detect and disrupt economic crime; and an expanded CKC, using the NCA's expertise to target corrupt elites, their money and their enablers; and ambitious reform of the UK's supervisory regime.

85 We will implement the new Fraud Strategy, published in May 2023. This follows on from the actions to tackle fraud in the Economic Crime Plan (including the 2021 Statement of Progress update). The Fraud Strategy sets out a unified and coordinated response from Government, law enforcement agencies and the private sector to tackle fraud. To keep the public safe we will take an end-to-end approach to cut fraud, focusing on three key elements: pursuing fraudsters; blocking frauds at source; and empowering the public to respond. Specifically, we are setting up a new National Fraud Squad with over 400 new investigators to identify and target fraudsters. We have set up a new unit as part of the UK intelligence community to target fraudsters globally. We are replacing Action Fraud with a state of the art reporting system. A central part of blocking frauds is the role of the private sector in stopping attempts from reaching potential victims. The Fraud Strategy sets out new initiatives to address this and will be supported through the new online fraud charter with commitments from technology firms to fight fraud on their platforms and put in place better protections. We aim to stop fraudsters from abusing the telecoms network by clamping down on scam texts, banning cold calls on investment products and stopping spoofing. We will also improve public messaging on fraud, bolster victim support and ensure that more people get their money back.

86 We will continue to support law enforcement agencies in their efforts to disrupt criminals and deprive them of their ill-gotten gains. The ambitious Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Programme announced in the Economic Crime Plan 2 continues Government and law enforcement's efforts to build capacity across the system and ultimately recover more criminal assets. The programme seeks to increase the prevention, detection and disruption of money laundering and increase asset recovery, with the aim of recovering an additional £1 billion of assets over the 10 year programme period.⁴⁰

87 We are introducing new measures to support closer collaboration between the NCA and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) to tackle serious and complex fraud, bribery and corruption. We will amend the Crime and Courts Act 2013 to allow the Director General of the NCA to direct the Director of the SFO on matters relating to the investigation of suspected incidents of serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption, in the same way that the NCA has power to direct the police in relation to serious and organised crime. The NCA and SFO are both critical and independent parts of the Government's fight against fraud.

88 Development of the new UK Anti-Corruption Strategy is well under way with publication expected shortly. The new strategy will build on the progress made by the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022, reset the Government's ambition and strengthen UK resilience against corruption. Corruption undermines national security and global stability, impedes global prosperity and erodes trust in institutions while harming its victims. The new strategy is being developed to combat this threat. It will set out the steps that we will take to prevent our institutions from being corrupted, bring corrupt actors to justice and address the harms caused by corruption. It will also set out the ways that the UK will combat corruption internationally.

89 We will continue to deliver the actions set out in the 2021 Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse and bring offenders to justice. We will use the full force of the State to counter the growing scale and impact of child sexual abuse, investing across agencies to ensure they have the necessary capabilities, resources and powers to tackle the threat. We announced the Child Sexual Exploitation Police Taskforce in April 2023, which will provide practical, expert, on the ground support for forces on all forms of child sexual abuse, with a particular focus on complex and organised child sexual exploitation, including grooming gangs. The NCA will continue to lead the national law enforcement operational response, the NPCC will drive effective local responses, the National Cyber Force (NCF) will carry out cyber operations to counter child sexual exploitation and abuse, and GCHQ will lead on disrupting high-harm offending and developing solutions to systemic internet problems.

90 We will deliver the end-to-end plan to tackle drugs supply set out in the 2021 Drugs Strategy, From Harm to Hope, to attack the drugs supply chain at every level. We will deploy new people and capabilities in drug source and transit countries to disrupt drugs travelling towards the UK. The NCA and Border Force are delivering the Drug Strategy commitment to work together to create a 'ring of steel' around key ports. Police and the NCA will disrupt domestic drug distribution by tackling the middle-market of supply, where the enablers of drug distribution can be best disrupted. We are also investing up to £145 million to bolster our County Lines Programme over three years up until 2024/25, and will continue to fund Project ADDER, a whole-system approach to tackling drug misuse, until March 2025.⁴¹

40 [New plan puts UK at the forefront of fight against economic crime \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

41 [From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

91 We will intensify our response to the destabilising influence of serious and organised criminals who continue to carry out their criminal activity from prison or while under statutory probation supervision. HMPPS uses its Multi-Agency Response to Serious and Organised Crime programme to support joint working between the police, prisons, probation, and other agencies to jointly identify, prioritise and disrupt serious and organised criminal activity to protect the public and to reduce reoffending. This includes offenders that are capable of continuing criminal activity from within custody. The Ministry of Justice with HMPPS will invest an additional £11 million by 2025 to expand and enhance the Serious and Organised Crime Unit within HMPPS to better disrupt and undermine serious and organised crime offenders.

92 HMPPS is developing a new intelligence management service to improve intelligence sharing between prisons and probation, to enhance risk assessment and management and to target crime in the community. HMPPS will increase levels of protection against serious and organised crime in the prison estate through investment to upgrade existing mobile phone capabilities. This will help to reduce instances of organised criminals using illicit devices to run their criminal networks while in prison.

93 The Government will ensure that police and law enforcement partners have the powers they need to disrupt organised criminals and are able to use existing powers to their full extent to tackle serious and organised crime. The Government has brought forward legislation in the Criminal Justice Bill that will counter evolving threats and sophisticated technologies used by organised crime groups. This includes introducing new criminal offences for the possession, importing, manufacturing, adapting, supplying and intending to supply specific articles for use in serious crime. These articles are vehicle concealments, templates used to print 3D firearm components and pill presses. The legislation will enable the Government to amend the list of articles to ensure that the list can be updated as criminal tactics evolve. We are also prohibiting electronic devices used in vehicle theft and the possession and supply of SIM farms that have no legitimate purpose. In addition, the Government will legislate to strengthen Serious Crime Prevention Orders to make it easier for police and other law enforcement agencies to place restrictions on suspected offenders and stop them from participating in further crime. More widely this Bill will strengthen our laws by giving the police greater access to the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency database to identify criminals, and also provide law enforcement with the ability to apply for a court order to mandate the suspension of domain names and IP addresses being used for criminal activity. We will not hesitate to give law enforcement agencies further powers so that they can stay ahead of the threat from serious and organised crime.

Case Study – Operation Venetic

Operation Venetic demonstrates the effectiveness of a multi-agency response. Led by the NCA, working closely with police partners, it was the largest law enforcement operation of its kind in UK history. It successfully targeted users of encrypted devices employing the notorious ‘EncroChat’ platform and has led to 3,000 arrests, including many major organised criminals and the seizure of 77 firearms, over 1,800 rounds of ammunition and more than two tonnes of Class A and B drugs. The operation continues to deliver vital intelligence, with a significant impact on crime gangs across the UK.

Case Study – Multi-Agency Response to Organised Crime Groups from the Western Balkans

Organised crime groups from the Western Balkans operate globally and are involved in multiple crimes such as illegal drug importation, organised immigration crime and money laundering. Their illegal activities threatened the safety of our communities, integrity of our borders as well as prosperity and stability of the Western Balkans.

The Government mobilised all levers, including our intelligence community, overseas networks and international partnership to deliver a range of law enforcement, programmatic and diplomatic activities to reduce the threat. This included capacity and capability building activities to enable our law enforcement partners in the Western Balkans to disrupt Western Balkan organised crime groups more effectively, disruptive actions against several public figures in the region due to their ties to criminality and corruption and a series of targeted law enforcement operations across the UK. This joined up approach has delivered sustained disruptive outcomes against Western Balkans organised crime groups.

Building resilience in local communities, deterring and diverting individuals

94 As set out in the Beating Crime Plan, the Government has invested in neighbourhood crime prevention including the Safer Streets Fund. But there is more to do to increase resilience against the impact of organised criminals, who try to dominate communities with fear and violence. We need to make sure that once a violent organised crime group has been disrupted within a community, it cannot return and there is not another group able to take its place. We need to make sure the prison estate is as protected and resilient as it can be, so that organised criminals cannot continue to run their illicit business from within prison and that offenders do not go on to re-offend after release.

