NCA
National Crime Agency

National Crime Agency Annual Plan

2025–2026

Protecting the public from serious and organised crime





NCA National Crime Agency

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC FROM
SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

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Foreword by the Home Secretary



Serious and organised crime is one of the most significant and corrosive threats we face.

It undermines our shared security and prosperity, and damages communities throughout the UK. It fuels violence, destroys lives and makes our streets less safe. This in turn imperils public confidence in the police and criminal justice system.

Serious and organised crime takes many forms. It includes cyber-attacks, fraud, money laundering, bribery, organised immigration crime, modern slavery and human trafficking, child sexual abuse, and the supply of illegal drugs and firearms. All too often organised crime groups and networks employ serious violence to perpetrate their criminal activities, and the most vulnerable in our society suffer as a result.

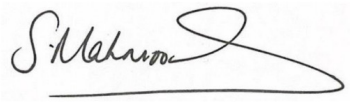
The National Crime Agency is at the forefront of UK law enforcement's response to serious and organised crime. From working with the Border Security Command to dismantle the smuggling gangs facilitating dangerous small boat crossings, to countering fraud, disrupting the flow of illegal drugs and weapons, and to keeping children safe online.

Through Operation Beaconport, the National Crime Agency are overseeing a national police operation into Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. This includes reviewing previously closed cases, analysing data to identify prolific offenders and cross-area offending, and equipping police forces to act quickly, apply best practice and deliver justice in tackling these terrible crimes.

Through its work with the Border Security Command, we have been able to provide further investment into the NCA's anti-organised immigration crime capability; develop new legislation to combat organised crime gangs and station officers across Europe to drive closer working with international law enforcement partners to target and dismantle the smuggling gangs facilitating dangerous small boat crossings.

The Agency's greatest asset is its people, and I am grateful to them all for their continued professionalism and diligence. In recognition of the complex and constantly evolving landscape they are operating in, the government increased the NCA's budget by 15% by the end of the financial year to ensure it has the capabilities and tools to stay ahead of the most harmful threats.

Without security, people cannot flourish. For our country to thrive, it has to be safe. That is why this government has placed national security, secure borders and safer streets at the heart of our Plan for Change. It is why we are mounting a wide-ranging effort to tackle the most serious and dangerous threats to public safety. As this plan illustrates, the NCA is and will continue to be an essential partner in that task.



Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP
Home Secretary

Statement by the Director General



I am pleased to introduce the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Annual Plan for 2025-26. The NCA leads the UK's operational response in the fight against serious and organised crime (SOC), which has such a devastating impact on the public: exploiting the most vulnerable people, undermining communities, and having a corrosive effect on our economy.

Our National Strategic Assessment (NSA) indicated that the threat from SOC increased in 2024, albeit at a slower rate than previously. We have seen increases in drug supply, consumption and, tragically, deaths. Migrant deaths in the channel were over six times higher than in 2023. The societal shift to living more of our lives online continues to be exploited by criminals in the form of cybercrime, fraud, and child sexual abuse, and in online forums that promote and lead to physical and sexual abuse.

Over the last three years, the Agency has focussed its operational activity upstream, overseas and online, where we believe we can make the biggest impact on reducing the harm caused by SOC to people across the UK. This has meant taking on tougher, more complex investigations, against more sophisticated criminal networks. And it has been successful. Over that time, we have increased our highest impact operations by 68%, at the same time as substantially increasing our overall number of 'disruptions' – actions, such as arrests or seizures, that have materially reduced SOC.

We will continue with that approach this year, and in delivering our strategy, our main effort will be on increasing our impact against organised immigration crime (OIC), reflecting both the rising number of small boat crossings and the criminality that is enabling them, and the priority attached to it by the Government and the public. We will aim to sustain our impact against the other crime types set out in the Home Secretary's Strategic Priorities, while also managing the increased demand from attempts to smuggle drugs through our airports, and from the referrals we receive of child abuse and exploitation happening online.

We must also build for the future. This year our focus will be on our digital transformation to modernise our IT infrastructure, including a new intelligence and case management system replacing the outdated and fragmented system in use. This will make it easier to securely access, share, and manage information in support of operational activity - saving time and reducing risk. We will be piloting more use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation to improve our productivity and data exploitation. We will be moving the Agency's headquarters from Vauxhall to Stratford. We will be further implementing our communications intelligence programme. We will launch a National Crime Agency Academy, expand our management development programme, strengthen our Investigations Command, and enhance our data and technology skills. And we will be working with Government and policing colleagues on ambitious proposals for Police Reform.

