



**NCA**

National Crime Agency



**National Crime Agency  
Annual Plan  
2024-2025**

**Protecting the public from serious  
and organised crime**



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## Foreword by the Home Secretary



The United Kingdom faces an enduring threat from serious and organised crime.

The impact is felt not just in financial terms but on a human level, as lives are destroyed, and communities are damaged. Moreover, legitimate business is undermined, as is the credibility of our institutions.

These threats manifest themselves in a variety of forms including fraud, bribery, organised immigration crime, modern slavery and human trafficking, child sexual abuse, and the supply of illegal drugs and firearms. Very often, it is the most vulnerable in society who suffer as a result.

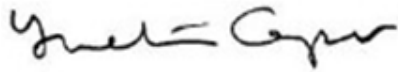
As Home Secretary, I am committed to working closely with law enforcement as we build a stronger, more secure country. Through our Safer Streets Mission, we are determined to crack down hard on threats that cause misery and fear in our communities such as knife crime, violence against women and girls and anti-social behaviour.

We are delivering a step change in the fight against criminal gangs who put lives at risk and undermine our border security by arranging dangerous small boat crossings. The government has invested a further £150m to establish the Border Security Command and invest across the Border Security system. The NCA will work closely with the Border Security Command which will drive forward this step change in the UK's approach to border security. It will provide a clear and long-term vision bringing together and providing leadership to all parts of the border security system, of which NCA is a key partner. The NCA continues to be a critical area for further investment in technology and people to target organised immigration crime groups, enablers and supply chains. The government has already announced an additional 100 investigators and intelligence officers in the NCA, and we are continuing to explore further options to expand capability.

With its wealth of expertise and strong track record confronting the most serious threats, the NCA has an integral part to play as we drive forward our pursuit of safer streets and secure borders. This work is as complex as it is crucial, and we will always do our utmost to make sure those charged with protecting the public from harm have the tools and powers they need to do their work effectively, and we will continue to invest in developing the NCA's capabilities, including an additional £58m in the NCA's core funding in 2025/26.

I recently set out my roadmap for police reform, with the aim of creating a police service that is fit for the future. We will publish a White Paper on policing next year, covering issues from technology to the future workforce, from how the policing system can work better to tackle fast changing crime, to leadership and culture. As crime becomes ever more complex; as threats cut across force boundaries, we need to look again at the capabilities provided at local, regional and national level and the way they are coordinated. We are currently working closely with policing to explore and develop specific reform proposals, and I welcome the NCA's contribution to these discussions.

For all that they do, I am immensely grateful to the officers and staff of the NCA – the UK is safer and more secure because of their tireless efforts.



**Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP**

Home Secretary

## Delayed Publication

We originally intended to present this Annual Plan for 2024-2025 on behalf of the Agency at the beginning of this Financial Year. However, we delayed publication until the Strategic Priorities of then Home Secretary were confirmed. This was then delayed further due to the onset of a General Election and a subsequent change in government. As the Annual Plan is a statutory requirement and a key document in ensuring the Agency's accountability to the people and institutions it serves, we have decided to publish the plan we had ready for 2024-25 with the recently confirmed Strategic Priorities of this Government.

## Statement by the Director General



I am pleased to introduce the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Annual Plan for 2024-2025. This year the agency enters its second decade, proud of its many achievements to date, but clear on our determination to increase our impact against the threat from serious and organised crime.

Serious and organised crime has a devastating impact on the public: it exploits the most vulnerable in our society, undermines communities, and has a corrosive effect on our economy. And it continues to evolve in new and challenging ways. As highlighted in our National Strategic Assessment, the most significant

change across the last decade has been our increasingly online lives. This new reality is being exploited by OCGs across the globe who are using technology to victimise people at ever greater scale.

Reducing the harm caused by serious and organised crime requires us to reduce demand, improve our defences, and disrupt and dismantle criminal groups. In line with the strategy we set out in 2023, it means we need to continue to focus our own operational efforts upstream, overseas and online. And it means we need to continue working across international, national and local law enforcement partners to bring all our capabilities and knowledge together to understand and disrupt SOC threats.