95 We will work to deal with the impact of serious and organised crime in communities, by building their resilience and helping to prevent serious and organised crime from returning. By the end of Spring 2024, we will roll out to every territorial force in England and Wales the Clear, Hold, Build pilot – an end-to-end partnership approach to dealing with serious and organised crime at the local level. This involves the police and local partners taking an integrated and comprehensive approach to the pursuit of OCGs and helping local communities become more resilient to serious and organised crime in the future. The ‘clear’ phase involves intelligence-led enforcement activity targeting organised crime group members, their networks, business interests, criminality and spheres of influence. The police use all powers and levers to disrupt their ability to operate, creating safer spaces within which to begin community engagement. The ‘hold’ phase involves consolidating and stabilising the initial clear phase to stop remaining members or other criminal groups capitalising on the vacuum created. The ‘build’ phase involves interventions with the community to tackle the drivers of crime and eliminate opportunities for serious and organised crime to flourish in the future. Police forces have reported that this approach can deliver a positive impact at the local level. It has been recognised as innovative and good practice by HMICFRS and in May 2023 the College of Policing published Clear, Hold, Build Smarter Practice to support forces nationally in the successful implementation of the model.

96 We will work to divert more of those involved in organised criminality away from a life of crime and deter committed criminals. The Government is investing in early intervention to prevent people becoming involved in crime and violence, including the £200 million

Youth Endowment Fund and targeted interventions aimed at young people who are already offending. We must continue to build on these programmes with interventions focused on the specific risks from organised crime. These programmes will divert those on the fringes of serious and organised crime while deterring committed organised criminals by sending a clear message that we will freeze, seize or otherwise deny them access to their finances, assets and infrastructure.

Case Study – Clear, Hold, Build

West Yorkshire Police began implementing Clear, Hold, Build in Bradford Moor in 2020 as part of a pilot. The area was within the top 10% most deprived wards in England, experiencing high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour as well as violence and drugs supply. There was high unemployment and low levels of community trust in policing and several mapped organised crime groups operating within the area, with evidence of exploitation involving human trafficking. To understand the totality of the threat from serious and organised crime, the force prepared a profile of the ward by overlaying a range of police and partner data. This was used to inform an end-to-end partnership response which included a targeted arrest phase of people associated with organised crime groups, a range of voluntary sector interventions to engage and divert the vulnerable individuals from criminal exploitation and the re-claiming of community assets such as housing to prevent them from being used for criminal activity by drug dealers. This led to a sustained reduction in the threat from serious and organised crime and improvements in community resilience and confidence in policing. While we cannot directly attribute changes in crime levels to Clear, Hold, Build, there were also reductions in crime within the pilot site in West Yorkshire including a 57% reduction in burglary, 27% reduction in drug offences and 38% reduction in antisocial behaviour.⁴²

Greater Manchester Police launched one of the largest ever UK multi-agency operations in the Cheetham Hill area to tackle serious and organised crime linked to the counterfeiting marketplace. The Chief Constable hosted a multi-agency launch event, with representation from public, private and voluntary sectors, sharing information and intelligence to ensure there was a common understanding of the complexity and gravity of organised criminality in the area.

Adopting the Clear, Hold, Build methodology, a multi-agency operational plan was put into effect, relentlessly targeting the crime groups, their business models and enablers, while addressing community vulnerabilities exploited by them. During the initial 'clear' phase, 56 multi-agency warrants were executed, involving Manchester City Council, Trading Standards, private sector anti-counterfeiting teams, medicines regulators and building inspectors. This resulted in 96 arrests and the seizure of 298 tonnes of counterfeit goods with an estimated value of £39 million. Under the 'hold' phase, 191 counterfeit shops were closed down and unused structures within the area were cleared and demolished. There were also visible and high-profile multi-agency patrols and liaison with the legitimate business community. As part of the 'build' phase, clothing was re-branded and constituted and distributed to local schools and charities. Community groups were re-established and work is under way to regenerate the area.

97 We are working with the NPCC and NCA to strengthen the law enforcement response to organised crime groups from the Western Balkans operating in the UK. This includes Operation Mille, an NPCC-led operation. Carried out over the summer in 2023, it involved the execution of up to 1,000 warrants targeting cannabis factories.⁴³ This disruption activity has since improved our strategic and tactical understanding of Western Balkan business models.

98 To complement Operation Mille, we will invest a further £0.8 million in police forces and the NPCC in 2023/24 to tackle the threat caused by organised crime groups with links to the Western Balkans, including funding for Serious and Organised Crime Community Coordinators and evidenced-based interventions within more hotspot areas. The work currently consists of three pilot sites in Norwich, Greater Manchester and Brighton and includes operational actions relating to illegal migration and drugs cultivation. The approach involves a range of sport and employment initiatives to engage and support participants from the community who may be at risk of becoming involved or are already involved in crime and drugs. This UK community-based approach complements and links to community-based interventions in the Western Balkans designed to address the main socio-economic drivers of people into serious and organised crime. An NPCC national coordinator will also be appointed, with responsibility for using the information and evidence from the pilots to support all forces in England and Wales in improving how to deal with the impact and reduce the threat posed by Western Balkan organised crime groups in the UK.

99 The police will continue to work with partners to deter people who are most likely to join an organised crime group and divert those already on the cusp of a life of organised crime. To aid this the Home Office will update existing practitioner resources on prevention. We will also publish new guidance in 2024 on the importance of working in partnership to reduce the harm caused by serious and organised crime on communities.

Design out crime and raise barriers online

100 Organised criminals increasingly use modern technology and exploit online vulnerabilities, committing crime across borders and at scale. To have a meaningful and lasting impact against crime online and to protect the public, we cannot rely on disruption alone. We need to make it much harder for criminal networks to operate and succeed in the first place. This means building protection online, better understanding how organised crime groups are exploiting online capabilities and marketplaces, helping the public and businesses to protect themselves better and designing out crime, making it harder for criminals to exploit vulnerabilities to commit crime through regulation and technical solutions.

101 We will reduce online vulnerabilities and the opportunities for organised criminals to commit crime online at scale. We will work to make the public and businesses more resilient and better able to protect themselves. The NCA will work with the public and private sectors and regulators to design out online crime, in particular child sexual abuse online, fraud, economic crime and cybercrime, building on successful public-private partnership work to date, such as the Joint Money Laundering Intelligence Taskforce. The NECC will deliver preventative responses to design out fraud and economic crime, change behaviours and close the upstream vulnerabilities exploited by money launderers. We have taken action through the Online Safety Act to give a duty to platforms to report to the NCA any child sexual exploitation and abuse content that they encounter. We will further support the prevention of child sexual abuse by continuing to invest in and support programmes to deter individuals from abusive behaviour and divert people away from offending, for example through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's "Stop It Now!" Campaign and its confidential helpline.

43 **Unprecedented operation leads to £130M of cannabis seized (npcc.police.uk).**

102 We have consulted on a Cyber Duty to Protect to reduce cybercrime and the offences it facilitates at scale and reduce the burden on citizens for cyber security. We will work with stakeholders to consider measures which place more responsibility on organisations which manage user accounts and process personal data, to protect those personal accounts and data. This would help to reduce unauthorised access, fraud and online crime.

103 We will maximise use of the Active Cyber Defence (ACD) initiative within the National Cyber Security Centre to tackle organised criminals. ACD is a technical programme to disrupt economic and cybercrime upstream, blocking malicious digital communications before they reach UK IP addresses. Better focusing this programme on organised criminals will reduce malware and malicious content from overseas organised criminals, reduce the number of fraud and cybercrimes and reduce harm at scale, preventing high-volume attacks from ever reaching the UK. This will build on the positive delivery to date, with 2.3 million cyber-facilitated commodity campaigns removed in 2021, including scammers.⁴⁴

Outcomes and Success Measures

104 Taken together, this activity will help to deliver outcomes across these main areas:

- increased impact against the highest-priority organised crime groups operating in and against the UK;
- increased impact against fraud and economic crime, including illicit finance and cybercrime as a key enabler of all types of serious and organised crime;
- improved criminal justice outputs and outcomes;
- increased resilience of local communities against organised criminal activity;
- individuals diverted away from involvement in crime; and
- reduced vulnerabilities to serious and organised crime online and increasing protections.

105 We will measure impact against a range of indicators, including, but not limited to:

- total number of active organised crime groups operating in and against the UK;
- levels of understanding of high-harm organised criminals;
- scale and breadth of disruptions against the highest-priority organised crime groups;
- value of criminal assets recovered and denied; fraud and money laundering disruptions;
- criminal justice outcomes such as arrests, charges and convictions; and seizures of drugs and other illicit commodities;
- levels of vulnerability to serious and organised crime in public and private sector systems;
- numbers of public and private sector organisations experiencing cybercrime attacks;
- evaluation of early intervention and prevention programmes in diverting people away from serious and organised crime; and
- evaluation of community-based initiatives, including the impact of Clear, Hold, Build on local crime rates.