There is a lot to do, and I would like to pay tribute to the NCA officers who make it all possible. They are dedicated to their jobs, and passionate about our mission to protect the public from serious and organised crime. Through them, and working with our partners, I am confident we will deliver this plan.



Graeme Biggar CBE
Director General NCA

Our vision and purpose

The National Crime Agency's mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime (SOC). 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 Home Secretary determines the Agency's Strategic Priorities, while the Director General sets the Operational Priorities and decides which operations are mounted by NCA officers, and the way in which they are conducted. Therefore, the Agency is operationally independent.

The Agency has officers based in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We are an organisation with global reach, with liaison officers based in more than 50 countries around the world. We work closely with policing partners, the intelligence agencies, regulatory authorities and other operational agencies, including in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to lead and coordinate a comprehensive response to SOC in the UK and overseas.

The Agency is responsible for:

- The single intelligence picture of the SOC 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 SOC, 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 SOC 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, including support to serious and major crime investigations across policing.

Our mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime

We are an organisation with global reach, with liaison officers based in over 50 countries around the world. The Agency operates across the UK with major hubs in London, Warrington, Birmingham and Bristol.

Crime Reduction Function

Criminal Intelligence Function

9 Strategic Priorities set by the Home Secretary

The NCA 5 year Strategy 2023-28

The Agency has five responsibilities

1	2	3	4	5
The single intelligence picture of the serious and organised crime threat facing the UK.	Collecting and exploiting data and intelligence to detect and disrupt serious and organised crime.	Investigating and taking action against the highest-harm offenders and their enablers.	Setting operational priorities for the serious and organised crime system.	Hosting and providing partners with access to national and specialist capabilities.



Protecting the public in 2024–2025

6,989
total disruptions,
highest ever volume

1/3
more than last year

Prevented over
400,000
frauds through NCA disruptions

2,000
Arrested more than **2,000 people for involvement in serious and organised crime**



450 **high impact disruptions**
Directly hit the most dangerous organised crime groups

345
NCA led OIC disruptions, highest ever volume (40% increase on last year)

Helped to seize over
230 **metric tonnes of Class A drugs globally**



3,448
NCA led intelligence and national amnesty on Top-Venting Blank Firers (TVBFs) led to **3,448 TVBFs removed from the streets**

Issued over **400 cyber protect notifications, of which 170 related to ransomware**. This is estimated to have prevented costs of approximately **£221m to the UK economy**

400

800
arrests

1,100+
safeguarded

Each month, NCA intelligence helped UK policing make circa **800 child sexual abuse related arrests** and **safeguard approximately 1,100 children**, based on online leads

Home Secretary Strategic Priorities

The Government is committed to reducing SOC. 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 plays a crucial role as the operational system leader on SOC in the UK and through its direct action against organised crime groups (OCGs) in the UK, overseas and online.

The National Crime Agency will:

1. Lead the law enforcement system on SOC in the UK, including strengthening cooperation with policing and other partners to tackle OCGs 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 OCGs 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 (OIC) in all its forms, with a primary focus on the OCGs facilitating small boat crossings. The NCA will have due regard for 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 (CSA) 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 CSA 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 OCGs 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 (JICC) for support investigations involving crime with an international dimension.

NCA Strategy 2023-2028

In 2023, the Agency launched a five-year Strategy to protect the public from SOC.[1] It sets out our commitment to degrade the most harmful organised crime groups (OCGs) by moving upstream, overseas, online; lead the UK's operational response; transform the Agency's capabilities; and grow a highly skilled workforce. Since 2023, we have embedded the Strategy's implementation throughout the Agency. During the remainder of the Strategy's term (up to 2028) we strive to deliver the Strategy's ambition, whilst also focusing on measuring the impact the Agency and the wider system is having against the SOC threat.

Our long-term strategic priorities frame our annual objectives for the year.