The effectiveness of our approach has been evidenced by several high-profile cases. The NCA, in close cooperation with international partners such as the FBI, successfully infiltrated and disrupted the world's most harmful cyber group, LockBit. By hacking the hackers, we demonstrated that no criminal operation, wherever they are, and no matter how advanced, is beyond the reach of the Agency and our partners. We have led the UK multi-agency operational response to the emergence of dangerous synthetic opioids such as nitazines, constricting supply and preventing an exponential growth in fatalities. We are also proud of the collaborative work involving a wide range of partners that has successfully suppressed criminal access to firearms in the UK. Firearm discharges, homicides and serious injuries have decreased, continuing a trend reported since 2020.

This year, the NCA will continue its focus on degrading the most harmful organised crime groups. Our biggest single effort will remain drugs, but we will have a particular focus on improving our disruption of organised immigration crime and online fraud, while maintaining strong performance against the other highest priority SOC threats.

Organisationally, our top three priorities for this year will be: moving the NCA HQ from Spring Gardens to Endeavour Square in Stratford, developing and advocating for a major reform of NCA officer pay and contracts, and continuing with our digital transformation to ensure we are more operationally effective, productive and secure.

Our mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime and, through this plan and thanks to the dedication and skill of our officers, I am confident that we will strengthen our ability to do so.



**Graeme Biggar CBE**

Director General NCA

# The National Crime Agency

The National Crime Agency's mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime. The Agency has two main functions set out in the Crime and Courts Act (2013):

- A 'crime-reduction function' of ensuring efficient and effective activities to combat organised crime and serious crime are carried out (whether by the NCA, other law enforcement agencies, or other persons); and
- A 'criminal intelligence function' of gathering, storing, processing, analysing, and disseminating information that is relevant to, among other things: activities to combat organised crime or serious crime and activities to combat any other kind of crime.

The Agency is operationally independent, with its Director General accountable to the Home Secretary, who determines the Agency's strategic priorities.

The Agency is a global organisation, with liaison officers based in over 40 countries around the world. The Agency operates across the UK with major hubs in London, Warrington, Birmingham and Bristol. It works closely with policing partners, the intelligence agencies, regulatory authorities and other operational agencies including in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to ensure a unified response to serious and organised crime.

The Agency is responsible for:

- The single intelligence picture of the serious and organised crime threat facing the UK. This can be found in the Agency's annual National Strategic Assessment.
- Collecting and exploiting data and intelligence to detect and disrupt serious and organised crime, pursuing the most serious and dangerous offenders.
- Investigating and taking action against the highest-harm offenders and their enablers, including through criminal justice outcomes, civil recovery and tax proceedings.
- Setting operational priorities for the serious and organised crime system (including roles and responsibilities for a cross-system threat response), providing a prioritised view of demand on the system, and measuring and assessing Agency and national system performance against those priorities.
- Hosting and providing partners with access to national and specialist capabilities, and providing specialist support to serious and major crime investigations across policing.

# Our Year in Numbers 2023-2024

Highest ever total disruptions of

**4,740**



Infiltrated and disrupted  
Lockbit, the  
world's most  
harmful  
ransomware  
strain



**376 disruptions** were high  
impact pursue disruptions  
against the most  
harmful organised  
crime groups



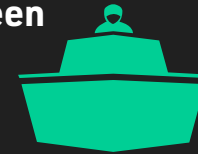
Seized or restrained  
**£230m** of criminal  
assets



Arrested more than  
**1,000** suspected  
serious and  
organised criminals,  
a **16%** increase



Seized more than **350 boats**  
and engines, with partners,  
that would have been  
used to cross the  
Channel



Helped seize over  
**200 tonnes** of  
class A drugs  
globally



NCA intelligence has helped  
UK policing make **800** child  
sexual abuse-related arrests  
per month, and in the last  
year, safeguard around  
**11,000** children



Prevented **260,000** frauds  
through NCA  
disruptions



Helped reduce offences  
involving discharge of a  
firearm by  
**over 30%**  
since 2019



# Home Secretary Strategic Priorities

The Government is committed to reducing serious and organised crime. Organised crime groups drive the crime that blights our communities, undermine our border security, put lives at risk, and are a persistent threat to our national security.