2 UK Border

Our second line of action is strengthening the UK border. This provides a unique opportunity to identify and intercept known and unknown individuals and goods who have managed to evade our upstream disruption from entering the country illegally or who are leaving the country and transporting the proceeds of organised crime overseas.

106 The border is a unique intervention point for disrupting the operations of organised criminals, stopping illegal people smuggling and the flow of illegal commodities into the country. The more we disrupt serious and organised crime at the border, the more we reduce the profits of criminal networks and raise the risks for them to operate. Action at the border also directly helps to reduce harm on the streets of the UK, by intercepting and seizing the illegal drugs and firearms which fuel crime in neighbourhoods across the UK. Border Force, Home Office Intelligence, the NCA and other agencies work together, using intelligence, capabilities and data to identify, target and disrupt organised criminals seeking to exploit the UK border.

107 As part of the Prime Minister's five priorities, we will strengthen the UK border and enhance disruptive activity against organised immigration crime groups who work close to the border to smuggle and facilitate people to enter the UK illegally, increasingly through dangerous small boat crossings in the Channel. As well as pursuing high-harm criminals, we will focus on disruptive activity to seek to impact the capacity of organised criminal groups to operate the small boats methodology. This will be done through: enhanced intelligence sharing and coordination by UK law enforcement agencies; border hardening measures; use of technology; increased law enforcement activity; and collaboration with international partners including France and other near neighbours such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

108 At the UK-France Summit in March 2023, the Prime Minister agreed with France the most ambitious deal yet to tackle small boats. This new multi-year deal will significantly increase our capacity to prevent small boat crossings and break the model of the criminal gangs that facilitate them. The agreement will see: more than double the number of UK-funded personnel working to stop small boats; a new Zonal Coordination Centre; a package of new cutting-edge surveillance technologies; a new international customs initiative to tackle the supply chain of equipment that enables dangerous and illegal small boats; the creation of a new retention centre in Dunkirk to allow more migrants who might otherwise travel by dangerous boats to be removed from the French coast and the deepening of intelligence cooperation work between the UK and France. As we seek to drive down small boat arrival numbers, organised criminals may turn to other methods of entry, such as roll-on/roll-off ferries. This possible displacement of illegal migrants to other methodologies poses a challenge to the UK to maintain the visibility, coverage and understanding of these routes and methods.

109 We will strengthen the security of the UK border against drug trafficking, increasing disruptions and seizures and helping to dismantle supply chains, with Border Force and the NCA trialling new multi-agency approaches to targeting interventions against the supply of illicit drugs. Maritime routes continue to be attractive for organised crime groups to carry out a range of criminal activities including trafficking illegal items and substances, especially class A drugs. Border Force Maritime Command will continue to counter this threat and reduce crime, through its National Deep Rummage Team and its fleet of Cutters and Coastal Patrol Vessels. UK law enforcement agencies will continue to work closely with neighbours and international partners to tackle serious and organised crime in the maritime domain.

110 Our approach to border security also begins overseas away from the UK's physical border. Where possible, we already use our current visa regime to refuse visas and prevent the travel of those known to pose a threat to the UK. Later this year we will also launch our Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme to strengthen the security of our border further. The ETA scheme will apply to those passengers visiting the UK or transiting through the UK who do not currently need a visa for short stays and do not already have any other UK immigration status before travelling. The ETA scheme will therefore enhance our ability to screen such travellers and prevent the travel of those who pose a threat to the UK, including criminality, making the UK safer.

111 We will challenge organised criminals who seek to exploit any vulnerabilities in our border systems and the people who operate them, including making use of corrupt insiders at ports. The UK has advanced capabilities to identify and prevent people and harmful goods arriving in the UK, including screening and detection technologies deployed at the border. We will ensure our capabilities are as effective as possible and maximise the opportunities provided by the UK border to disrupt organised criminals. This means securing and making the best possible use of data, including linking it with advances in intelligence and detection capabilities, to identify and target consignments and journeys linked to organised criminals. The 2023 Target Operating Model will illustrate how and when we will collect advance goods data to meet this objective.

112 We are strengthening the capabilities of Border Force to protect the UK border and interdict illicit commodities, particularly class A drugs, through a wider investment programme. Data-driven detections account for a large proportion of class A drugs seized at the border. We are investing in next-generation data analytics to identify high-threat movements of goods and people (CERBERUS). As part of EU Exit, the UK will receive data on the movement of EU goods for the first time in 2025. This data will be a key element in powering data analytics. We are also investing in detection capability, both technical and people, to improve our ability to find drugs concealed in legitimate goods.

113 We will enhance our response to corruption at the border and the threat posed by corrupt insiders through the new Anti-Corruption Strategy. We will disrupt attempts by organised crime groups to infiltrate Border Force through improved intelligence, background checks, vetting checks bespoke to Border Force, improved security processes and ongoing personnel security risk management. The NCA and Border Force working closely with industry partners will continue to trial innovative approaches to secure the border and tackle drug supply facilitated by corrupt insiders. The Home Office and Department for Transport continue to develop and expand the Access Pass Holder Information Distribution System, to mitigate the insider threat to UK aviation security and other modes of transport.

114 We will enhance border security by risk testing and collecting intelligence. This will allow us to quantify vulnerability at UK ports and upstream in countries of origin or points in between and understand the threats we face and the countries from which those threats come. This will enable us to respond swiftly as the nature of the threat changes. We will continue to invest in capabilities to deliver the risk testing initiative which will involve operational teams combined with detection capabilities to identify the entry of high-harm threats, including Class A drugs, firearms and clandestine entry.

115 We will use Intelligence Threat Assessments to strengthen operational planning and increase our ability to deploy Border Force resource at the border. We will deliver the Risk, Intelligence and Detection capability to bring together intelligence programmes and enhancements to our detection technology to improve our data, targeting and intelligence base and detection capability to intercept and reduce serious and organised crime at the border.

116 We will improve Border Security by enhancing data analytics and detection capabilities. The Home Office is building a world-class data analytics capability that will use border data and intelligence to identify the movement of high-threat goods and people. We will align this with a strategic uplift in our detection capability.

Outcomes and Success Measures

117 Taken together, this activity will help to deliver outcomes across three main areas:

- disruption of organised immigration crime;
- a stronger border as an intervention point to stop organised criminals and illicit commodities; and
- reduced vulnerability of the border to corrupt insiders.

118 We will measure impact against a range of indicators, including, but not limited to: numbers of disruptions of organised immigration crime groups, including those facilitating illegal small boat crossings; seizures of drugs, other illicit commodities and criminal cash at the border; disruptions of criminal networks involved in the supply of illicit commodities; and disruptions of corrupt insiders at ports and the border.

3 International

Our third line of action is overseas, including relentless intelligence-led disruption at source of internationally-networked organised crime groups operating against the UK, raising the barrier to harm reaching the UK. We will also work to improve international information and intelligence sharing and reduce global drivers of serious and organised crime.

119 Serious and organised crime is a global challenge that requires international cooperation and global solutions. Conflict, state threats, instability and poor socio-economic conditions overseas have driven demand for criminal networks' expertise in aiding illegal migration into Europe and the UK. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, coupled with ongoing international instability, weak governance and severe socio-economic pressure, exacerbates the global threat from serious and organised crime. In some countries, transnational criminal networks currently targeting the UK have already infiltrated societal, commercial, and political structures, often through corruption and illicit finance. They have established self-serving 'safe havens' to the detriment of the rule of law and human rights and the UK's security, foreign and development policy.

120 Working overseas provides the opportunity to target serious and organised crime at its source, preventing problems such as illegal migration from reaching our shores. Our international approach has given us the global reach and the network of international partnerships and alliances, such as the UK-UAE Partnership to Tackle Illicit Finance Flows, needed to carry out significant disruption of transnational criminal networks, confront the

underlying drivers of serious and organised crime at source and en route to the UK, and build stronger global resilience to organised crime threats. But the threat continues to evolve and pose new challenges for our response.

121 To support efforts at the UK Border, we will work further upstream to disrupt the efforts of organised crime groups who are exploiting global migration challenges to smuggle and facilitate people to enter the UK illegally, including via small boats – and whose operations sit far beyond the UK. As with our efforts at the UK Border, as well as pursuing high-harm criminals we will focus on disruptive activity to impact the capacity of organised crime groups to operate the small boats methodology specifically.

