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### NCA Director General Response Statement to HMICFRS Thematic OIC Report

On the 16th May 2025 HMICFRS published a report on 'Improving the response to organised immigration crime'.

This report focuses on how well the police and NCA tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC).

The inspection reviewed the following areas:

- how the response of law enforcement agencies to OIC was led
- the initial response to suspected immigration crime incidents
- the management of information and intelligence
- how OIC groups were targeted by law enforcement
- organisational learning and training for officers and staff

HMICFRS recognised a positive change in OIC prioritisation in police forces and leadership provided by NCA with the DG using his legal powers to improve police force responses by direction of specific tasks. The Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit (MSOICU) established by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) was praised for improving initial responses to suspected immigration crime incidents through its National Response Plan (NRP). There was also recognition for the new and developing Joint Fusion Cell approach to addressing information and intelligence sharing issues. NCA's work with social media companies to remove online OIC adverts and international liaison were cited as 'good examples' with several 'excellent' examples of investigations at home and abroad, using an established process for determining which agency managed them. Generally, the NRP was found to be understood and implemented particularly by police control room personnel and incident managers. However, there are some areas that require development and refinement and as the Agency continues to lead the UK's fight against Serious and organised crime, protecting the public by targeting and pursuing the most dangerous offenders in the most effective and efficient way, we welcome the scrutiny and assessment of our performance as it allows us to focus on areas of improvement. The NCA accepts the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: By 31 December 2025, the National Crime Agency, in consultation with the Border Security Command and the Home Office, should review, revise and reissue its roles and responsibilities document, 'Organised Immigration Crime High Level Responsibilities'. The revised version should describe relevant responsibilities of the Border Security Command; and where police forces retain substantial serious organised crime investigation capabilities, extend those responsibilities to include investigating organised immigration crime.

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- Recommendation 5: By 30 April 2026, the National Crime Agency, working with the Home Office, should develop the Joint Fusion Cell. This should include:
  - making sure that vacancies are filled;
  - making sure it has access to all relevant intelligence systems and removing
  - the need to copy information from one system to another;
  - designing formal data-sharing agreements and processes with other
  - agencies; and
  - providing greater access to analytical support.

The National Crime Agency should also examine the possibility of automating processes to link the intelligence systems of the law enforcement agencies involved in tackling organised immigration crime.

- Recommendation 7: By 30 April 2026, the National Crime Agency should establish and begin operating a system to regularly assess the known organised crime groups recorded on the Police National Database and serious and organised crime master list. The National Crime Agency should make sure all opportunities to investigate and disrupt them are taken.

**In response NCA Director General, Graeme Biggar said:**

*“Tackling the criminal gangs involved in organised immigration crime is a critical priority for the NCA. The activity of these gangs leads to vulnerable people being put at risk and, in a growing number of cases, losing their lives.*

*I welcome the findings contained in this report, including the acknowledgement of the progress made at the time of the inspection. We support the recommendations made and have already taken action in respect of those directed towards the NCA.*

*In the year since this inspection took place we have continued to develop and improve our collective response to the threat posed by people smuggling gangs, increasing the number of disruptions against them by more than a third, and we are committed to working with law enforcement and government partners to go further.*

*In respect of the whole-system response to this complex problem, the NCA is working in close partnership with the Domestic Taskforce, led by DCC Wendy Gunney. We have already established governance infrastructure, jointly led between Wendy and NCA Director Alex Murray, to ensure the Taskforce's work is set up to succeed and that urgent action is planned to tackle the problem as it manifests on the streets of the UK.*

*I look forward to continuing to engage closely with HMICFRS as we develop our collective response to the threat from Organised Immigration Crime.”*

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