The NCA has a crucial role to play as the operational system leader on serious and organised crime in the UK and through its action against organised crime groups in the UK, overseas and online.

## The National Crime Agency will:

### **1. Lead the law enforcement system on serious and organised crime (SOC) in the UK including by strengthening cooperation with policing and other partners to tackle organised crime groups that impact on the UK.**

The NCA will develop and disseminate intelligence, invest in specialist capabilities and technology to ensure no criminals are beyond the reach of law enforcement and provide support to other law enforcement activity to target SOC in our communities and online.

### **2. Prioritise the NCA's own operational capabilities against the highest harm individuals, groups and networks operating in or against the UK.**

The NCA will focus on criminals beyond the reach of local and regional policing where the Agency's specialist capabilities can have greatest impact on harm to the UK.

### **3. Strengthen and protect the UK border by working with the Border Security Command, Border Force and other partners to disrupt and dismantle the organised crime groups that undermine our border security and drive cross-border threats, in particular the smuggling of illicit commodities and the facilitation of irregular migration.**

The NCA will deliver a step change in reducing Organised Immigration Crime in all its forms, with a primary focus on the Organised Crime Groups facilitating small boat crossings. The NCA will have due regard to the strategic priorities set by the Border Security Commander's Border Security Strategic Leadership Board.

### **4. Lead the law enforcement system to reduce child sexual abuse by tackling the highest harm and most technically sophisticated individuals and organised online networks.**

The NCA will ensure effective and timely referral of intelligence about child sexual abuse online to policing and will deliver high impact operations which require national or international co-ordination and/or sensitive capabilities to ensure no CSA offenders are beyond the reach of law enforcement.

**5. Make our streets safer from violent crime by working with policing and other partners, in the UK and overseas, to disrupt and dismantle the organised crime groups and networks that traffic and supply illicit commodities, including drugs and firearms.**

This includes the NCA leading the UK law enforcement response to stem the flow of synthetic opioids into the UK and working with partners to reduce the threat posed by SOC offenders operating from prison.

**6. Reduce fraud and combat corrupt elites, cyber and economic crime.**

The NCA will lead the law enforcement system in targeting fraud, money laundering, sanctions evasion, corrupt elites and professional enablers. It will investigate and disrupt cyber criminals and the ecosystem that support them, with a particular focus on ransomware.

**7. Reduce the opportunities for organised crime groups to traffic and exploit individuals.**

The NCA will ensure effective join up between law enforcement agencies to address the enablers of modern slavery and human trafficking and will disrupt and dismantle the highest harm groups that are trafficking individuals into and around the UK.

**8. Identify, respond, and reduce the impact of emerging threats to the UK in particular the growth in crime taking place online or enabled by technology.**

**9. Enhance bilateral and multilateral international partnerships, including through Europol and INTERPOL, upstream and transit countries to reduce the harm caused by organised crime groups operating against the UK from overseas.**

The NCA will work closely with policing through its Joint International Crime Centre to support investigations involving crime with an international dimension.

# NCA Strategy 2023-2028

In 2023, the Agency set a five-year Strategy to **protect the public from serious and organised crime**.<sup>1</sup> It sets out our commitment to degrade the most harmful OCGs by moving upstream, overseas, online; leading the UK's operational response; transforming the Agency's capabilities; and growing a highly skilled workforce. In 2023-2024 the agency has worked towards embedding the strategy and developing a way to measure progress against the key objectives. Going into this next year we will focus on measuring the impact the NCA and wider system is having against the SOC threat.