122 Project INVIGOR is a Government funding programme that supports investment and development in UK Government and overseas capabilities to address organised immigration crime. The aims of the fund are to:

- identify and disrupt the smugglers' business model by targeting the enablers of organised immigration crime including criminal finances, communications, corruption and social media;
- increase the number of disruptions and enforcement activity against organised immigration crime and the criminal gangs that facilitate it; and
- tackle the upsurge of small boats crossings in the English Channel.

123 On 13 December 2022, the Prime Minister announced that funding for tackling organised immigration crime would be doubled as part of his statement on illegal migration.⁴⁵ This includes doubling the capabilities within the NCA and the NPCC's national modern slavery and organised immigration crime programme to enhance our response.

124 This funding has been allocated to a number of delivery partners including the NCA and NPCC. Projects include the establishment of an Online Communications Centre to tackle organised immigration crime related content on social media platforms. The funding to tackle organised immigration crime has also led to the doubling of funding for NCA Investigations capabilities and tripled NCA funding for intelligence capabilities, alongside introducing additional TRACER and Chief Data Office capabilities. It is also supporting a dedicated Task Force based in Tirana, Albania to increase organised immigration crime related intelligence and capabilities and has provided specific funding to tackle organised immigration crime related activity.

125 We will use our domestic capabilities to tackle crime with an international dimension through the JICC within the NCA in conjunction with the NPCC. This will bring together and strengthen the international policing capabilities from the International Crime Coordination Centre in the NPCC and the NCA's international team to ensure all UK police have the tools and skills to work across borders. The JICC will provide a 24/7 service that prioritises and responds to operational requirements of domestic and international partners, equipping the police and wider law enforcement with the tools and insights needed to tackle crime with an international dimension.

126 Where necessary we will leverage our cyber capabilities against organised criminals to counter, disrupt, degrade and contest those who would do harm to the UK. Bodies such as the NCF can operate beyond traditional law enforcement capabilities and deliver on a broad range of outcomes that have a direct real-world effect, irrespective of geographic boundaries.

45 [PM statement on illegal migration: 13 December 2022 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/press-releases/2022/12/13).

We will also continue to make use of the UK's autonomous cyber sanctions regime and attributions process to impose costs on our adversaries and condemn malign and reckless cyber attacks.

127 We will maintain the capabilities in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) to ensure we can work with counterparts across Europe to tackle crime, including serious organised crime and terrorism. The comprehensive package of capabilities in the TCA supports data exchange and practical cooperation and also provides a strong foundation for UK cooperation with the EU policing and criminal justice agencies (Europol and Eurojust).

128 We will continue to maximise our operational relationships with Europol and Eurojust. We recognise the added value which the agencies bring in facilitating coordination with international partners and supporting cross-border operations. We will maintain a strong multi-agency UK Liaison Bureau at Europol and a UK Liaison Prosecutor led team at Eurojust. Strong relationships with the agencies continue to yield significant results for the UK and our international partners in tackling shared threats across the range of serious and organised crime and terrorism.

129 We will increase use of data-sharing platforms to maximise our response to cross-border criminality. We will make full use of data sharing arrangements established through the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, including the Prüm data-sharing capability, an international biometric exchange system through which we currently exchange DNA and fingerprint data. Our ambition is to finalise connections to remaining member states by Spring 2024.

130 The Home Office will continue to bolster the UK's relationship with INTERPOL, supporting it through investment in core capabilities and strengthening the organisation against misuse. The UK is hosting the INTERPOL General Assembly in 2024 which will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the UK's global leadership in tackling international crime and promoting cross-border law enforcement cooperation.

131 We will continue implementation of I-LEAP which will deliver connectivity to INTERPOL's databases, providing real-time access for UK law enforcement agencies to subjects and objects of interest. We will continue to identify new opportunities to work with international partners in enhancing alert sharing capabilities, as well as intelligence sharing and intervention methods.

132 We have comprehensive agreements in place to exchange criminal records with EU countries under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This ensures that we are notified when a UK national is convicted of a crime in an EU country, and provides a basis for securing any criminal history held by an EU country on one of its nationals. We are now putting in place new arrangements to exchange criminal records data with other international partners to support the investigation and prosecution of those involved in cross-border crime. This includes work to extend to all Western Balkan countries the arrangements in place with Albania and recently Kosovo. We also have a commitment from both sides to negotiate an exchange mechanism with India. Developing and improving criminal records sharing arrangements has been proven to enrich intelligence and support activity in enabling the disruption of serious and organised crime. This activity will deliver better-informed sentencing by the judiciary to deter those involved in serious and organised crime from operating in the UK.

133 We will secure new bilateral and multilateral arrangements to enhance police and judicial cooperation across borders and continue to enhance the operation of existing arrangements that support the detection, investigation and prosecution of cross-border criminality affecting the UK. This activity will be driven by the operational requirements of domestic and international partners, and the need to keep pace with evolving threats and technology.

134 The NCA will enhance its international liaison network in the highest-priority countries to take action in the source and transit countries relevant to organised immigration crime and illegal drugs and other threats. It will continue to develop and adopt international disruption strategies and increased cooperation with international law enforcement bodies through the NCA International Liaison Officer network. The NCA will establish International Advisors to provide specialist support to operations led by UK-based teams, providing advice on international tactics, disruptive options and the capacity, capabilities and priorities of overseas partners.

135 We will boost the work of the Home Office International Operations. We will continue to deploy officers into priority countries (including in new locations), working with and through international partners to tackle all types of organised immigration crime. We will focus effort on volume disruptions designed to quickly and relentlessly disrupt the activity of organised criminals, and more widely disrupt flows of illegal migration to the UK. Where necessary we will expand and introduce new types of activity to tackle the threats.

136 We will bolster our international response to serious and organised crime through our joint Home Office and FCDO overseas Serious and Organised Crime Network (SOCnet), bringing together diplomatic, operational, programmatic and development work to tackle serious and organised crime and illicit finance threats in a coordinated way. SOCnet consists of regional serious and organised crime coordinators supported by UK and country-based staff in key locations, in addition to illicit finance policy leads who play a key role across the network. SOCnet coordinates responses to the threat to UK interests, including between serious and organised crime and emerging areas such as climate change. SOCnet works alongside around 80 overseas posts who contribute to Joint SOC Platforms (JSOCs) at post.

137 The FCDO will strengthen the strategic leadership and diplomatic expertise in tackling serious and organised crime by embedding international goals and priorities within Business and Country Plans under the leadership of Heads of Missions. It will continue to improve the coordination of cross-Government international responses through the joint FCDO and Home Office overseas SOCnet and Joint Serious and Organised Crime Boards in over 80 British embassies and high commissions.

138 We will expand our existing international campaigns against serious and organised crime that fuels crime, violence and exploitation in the UK. The campaigns will bring together all government and international levers, including bilateral and multilateral partnerships, to target transnational criminals and networks, priority threats and/or major supply routes in global geographical hotspots such as the Western Balkans.

139 We will continue to lead delivery of the Integrated Security Fund international serious and organised crime programmes. Worth almost £100 million between 2022 and 2025, they support priority international partners' ability to disrupt the business model of global organised crime networks threatening our national security, reduce the harm they cause and address their underlying drivers. We are continuing to target them where they can make the biggest difference for UK citizens, countering the supply of drugs and firearms and operating upstream to restrict the ability of organised crime groups targeting the UK to operate with impunity, recruit and profit from crime overseas. These programmes will continue to

complement and enhance our domestic and international operational response to serious and organised crime and target the nexus with other transnational security threats to the UK (such as illicit finance or state threats).

140 The Home Office will also continue to invest in global efforts to protect vulnerable people from exploitation. Between 2022 and 2025, we will be investing £16.5 million in the global Safe Online fund to stop child sexual abuse online and £24 million in the Modern Slavery Fund to reduce modern slavery in the UK and overseas, including through the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund. We are continuing to drive forward important international leadership, working with Five Country and G7 partners, on a shared priority commitment to building global capacity to tackle the transnational threat from child sexual abuse.

141 To reduce the threat international illicit finance poses to the UK, we will work to continue to enhance international standards and cooperation including through our leading role in the Financial Action Task Force, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the G7 and G20, to eliminate safe spaces for criminals to enjoy their profits. We will strengthen partnerships with other financial centres, particularly the US, UAE and our Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

Outcomes and Success Measures

142 Taken together, this activity will help to deliver outcomes across four main areas:

- disruption of high-harm organised criminals overseas, reducing impact in the UK as well as its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories;
- improved information and intelligence sharing internationally to support better investigative and criminal justice outcomes;
- increased political will of decision makers in priority countries overseas to step up the response to serious and organised crime; and
- reduced global drivers for serious and organised crime, linked to wider Government development goals.