Pillar 1: Degrading the most harmful OCGs

- 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
- Rebalancing the Agency's work between different threats, with a higher proportion of our resource committed to economic and immigration crimes

Pillar 2: Leading the UK's operational response

- 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



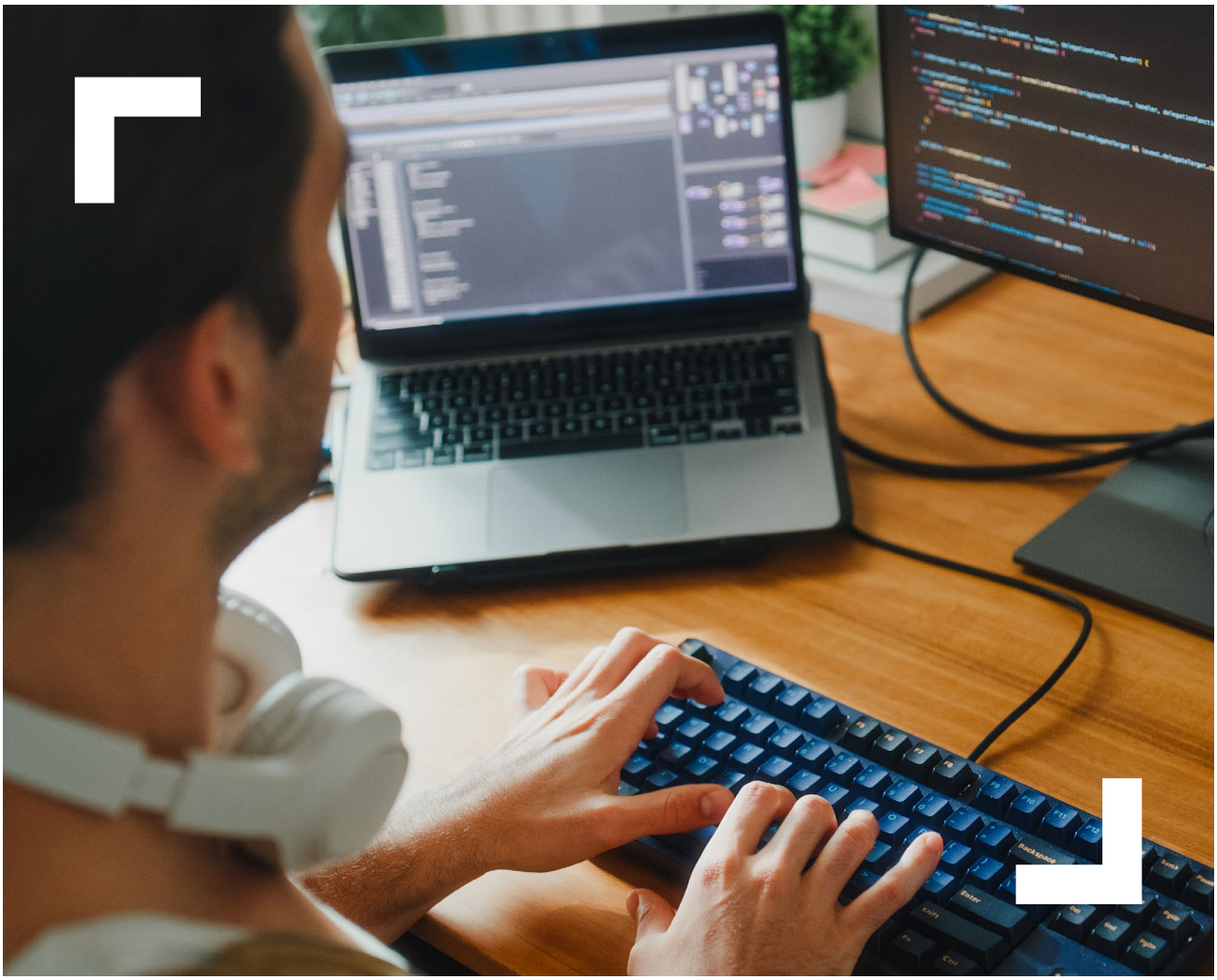
1 The NCA Strategy aligns and supports the following wider Strategies No Place to Hide: Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028; Beating Crime Plan; From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives; Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy; Economic Crime Plan 2 2023-2026; Fraud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

Pillar 3: Transforming the Agency's capabilities

- Unlocking the value of data and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to drive direct operational impact
- Delivering a new approach to capability development
- Improving the Agency's situational awareness
- Delivering the IT transformation programme
- Strengthening foundational capabilities as they relate to data technology and estates

Pillar 4: Growing a highly skilled workforce

- 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



2025–2026: Delivering against our priorities

In 2025-2026 we will prioritise the following activity in line with the long-term ambition set out in the Home Secretary's Strategic Priorities and Agency's Strategy. This includes targeting resources to best protect the UK public from the existing and emerging SOC threats that cause the most harm. Doing so will help to deliver the Government's secure borders and national security foundations, and safer streets mission.