Below is highlighted key activity for this coming year which will help us achieve the ambitions as laid out in the Strategy.

## 1. Degrading the most harmful organised crime groups by:

- Going upstream to disrupt those at the top of the criminal chain, those who enable their activities, and those who launder the money they make.
- Taking action overseas, tackling the threat at source and en route to the UK.
- Increasingly focusing on online crime to combat a critical enabler of the organised crime business model, reflecting the fact that more crime takes place online or is enabled by technology.

## 2. Leading the UK's operational response by:

- Improving how the threat is understood and used to prioritise across the system.
- Strengthening multi-agency 4P (Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare) plans to reduce the harm from each threat.
- Improving performance measurement across the system.
- Bolstering the national services and capabilities provided by the Agency to system partners.
- Strengthening the system response to new and emerging threats.

<sup>1</sup> The NCA Strategy aligns and supports the following wider Strategies No Place to Hide: Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028; Beating Crime Plan; From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives; Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy; Economic Crime Plan 2 2023-2026; Fraud Strategy; Strategic Policing Requirement

### 3. Transforming the Agency's capabilities by:

- Unlocking the value of data to drive direct operational effect.
- Delivering a new approach to capability development.
- Improving the Agency's situational awareness.
- Strengthening foundational capabilities as they relate to data technology and estates.

### 4. Growing a highly skilled workforce by:

- Better understanding the skills the Agency needs to transform workforce planning.
- Creating career pathways that improve officer experience.
- Becoming a more attractive employer through reformed pay and benefits.
- Improving the Agency's learning offer to meet future challenges.
- Establishing a more diverse workforce and inclusive culture.
- Embedding smarter working into the Agency's ethos.

## 2024-2025: Delivering against our priorities

In 2024-2025 we will prioritise the following activity in line with the long-term ambition set out in the Agency's Strategy. This includes targeting scarce resources to best protect the UK public from the existing and emerging serious and organised crime threats that cause the most harm to the UK public, institutions, and infrastructure.

### **In 2024 – 2025:**

**Our operational focus is to degrade the most harmful serious and organised criminals and enablers impacting on the UK, that require NCA capabilities.**

#### **In particular:**

- We will work with partners in the UK and abroad to tackle organised immigration crime, including identifying and dismantling the most harmful networks and targeting the supply chains of boats and equipment these group rely upon.
- We will increase our disruptive impact on Fraud, Money Laundering and Economic Crime threats through growth in our specialist capabilities as well as focus on developing our partnerships in the UK and abroad.
- Our continued focus on drugs and firearms supply, including upstream and internationally will reduce impact on the streets of the UK.

**We will lead the UKs' operational response to serious and organised crime through governance, service provision and effective relationships.**

- We will lead the implementation of the new National Control Strategy to enable the prioritisation and effective co-ordination of the system's response to serious and organised crime.
- We will continue to deliver national services to UK law enforcement, HMG and overseas partners. One example is the Joint International Crime Centre (JICC), which will mature in 24/25 and provide even more effective services to law enforcement in the UK and abroad.
- Our Cyber Crime capabilities underpin our own investigations as well as supporting UK and global law enforcement partners. We will continue to build on our operational successes and explore ways of expanding the impact of our specialist cyber teams.

## **To deliver our operational ambitions, we must continue the transformation of our capabilities.**

- This year marks a major milestone in the move of our Headquarters to Stratford. This will provide NCA with a modern, more efficient working environment, improved operational capability and will offer opportunities to enhance collaboration with partners. We will expand our North West Hub location in partnership with the NW Regional Organised Crime Unit.
- We will continue to modernise our technology estate, with a particular focus on the platforms and equipment our officers use every day. We will build on the successful launch of the SARs digital platform to further transform the use of this valuable data by the UK Financial Intelligence Unit and our partners.
- This year will see the first operational use of material gained under US/UKDAA.