143 We will measure impact against a range of indicators, including, but not limited to: numbers of successful disruptions against organised criminals; criminal justice outputs and outcomes from cross-border data exchange and cooperation; and evaluation of the impact of foreign policy and development focused networks, campaigns and programmes.

4 Technology and capabilities

Our fourth line of action is ensuring the best intelligence and data collection, analysis and investigative capabilities are in place to identify and disrupt organised criminals.

144 The threat of serious and organised crime is constantly evolving with offenders exploiting technology to facilitate their criminality. Rapid technological change has brought huge benefits and opportunities for citizens and businesses across the UK. However, it has also lowered the barrier to entry for organised criminals to exploit technology, using it to conceal their communications, hide their financial transactions and evade detection by law enforcement agencies. Although there are specialists who create bespoke technology and tools for criminal gain, it is often technology in use by the general population that is adopted by organised criminals, such as secure messaging applications that offer end-to-end encryption or Virtual Private Networks. Technologies such as end-to-end encrypted communication, cryptocurrencies, 5G, digitisation, the dark web, virtual currencies and new payment systems

pose challenges to law enforcement agencies' ability to maintain visibility of criminals' communications and financial transactions. Developments in AI may further enhance criminal capabilities, creating easy access to more sophisticated methodologies.

145 Technological change does present law enforcement agencies with opportunities in some cases, for example the potential use of AI. However, our focus is to respond to the challenges that technology creates, by ensuring that the best intelligence and data collection, analysis and sharing capabilities are in place to address these challenges. These data and intelligence capabilities, both overt and covert, are essential to ensuring law enforcement agencies can collect data linked to the activity of organised criminals, analyse it to establish a picture of criminal activity and share insights at the appropriate operational level to support effective, targeted disruption. In other situations, criminals use social media platforms to advertise their services such as the facilitation of illegal migration including via small boats. The challenge for law enforcement authorities is to ensure these posts are taken down as promptly as possible and avoid people's lives being put at risk through dangerous and illegal journeys.

146 Rapid technological change is likely to continue over the next five years and beyond, providing a continuing challenge to the law enforcement response. Individuals will spend more time online and possess more devices which are connected to the internet, posing greater opportunities for criminal activity. The storage, transfer and exploitation of data is becoming more complex and resource intensive due to the volumes of data, while the growing use of end-to-end encryption means that intelligence which can be collected is less valuable than it used to be. New or adapted technologies, such as AI and deep fakes, provide new opportunities for criminals to access enhanced capabilities to offend more effectively and at greater scale, and to frustrate the way investigations are run and evidence is gathered, analysed and deployed in court. This poses a significant challenge to the existing disclosure regime for evidence and the requirement for prosecutors to disclose to the defence all material that weakens the prosecution's case or strengthens the defendant's case. As part of a new independent review into the challenges of investigating and prosecuting fraud, the Government committed in the Fraud Strategy 2023 to consider how the disclosure regime can be streamlined for cases with large volumes of digital material, reducing the significant burden on law enforcement and prosecutors. This will include looking at international comparators on disclosure for any lessons we can learn. Equally, close collaboration with the relevant tech companies will be important to enable law enforcement agencies to be able to tackle criminals' use of technology.

147 The Serious and Organised Crime Strategy will work in tandem with the National Cyber Strategy (NCS), which aims to build resilience across the cyber ecosystem to prevent and mitigate against criminals exploiting technology and its advancements. Through the NCS Technology Advantage Pillar, the Government takes steps to address technology developments that are critical to cybersecurity, to ensure we harness opportunities and mitigate risk. The NCS champions the responsible development of connected technology, with principles of security and resilience embedded through programmes such as Digital Security by Design to minimise exploitable vulnerabilities.

148 We will act now to strengthen our critical data and intelligence capabilities to ensure that they remain consistent, robust and fit for purpose in tackling serious and organised crime. By ensuring that our capabilities are consistently fit for purpose alongside effective operating practices, facilities and structures, we will maintain the ability of law enforcement agencies to gather evidence, investigate crime and disrupt organised criminals even as technological changes make this more challenging. Up-to-date data and intelligence

capabilities will maximise the impact of the uplift in frontline officers, helping to ensure that additional officer capacity is targeted where it is most likely to be effective. AI offers significant opportunities in improving the speed and effectiveness of these capabilities. We will undertake a comprehensive review of digital forensic capabilities nationally, analysing the demand and supply with a view to focused investment.

149 Where individual crime types demand a specific response, we will ensure the capabilities are available to counter the threat. To tackle organised immigration crime related activity online as in the Prime Minister's announcement on 6 August 2023, the Home Office and NCA will continue to work in partnership with social media companies to accelerate action to take down content such as criminals sharing information about Channel crossings. This includes the establishment of an Online Capability Centre to tackle organised immigration crime related content on social media platforms. Additionally, the Home Office and NCA will continue to build on the voluntary Social Media Action Plan agreed jointly between the Home Office, NCA and a number of social media companies in 2021 to explore how to step up efforts to redirect users to appropriate messaging, deliver timely, public-facing safety information, and increase sharing of best practice.

150 To tackle child sexual abuse online, the Home Office will continue to invest in a range of critical data, intelligence and operational capabilities across the NCA, NPCC, GCHQ and the National Cyber Force to target the most technologically sophisticated offenders online. We have strengthened law enforcement capabilities to tackle child sexual abuse online by investing over £11 million in undercover online officers in 2022/23, maintaining trained teams and infrastructure within ROCUs and the NCA. The Home Office will continue to invest in the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID). This will help law enforcement to manage the scale of child sexual abuse material by further enhancing the CAID system, enriching data and allowing greater sharing of data and capabilities.

151 In order to target kleptocracy, the NCA will use the Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC), created in 2022, to target foreign elites, kleptocrats and the UK-based professional services that enable them.

152 To detect and investigate crime on the dark web, NCA officers will be upskilled to run online investigations which have a significant dark web component to both de-anonymise known offenders and proactively uncover new criminality. This will target those within the UK and overseas who deploy highly-replicable methodologies and who commit crime at scale.

153 In response to the serious and organised crime threat that emanates from prisons, HMPPS will build a new Digital Forensics Lab. This will enable mobile phones and similar devices which are seized in prisons to be examined more effectively, leading to increased intelligence for HMPPS and law enforcement agencies.

154 We will invest to develop effective digital communications capabilities and use existing capabilities to maximum effect against organised criminals. Existing capabilities include targeted interception, targeted equipment interference and the acquisition (and retention) of communications data, including as now facilitated through the UK's Data Access Agreement with the US which provides direct access to content data held by US companies for serious crime purposes. To ensure the powers remain fit for purpose and, as required under Section 260 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, in February 2023 the Home Secretary published and laid in Parliament a report on the operation of the Act to date. This report identified some

potential areas for legislative reform to improve the Act's effectiveness which could further support our efforts to tackle serious and organised crime in the future. The Government will look to bring forward legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

155 We are working to deliver a Sensitive Intelligence Network in ROCUs on behalf of policing and in partnership with 19 other agencies. This provides consistent processes, training, assurance models and tactics to enable the successful exploitation and analysis of sensitive intelligence to identify and investigate serious crime. The Home Office will now fund the roll-out of the network, giving the police the ability to receive, analyse, exploit and disseminate electronic material at secret classification. This will allow the police to identify, target and investigate the highest-harm criminality more efficiently and effectively.

156 Law enforcement agencies and other partners will work together and share intelligence and information to maximum effect against organised criminals. The police and other operational partners rely on intelligence to pursue offenders and disrupt and dismantle those that facilitate them. Providing agencies with the tools and access to shared information will improve the handling and analysis of data in investigations and will make it harder for criminals to operate online in the first place.

157 The NCA will provide a range of services to enable collaboration amongst partners. This includes sharing key information at Joint Serious Organised Crime Boards and access to covert intelligence collection, data exploitation, its international capability, horizon scanning and assessment functions (such as the National Assessment Centre) and its operational and investigative support services (such as the UK Protected Person Service). The NCA will work to increase access to intelligence by piloting NCA terminals across the ROCU network. If successful, this will allow police partners to interrogate NCA data independently, furthering their own operational objectives as well as supporting tasked activity in response to NCA intelligence disseminations. This will allow the NCA and the police to better understand the threat and exploit shared intelligence to maximise the impact against organised criminals.