Our operational focus is to degrade the most harmful serious and organised criminals and their enablers impacting the UK:

- We will increase our disruptive impact on OIC, supporting the Border Security Command in delivering Government priorities.
- We will continue to work in close partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service to drive judicial outcomes for SOC offenders.
- We will continue to deliver high impact operations against a wide range of SOC threats covering border vulnerabilities, child sexual abuse, cyber crime, drugs, firearms, fraud, illicit finance, and modern slavery & human trafficking.
- We will develop a strategy for our online transformation, maintaining our capabilities against increasingly sophisticated and technology enabled SOC threats.

We will lead the UK's response to SOC.

- We will embed the National Control Strategy to drive an efficient and effective cross-system response to SOC.
- We will invest in the Child Sexual Exploitation Referrals Bureau and launch the Designated Reporting Body to keep pace with increases in the threat.
- We will deliver against the new Crime and Courts Act taskings on OIC, Fraud and the drone threat in prisons.
- We will invest in data exploitation and fusion, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the SOC threat for the NCA and partners across the criminal justice system.
- We will continue to deliver critical national intelligence and investigative capabilities to police services across the UK.
- We will support delivery of the government's National Cyber Action Plan scheduled for publication in 2026.
- We will continue to influence and input into relevant regulation and legislation to drive strategic impact on work to Prevent SOC and Protect the public.

To deliver our operational ambitions, we must continue to transform our capabilities.

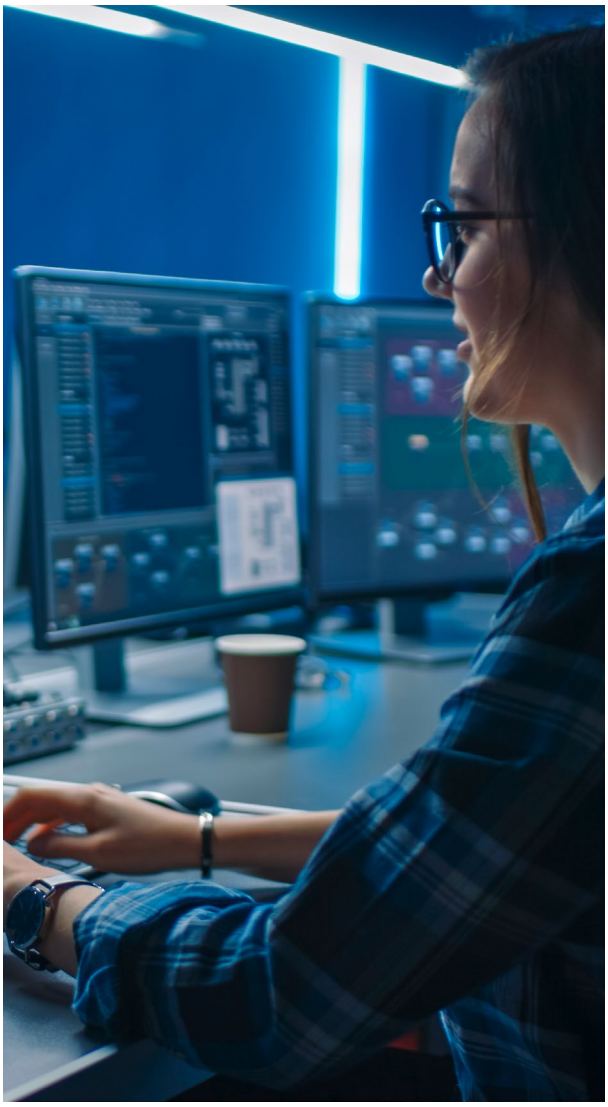
- We will continue to invest in our technology to deliver new and effective platforms and to increase cyber security, ensuring officers can target and disrupt sophisticated and well-resourced criminal networks.
- We will move to our new Headquarters in Stratford, delivering a modern, more efficient working environment, improved operational capability and opportunities to enhance collaboration with partners.
- We will automate more of our Child Sexual Exploitation Referral Bureau functions. This will enable the Agency to triage and disseminate intelligence more quickly, helping law enforcement to identify and safeguard potential victims sooner.