## **We will continue to grow a highly skilled workforce of NCA officers**

- The learning and development of our officers remains a central priority with a focus on upskilling our existing officers alongside targeted recruitment. This includes further professionalisation of key skills within the agency.
- We will begin the establishment of a NCA Academy in order to develop the skills and capabilities necessary to tackle the complex and online nature of contemporary serious and organised crime. We will work with partners across policing to develop an innovative and collaborative approach to jointly recruit, train and deploy officers into operational technology roles.

## Measuring Impact and Risk

The Agency's strategy has been to focus our efforts on the highest impact disruptions rather than the total number, on the basis that is where we can add the most unique value and where we can make the biggest difference in protecting the public from serious and organised crime.

In 2023/24 the Agency exceeded its target of delivering 364 high impact pursue disruptions, with 377. This is a 44% increase on the baseline set two years ago. The target for 2024/25 is to maintain that level of performance.

The types of cases we are now adopting are more complex requiring expensive and niche capabilities to identify and disrupt highly sophisticated criminal targets; they can also take longer. In addition, some areas of demand on the Agency have grown, for example through increased border seizures and referrals on online child sexual abuse. In spite of all of these pressures our performance in delivering total disruptions has remained strong.

### Managing risk

The Agency uses an enterprise risk management framework to understand, evaluate and mitigate risks across all business areas while providing assurance that controls are appropriate and effective.

In 2023-2024 the Agency continued to mitigate its most significant corporate risks. Overall progress was made to reduce aspects of the corporate risk profile, notably relating to information management and psychological services provided to our officers working in the most sensitive roles. The latter was removed from the corporate risk register to be managed at Directorate level, following an executive committee review of the impact of additional controls.

Risks relating to intelligence failure, data utilisation and partnerships were also de-escalated from the corporate risk register, following a review concluding that they could now be appropriately managed within directorates. This followed significant progress in a standardised training programme to our officers. The rollout of new technical infrastructure will see these risks reduced further in the years ahead.

New risks have been added covering factors which may diminish the benefits of our capital investment programmes; managing risks within our Child Sexual Exploitation Referrals Bureau (CSERB) function; and weaknesses in certain process which allow us to capture and monitoring our operational activity (known as License to Operate). These risk all have defined management plans in place.

## NCA and partners

Protecting the public from serious and organised crime relies on a system of organisations that have unique roles but a common set of goals. The domestic system in place to disrupt serious and organised crime includes, but is not limited to: law enforcement, government departments, the UK's intelligence community, the private sector, regulators, academia, the charitable sector, and wider civil society. At the same time, the Agency works with international partners to tackle serious and organised crime threats overseas before they reach the UK.

### UK serious and organised crime system

In 2024-2025 the Agency will continue to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of its system leadership and its relationship with serious and organised crime system partners.

The Agency will work with key partners across government, including the new Border Security Command, to ensure that our operations support the UK's collective efforts to reduce the risk to the public, including by providing operational expertise to inform new legislation. Police forces, Regional Organised Crime Units, Police and Crime Commissioners are critical to our success at a regional and local level, and the UK intelligence community use their cutting edge capabilities to provide insights into the most dangerous SOC offenders. We are committed to expanding these collaborations over the coming year, by jointly developing and sharing capabilities, and by exploring more joint training and career paths for our workforces.

### Private sector, academia and civil society

The Agency will continue to partner with a wide range of organisations, recognising that the serious and organised crime threat is a far reaching one. We will continue to work across the private sector to 'design out' offending through processes and safeguards to prevent crimes from taking place. We have stood up a central academic hub to work with think-tanks and academia to improve the Agency's understanding and knowledge of future challenges, building on the academic conference the Agency jointly held with RUSI in 2023.

### International

In 2024-2025 the Joint International Crime Centre (JICC) will enter its second year and continue to implement an improved operating model which will shorten the distance between frontline law enforcement and the NCA's international capabilities. This will be underpinned by a new case management system, which will automate manual administrative processes.