158 To ensure that the NCA can analyse local policing data, the NCA has piloted access directly to local policing data from the Police National Database for inclusion in operational analysis. Improved data sharing means that NCA investigators will be able to access promptly and exploit intelligence and other data from local police forces in new, more efficient ways. To support collaboration amongst police forces, the Home Office is also investing in the NPCC Data Analytics Strategy to establish a centralised function within the NPCC for establishing and maintaining data sharing and optimised delivery of data analytics capabilities across policing. This will create data analytics capabilities which are consistently available and simplified.

159 Through the Online Safety Act, Ofcom now has new responsibilities as the independent online safety regulator to ensure that regulated services fulfil their duties under the Act, aimed at increasing protection against the dissemination of illegal content online. This includes organised immigration crime related content posted by organised criminal groups involved in the smuggling and facilitating of people across the Channel on small boats. NCA and law enforcement agencies and Ofcom will need to build strong working relationships to ensure an effective approach to tackling online harms within their respective remits. The NCA will have a key role to play in providing Ofcom with evidence and information about the way that criminal activity, particularly child sexual exploitation and abuse and organised immigration crime, operates online and measures that could help to address the threat. There are already information sharing gateways in legislation which will enable Ofcom and the NCA and other law enforcement agencies to share information where relevant and appropriate.

Outcomes and Success Measures

160 This is a key enabling line of action designed to better deliver the outcomes set out in the first three lines of action. Taken together, this activity will help to ensure that we continue to have effective intelligence and data collection, analysis and investigative capabilities, allowing us to better disrupt and protect against the organised criminals of today and tomorrow. We will measure impact against a range of indicators, including the operational outputs and outcomes which these capabilities will directly support, such as disruptions and seizures of criminal assets.

5 Multi-agency response

Our fifth line of action is ensuring all public and private sector partners are working together as effectively as possible with the right capacity, skills, structures and tasking processes.

161 The response to serious and organised crime is beyond the capacity and capability of any single body. It requires an integrated and end-to-end response using the full force of the state and private sector including the entire intelligence, law enforcement, national security and diplomatic system.

Overall strategy

162 The Home Secretary is accountable for the overall response to serious and organised crime. The Home Secretary sets the strategy and policy direction, ensures that legislation and capabilities are robust and effective, provides agencies with the funding for their operations and holds the system to account for its overall performance against the threat.

163 The Home Secretary sets the strategic priorities for the NCA, which are informed by the strategic intelligence on the threat and its harm to the UK. In the 2023-24 strategic priorities,⁴⁶ the Home Secretary tasked the NCA to:

- reduce serious and organised crime in our communities by leading the law enforcement system and improving coordination with policing and other partners to tackle organised crime groups in the UK;
- reduce serious and organised crime in the UK by dismantling the highest-harm organised crime groups, networks and individuals;
- reduce organised immigration crime with a particular focus on the organised crime groups facilitating small boat crossings as part of the wider Government strategy to stop small boats under the Prime Minister's 10 point plan on illegal migration;
- reduce fraud and combat corrupt elites, state threats, cyber and economic crime;
- enhance the security of our borders and ports by working with operational partners to dismantle the organised crime groups and networks that seek to undermine their integrity; and
- to play a full role in delivering the Government's objectives to reduce crime and respond to national security threats.

164 The Director General of the NCA sets operational priorities for the NCA, taking into account the Home Secretary's strategic priorities.

165 The Home Secretary sets the direction for policing against public safety threats through the Strategic Policing Requirement. This ensures that capabilities are in place for policing, including the ROCUs, to deliver a national response to serious and organised crime.

The NCA

166 The NCA was established in 2013 by the Crime and Courts Act with the function of securing that efficient and effective activities to combat organised crime and serious crime are carried out. The NCA leads and coordinates the UK law enforcement response to serious and organised crime. The NCA is responsible for developing a single view of the threat from serious and organised crime. This annual assessment provides an insight on how organised criminal groups operate and how that is evolving. It shapes the NCA's prioritisation of its own operational resources and informs operational activity by law enforcement agencies to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks.

167 The NCA Annual Plan 2023-24 sets out its strategic priorities, including how it will play a full role in delivering the Government's wider strategy to reduce crime and respond to national security threats and dismantle the highest-harm organised crime groups and networks.

168 The NCA has particular capabilities and powers to disseminate strategic intelligence throughout the system and, under the Crime and Courts Act 2013, it has a specific intelligence function for serious and organised crime. Insights from the National Assessment Centre's (NAC) National Strategic Assessment are used to set the National Control Strategy that will enable the NCA and other partners to resource and plan against priorities. The NAC sits in the NCA to hold and enhance the strategic intelligence picture of existing and emerging serious and organised crime threats, to support the operational response of the NCA and partners and to inform senior decision makers to shape policy. The NCA maintains a long-term view of emerging technology through TRACER – a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team hosted within the NCA, which assesses opportunities and risks in relation to digital investigative capabilities.

169 The National Control Strategy will be the primary tool for setting and tracking progress of operational activity against threats, managed through Strategic Governance Groups. The NCA supports and coordinates the national law enforcement response to serious and organised crime through tasking mechanisms to ensure that strategic intelligence feeds into actionable intelligence for police forces at the local level. The NCA leads national tasking and coordination through two processes: National Strategic Tasking and Coordination and National Tactical Tasking and Coordination. Each involves a set of national meetings, chaired by the NCA and attended by senior representatives from the NCA, police and other law enforcement agencies, which set the priorities for law enforcement in support of the Home Secretary's strategic priorities.

170 The National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) is hosted in the NCA and is staffed by partners from across the law enforcement community (including the NCA, Financial Conduct Authority, HMRC, City of London Police and the Serious Fraud Office) and from the private sector. It builds on the work already done by these organisations to ensure economic crime is tackled in a more coordinated way. The National Data Exploitation Capability (NDEC) is a national central capability which makes more effective use of large-scale data analysis to support law enforcement agencies' responses to serious and organised crime.

171 The NCA's Combatting Kleptocracy Cell (CKC) is a cross-command operational unit which investigates and disrupts serious and organised crime linked to state threats. Whilst this predominantly relates to illicit finance and sanctions enforcement, the CKC exploits the full range of overt and covert tools and powers to disrupt state-linked criminal activity perpetrated by individuals (including elites), entities and their enablers challenging the impunity with which state proxies operate in the UK.

172 The NCA deploys a network of international liaison officers who use their international relationships and operational collaboration to disrupt organised criminals before they have an impact on the UK. The NCA acts as the UK competent authority for a number of international law enforcement information sharing and cooperation mechanisms. The NCA, supported by the Home Office, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will continue to lead the UK law enforcement disruption of high-harm criminals overseas. The NCA facilitates cooperation between UK and international law enforcement agencies, including through housing the Europol National Unit.

The police and criminal justice response

173 ROCUs can act as an operational and intelligence link between the NCA and police forces in England and Wales. ROCUs lead the law enforcement response to serious and organised crime in their regions and make sure that intelligence flows to and from the local police force level. ROCUs have specialist capabilities to disrupt organised crime groups at a regional level, which are also available to local police forces. Because of the particular threats affecting the City of London, some ROCU functions, as well other specialist capabilities, are provided by the Metropolitan Police Service, City of London Police and British Transport Police.

174 Most of the operational activity against organised crime groups is led by local police forces. Their role remains essential to dealing with serious and organised crime as it manifests itself in local communities. This includes strong partnership working, such as with local authorities, health, education and working closely with both the private and third sector. National priorities for policing, set through the Strategic Policing Requirement, help to focus police forces' work on tackling organised criminals in their force areas. PCCs play an important role, making sure that police forces are delivering an effective response in line with the threats described in the Strategic Policing Requirement. The Government will continue to work at the local level with the NPCC, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the LGA to ensure that the local response to serious and organised crime is as coordinated and effective as possible. In addition, the NPCC has recently established the National Rural Crime Unit to provide specialist knowledge and investigative support to police forces in dealing with crime in rural areas including waste crime and high-value acquisitive crime.

175 To support our response to the destabilising influence of serious and organised criminals who continue to carry out their criminal activity from prison or while under statutory probation supervision we will work with the MOJ and partners to deliver a bespoke Lifetime Offender Management strategy. An effective multi-agency response relies on having the right intelligence, investigative and enforcement capabilities in place to respond at the right level. This will require greater clarity on tasking structures and processes and ensuring that agencies are appropriately skilled to play their role in this response. We will build a system where law enforcement and HMPPS can better identify the highest-harm offenders and build an effective intelligence exchange mechanism to support law enforcement with their investigative capability inside prisons. Alongside the strategy, we will update the Lifetime Offender Management Framework. This framework depicts the offender management journey as they pass through the different stages of the Criminal Justice System.

176 Separately, the Modern Slavery & Organised Immigration Crime (MSOIC) Unit works directly to the NPCC lead for MSOIC. It is a Home Office funded programme that defines the standards for national policing around organised immigration crime. The Unit works to support police officers, police staff and law enforcement partners to tackle modern slavery and organised immigration crime, through embedding an improved policing and wider law enforcement response. MSOIC Unit is supporting the development of the national policing response through the Crime and Courts Act (CCA) tasking for organised immigration crime issued to all police forces and ROCUs by the NCA.

Intelligence

177 Intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination is led by the United Kingdom Intelligence Community (UKIC) and the NCA, working closely together to maximise the impact of their capabilities and reach. This intelligence-led response depends on strategic intelligence on the nature and scale of the threat and operational intelligence that can be turned into action against criminals.

178 The technological and international focus of the future threat from serious and organised crime will put an increasing demand on UKIC's unique capabilities. Their global intelligence collection capability will be critical for ensuring law enforcement agencies have access to the capability and intelligence needed to deliver outcomes against serious and organised crime. UKIC can operate in and through cyberspace to counter, disrupt, degrade and contest the activity of serious organised criminals. Furthermore, UKIC can deliver unique strategic understanding of technology and the criminal use of it, to meet the growing technological challenges we face. To better meet this significant demand as effectively as possible, UKIC will explore a new delivery model, looking to further integration with partners to build capacity and benefit.

Home Office Operations at the UK Border and beyond

179 Home Office Operations have an important role in stopping serious and organised crime, especially organised immigration crime and by extension illegal migration. These include Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, the Illegal Migration Operational Command Centre (IMOCC), Home Office Intelligence (HOI) including HOI Overseas, UK Visas and Immigration and His Majesty's Passport Office. Alongside the NCA, these agencies work together, using intelligence, capabilities and data to identify, target and disrupt organised criminals seeking to exploit the UK border and those criminals involved in facilitating illegal migration who operate outside the UK. This work is strengthened by close cooperation and joint working with our overseas partners as part of the international response to the global challenges of illegal immigration, organised immigration crime and the trade in illegal commodities.

- Immigration Enforcement (IE) leads the Home Office response to organised immigration crime. Working closely with law enforcement partners in the UK and abroad, IE's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) teams will pursue and disrupt organised crime gangs involved in all types of facilitation, including that by small boats, as well as tackling illegal working and other abuses of our immigration system. The aim is to pursue those committing serious crime, deprive them of the proceeds of their criminal activities, protect the integrity of the UK immigration system and protect vulnerable migrants from abuse.
- Border Force has a Small Boats Operational Command (SBOC) which supports a wide range of operational activity and engagement with France and is expanding its remit in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. The aim of this activity is to

degrade the viability of organised criminal gangs' business model, with a focus on improved information sharing, border hardening measures, technology and increased law enforcement activity with operational partners. Additionally, Border Force works closely with all major partners to develop an understanding of those involved in organised immigration crime and to tackle this criminality at the border. Enhanced intelligence and intelligence sharing is key to this mission, allowing early identification of risks, vulnerabilities and threats along with coordinated and tasked operational activity.

- Home Office Intelligence (HOI) collects, develops, targets and analyses information and intelligence in the UK through to source and transit countries upstream. Through this, it builds a comprehensive intelligence picture of the threat to the UK from illegal migration, including organised immigration crime to deliver tactical and strategic intelligence products.
- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) works closely with partners within Government to support investigations into organised immigration crime. Risk indicators in visa applications are subject to wider analysis and investigation. Where there is evidence of organised criminality or if evidence can be developed into risk profiles of similar behaviours, intelligence-based factual risk alerts are shared with caseworkers.
- HM Passport Office (HMPO) has a specialist team which focuses on the prevention and detection of passport fraud linked to serious and organised criminality. It works closely with the NCA and other law enforcement agencies and regularly meets and shares intelligence as part of a joint working relationship. This relationship has proven to be successful and has led to successful prosecutions and lengthy prison sentences which demonstrate the Government's commitment to tackle and dismantle these criminal gangs who seek to exploit and threaten public safety for profit. Where appropriate its safeguarding team will also highlight the victims of organised criminality and ensure the appropriate authorities are involved.

The wider Government response

180 A number of other Government departments have important roles in the fight against serious and organised crime:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) delivers the UK's response to organised criminal attacks on the tax system through a range of criminal, civil and specialist interventions and by targeting the profits, assets and businesses of organised criminals so as to stop and disrupt their operations as quickly as possible. HMRC plays a key role in support of the wider work to tackle serious and organised crime, including work to address the illegal drugs trade, modern slavery and child sexual exploitation and abuse. It works closely with law enforcement agencies to support the overall response to serious and organised crime through system checks, data exchanges and intelligence analysis.
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) work collaboratively with other justice organisations and agencies, including the legal professions, to ensure fair, efficient and accessible access to justice.
- The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is the specialist law enforcement agency which investigates and prosecutes serious and complex fraud, bribery, corruption and associated money laundering.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and where appropriate devolved prosecutors, prosecutes cases for the NCA, police and others.

- HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and police forces lead a multi-agency response to disrupt organised criminals running their networks from within the prison estate and support the management of their activity when offenders are released into the community, subject to conditions.
- The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) examines the direct impacts of serious and organised crime on the UK as well as on UK interests overseas. It delivers a range of international policy, diplomatic, security, development and programmatic expertise as part of the response to serious and organised crime. This includes the SOCnet network and Joint Serious and Organised Crime Platforms.
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) leads the response to protecting the welfare and benefits system from fraud by organised criminals and protects vulnerable people from human trafficking and modern slavery.
- The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for activity delivered by the education sector to educate and support young people to avoid involvement in and vulnerability to serious and organised crime.
- The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is responsible for ensuring that the health sector identifies and safeguards victims of serious and organised crime.
- The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulates the financial sector and financial advisers, and will pursue criminal prosecutions, including for insider dealing and market manipulation.
- Organisations such as HM Land Registry, Companies House and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) play an important role in identifying and reporting activity linked to criminality.
- The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is responsible for online safety. The illegal content duties within the Online Safety Act will require providers to proactively mitigate the risk that their services are used for illegal activity or to share illegal content.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) supports industry to put in place procedures to reduce serious and organised crime across the aviation, maritime and land transport sector. Organised crime groups use the transport network to facilitate their activities and conceal them amidst the people and goods moving legitimately through the transport network every day.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is responsible for safeguarding the natural environment and supporting the food and farming industry and has a lead role in tackling waste crime and illegal wildlife trade. The environmental agencies across the UK lead on tackling serious and organised crime in the waste sector, in particular through the Joint Unit for Waste Crime which is run out of England's Environment Agency.

181 Beyond the Government and law enforcement response, the private sector has an important role in fulfilling its regulatory requirements. Partnerships with the private sector must be fully used to ensure our response is making full use of the capabilities and resources of both the state and the private sector. The Economic Crime Plan 2 is a joint public-private initiative that will continue to transform our response to economic crime. The private sector has an essential role in the delivery of the Fraud Strategy with a mixture of voluntary agreements and regulation to prevent criminals abusing technology for fraud. The role of the private sector is particularly important for issues such as money laundering where, by making referrals to law enforcement agencies, the private sector can help to ensure that the sector