The NCA will continue to play a key role in Interpol, Europol, the Five Eyes, and, through our international liaison officer network, in bilateral cooperation with countries around the world. The NCA is supporting the candidature of Stephen Kavanagh to be the next Interpol Secretary General, and is hosting the the Interpol General Assembly in Glasgow in November. The NCA is also hosting a meeting of the European Police Chiefs in London in April.

In addition we will implement an overseas plan to ensure robust delivery against the aims of the Strategy, enhancing our international capabilities, improving our overseas operational impact, and future proofing our global response to SOC threats.

## Devolved administrations

Policing and criminal justice are devolved matters in Scotland and Northern Ireland. As a UK wide organisation, the NCA ensures its activity within both jurisdictions takes full account of their specific and differing legislative and operational requirements, whilst also respecting the primacy of the respective police forces and prosecution authorities.

The Agency works collaboratively with local, national and international partners to identify, tackle and disrupt serious and organised crime threats impacting Scotland and Northern Ireland, and remains committed to protecting their communities. In 2024-2025 the Agency will:

- Ensure all relevant institutions remain engaged in the delivery of the Agency's operational objectives.
- Tackle new and emerging threats and support mutual strategic priorities targeting upstream enablers and high value targets causing the greatest harm to communities.
- Disrupt organised criminal activity with the greatest impact on local communities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Support the operational response in these jurisdictions through the Agency's specialist capabilities including our international network and work to tackle online and cyber criminality.

### Scotland

The delivery of the NCA's functions in Scotland is governed by the General Authorisation under Schedule 5 to the Crime and Courts Act 2013 which exists between Scottish ministers and the Director General NCA. The delivery of those functions is subject to a memoranda of understanding with both the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Office and Police Scotland. The Director General designates appropriately trained and qualified NCA officers with the powers of a Scottish constable. The Director General appears before the Policing Performance Committee of the Scottish Police Authority to account for the NCA's performance and activities in Scotland.

### Northern Ireland

The delivery of the NCA's functions in Northern Ireland is governed by the General Authorisation under Schedule 5 to the Crime and Courts Act 2013. The delivery of those functions is subject to a memoranda of understanding with both the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Director General designates appropriately trained and qualified NCA officers with the powers of a Northern Ireland constable. The Director General appears before the Northern Ireland Policing Board to account for the NCA's activities and performance in Northern Ireland.

# NCA resource and budget

For 2024-2025, the Agency's total budget is £869.64m. This represents a small net increase of £0.18m compared to 2023-2024.

The Agency's budget includes both vote funded Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) from HM Treasury and external funding from third parties, primarily other Government departments. Table 1 below demonstrates the different funding streams for the Agency in 2024-2025.

The bodies that provide the external funding streams decide annually whether to continue their funding of the NCA.

**Table 1: Agency budget 2024-2025**

Funding type	Resource DEL (£m)	Capital DEL (£m)	Total DEL (£m)
Vote *	546.0	109.0	655.0
External*	203.63	11.83	215.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>749.63</b>	<b>120.83</b>	<b>870.46</b>

\*Numbers based on 2024-25 Home Office budget allocations letter of comfort dated 25 April 2024.

The figures in Table 1 are in line with the budget controls agreed with the Home Office and HM Treasury and reflect the NCA Board's draft budgetary targets. As a non-ministerial department, the NCA requires Parliamentary approval of its vote funding for 2024-25. The figures in Table 1 cover the costs of our planned activities.

In addition, the Agency received funding for non-cash items such as depreciation and annually managed expenditure for legacy costs such as pension liabilities. These funding streams are subject to a separate Home Office allocation process, which requests Parliamentary approval for funding to meet the actual costs incurred in the year.

The Agency starts the 2024-25 financial year with 5,789 full-time equivalent (FTE) officers, an increase of 169 officers over the previous year. In 2024-25, in line with the Government's cap on civil service numbers, the Agency is limited to a maximum of 5890 FTE.



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