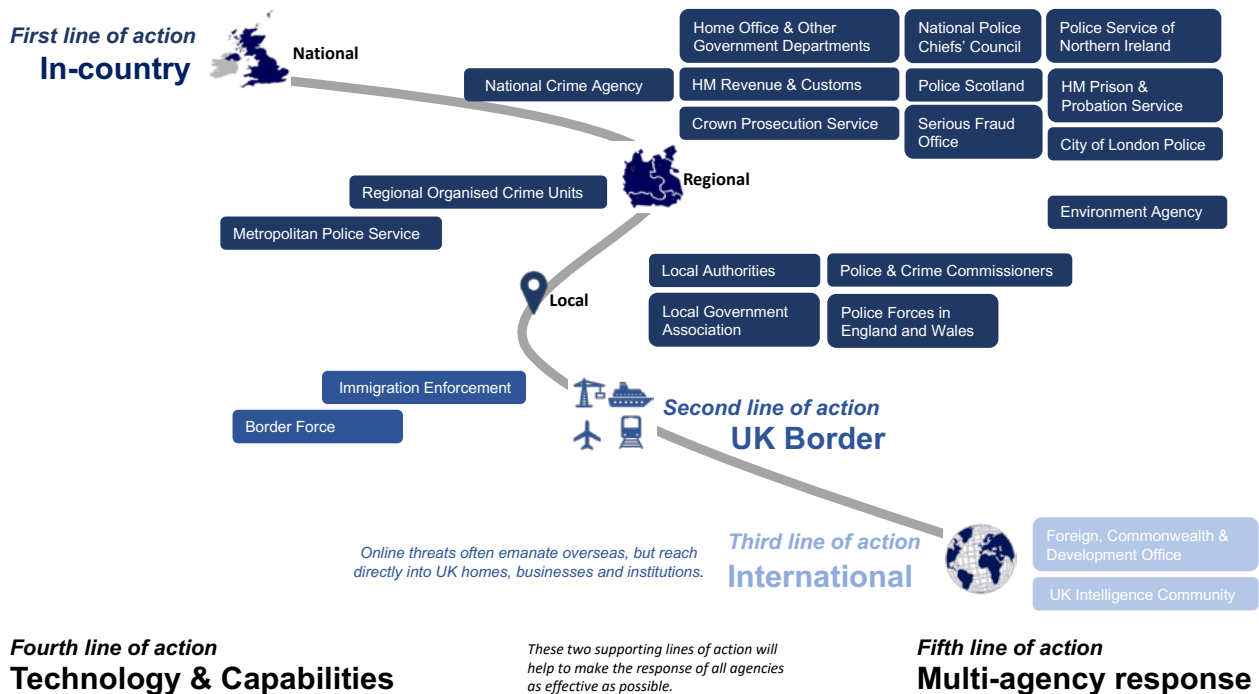
is not wittingly or unwittingly enabling organised criminality. The private sector also has a key role in ensuring that their platforms, services and infrastructures are not used by offenders seeking to abuse children sexually. In addition, private sector partners will need to undertake a risk-based approach whilst developing new technologies to ensure that risks posed to children are identified early and sufficient safety measures are put in place. The private sector can go further in creating high-impact partnerships to design out crime and by ensuring that its own systems, products and services are not open to exploitation by organised criminals.

182 The general public has a role to play in identifying and not using services linked to illicit goods and services, helping to choke off the money supply to organised criminals. The Government works to increase awareness of how individuals can better protect themselves from online crime. In doing so, this will raise the barriers against criminal attacks and minimise the harm of anything which does get through our defences.

Devolved Administrations

183 The devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are responsible for the functions which have been devolved to them. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, crime and policing matters are the responsibility of the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. These devolved administrations have published their own respective strategies (Scotland’s Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2022 and Northern Ireland’s Organised Crime Strategy 2021). In Wales, the Government will continue to work closely with the Welsh Government and the Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners to tackle serious and organised crime.

Figure 4 – The multi-agency response to serious and organised crime



Skills

184 For our response to keep pace with the evolving threat faced from organised criminals, it is important that all those involved have the necessary skills to succeed in meeting requirements now and in the future. We are therefore enhancing the Continuing Professional Development and Learning and Development offer for officers joining the ROCU network with

career pathways that will see them develop their skills in the NCA and forces as well. Similarly, the NCA Strategy reaffirms the NCA's ambition to attract and retain the very best officers and to ensure that they have the skills they need. The NCA will enhance the system's response to economic crime through the creation of training and pathway programmes for specialist roles, such as cybercrime officers, given the increasing online nature of fraud. The delivery of £1.5 million of flexible project funding in the 2022/23 financial year will drive digital innovation, strengthen strategic leadership and improve specialist skills within the ROCU network. The Government is increasing organised immigration crime-related training, intelligence, governance and operational capabilities for all 43 police forces in England & Wales.

Partnership working and system tasking

185 The NCA's move to focus on the most harmful criminals and their enablers will require partnership working across organisational and geographical boundaries. This will ensure that agencies are clear on their role and the balance between upstream intelligence-led disruption and in-country enforcement and prevention activity. Tasking across the response will be based on agencies possessing the knowledge, capabilities and analytical capability to tackle the scale of threat we face from technologically-enabled organised criminals.

186 By introducing a dedicated NPCC lead for serious and organised crime and the first national NPCC ROCU Strategy, we have strengthened the coordination of our regional and local response. The first ever long-term National ROCU Strategy sets out key objectives and ambitions for the network's development between now and 2030. It aims to deliver a more coherent, consistent and connected ROCU Network. Delivery will be monitored by the National ROCU Executive Board through an agreed National Business Plan. To support Government ambition on tackling organised immigration crime, ROCUs will continue to develop multi-agency working with partners such as Immigration Enforcement and Border Force to effectively share intelligence and promote joint working on investigations with a link to organised immigration crime.

187 In order to continue to support the NCA's shift in focus to high harm, existing tasking processes need to be strengthened and legislative tasking powers need to be used to the maximum effect. Agencies must be clear on which threats they lead and at what level of severity. For the NCA, this will involve ensuring tasking decisions are grounded in data, including through use of the Serious and Organised Crime Masterlist, which captures levels of operational activity against serious and organised crime across law enforcement, effective use of system-wide performance data to prioritise activity, and the use of the Crime and Courts Act tasking powers where necessary, to ensure an effective multi-agency response. This will provide assurance that the right priorities are responded to at the right level. Information sharing partnerships will also support improved targeting and evidence collection as this will enable disruptive action to be taken more quickly. The NCA is strengthening its understanding of the threat through further rollout of the Agency and Partnership Management Information System (APMIS), its system for capturing performance and tasking data for the majority of operational agencies, including all UK police forces. The NCA will actively pursue further high-impact information sharing agreements with partner and private sector organisations around the world, building on the recent UK-USA Data Access Agreement.

188 We will work closely with the NCA and NPCC, supported by the use of serious and organised crime system tasking, to ensure any operational impact of the NCA's shift in focus to high harm on Regional Organised Crime Units is clearly understood and then effectively and efficiently managed through the operation of the system. This will be supported by an NCA review into serious and organised crime system tasking and a comprehensive NPCC review of ROCU capabilities. To support further integration in the response to serious and

organised crime, we will develop a new national ROCU performance framework that will complement existing national and regional performance reporting structures. This will provide greater accountability and insight into trends and the impact of policing activity against serious and organised crime. New HMICFRS inspections will also give further insight on how effectively and efficiently forces are collaborating.

189 At the local level, we are establishing a new, more dynamic and prescriptive approach to serious and organised crime local profiles to ensure they are the driving force behind improved local partnership working. Local profiles are a police force's way of presenting and evidencing the serious and organised crime threat in its area and informing how it intends to tackle it with relevant partners. The new local profiles will support wider efforts to divert at-risk individuals away from criminal activity, ensuring local communities are aware of, protected against and empowered to reduce the harm caused by organised crime. We will also publish new guidance on the importance of working in partnership to tackle the harm caused by serious and organised crime on communities. Guidance will include examples of good practice and approaches that can help promote effective partnership working including the Serious Violence Duty, drugs profiles and local partnerships, community safety partnerships and working more closely with the violence reduction units.

Governance

190 A new Serious and Organised Crime Board, chaired by the Home Secretary and attended by key operational partners, will be established to oversee the delivery of this strategy.

191 We are building on recent progress to improve collaboration across the law enforcement response to serious and organised crime by strengthening governance arrangements. We are ensuring that all 43 police forces in England and Wales have access to the Agency and Partner Management Information System by the end of 2023/24. This will provide an improved picture of performance and allow us to understand better the contribution each force is making. The new Serious and Organised Crime Portfolio Collaboration and Oversight Board, chaired by the serious and organised crime lead for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, will bring independent accountability to the delivery of the National Serious and Organised Crime Lead's strategic priorities. We are strengthening the ROCU network's central coordination function to drive continuous improvement.

Outcomes and Success Measures

192 This is a key enabling line of action designed to better deliver the outcomes set out in the first three lines of action. Taken together, this activity will help to ensure the multi-agency response is better aligned, more effective and delivers maximum impact and value for money. We will measure impact against a range of indicators, including the operational outputs and outcomes which these capabilities will directly support, such as disruptions and seizures of criminal assets. We will also assess the effectiveness of the multi-agency response through evaluations, such as HMICFRS reports.



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