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

- We will increase the size of Investigations Command in the NCA, to reinforce our core cadre of investigators.
- We continue our efforts on pay and contract reform, with a view to improving the attraction and retention of highly skilled officers. We will further rebalance towards in-house specialists whilst reducing our reliance on external labour.
- We will develop career pathways that improve officer experience and increase the resilience and agility of our workforce.
- We will remain committed to developing an inclusive, empowering culture and strengthening the diversity of our workforce.
- As part of the new NCA Academy we will work with partners across Industry, as well as academic institutions, to ensure we build the skills we need to lead the fight against SOC.
- We will invest in interventions like TechX, a structured two-year training programme delivered in conjunction with The Metropolitan Police, NPCC and CT Policing, focusing on key technical skills that are in high demand across law enforcement.



NCA and partners



Protecting the public from SOC relies on a system of organisations that have unique roles but with a common set of goals. The domestic system in place to disrupt SOC includes, but is not limited to, law enforcement, government departments, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Prison and Probation Service, 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 SOC threats overseas before they reach the UK.

National Partners

In 2025-26 the Agency will continue to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of its system leadership and its relationship with SOC system partners including regulators and industry.

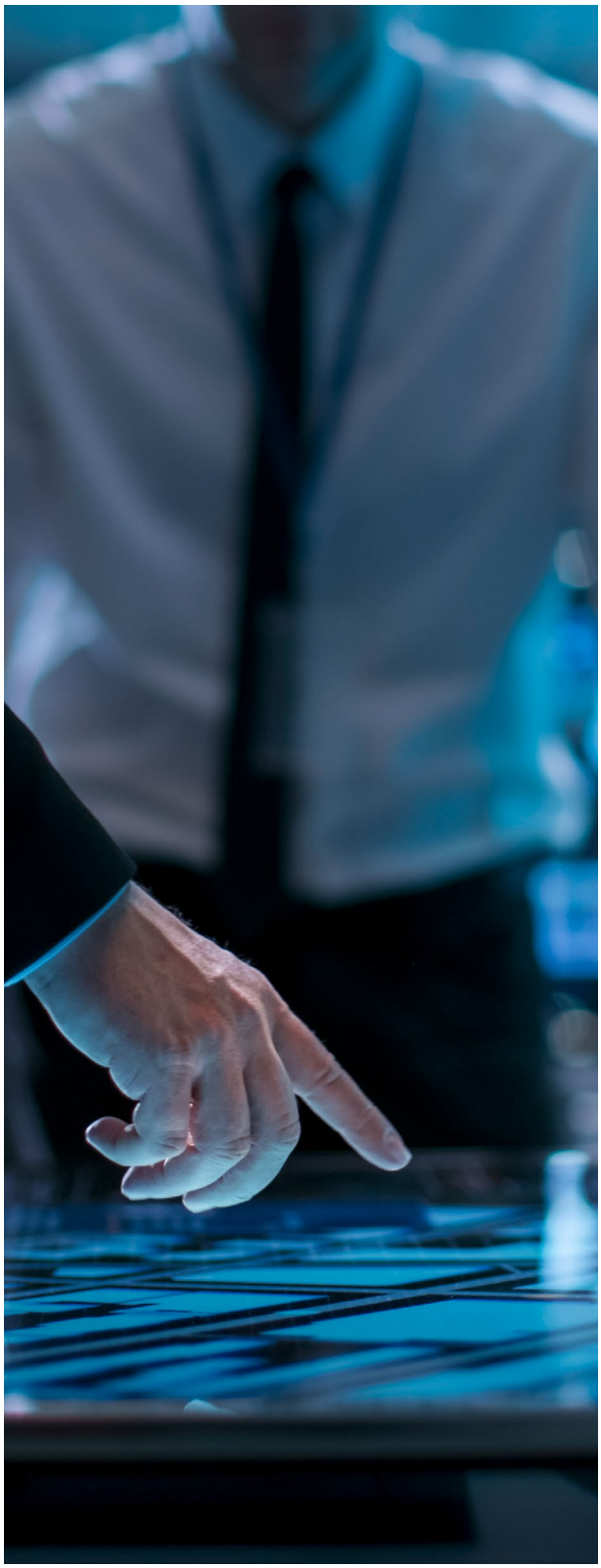
The Agency will work with key partners across government, including His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the new Border Security Command, to ensure that our operations support the UK's collective efforts to reduce the risk to the public, including by providing operational expertise to inform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

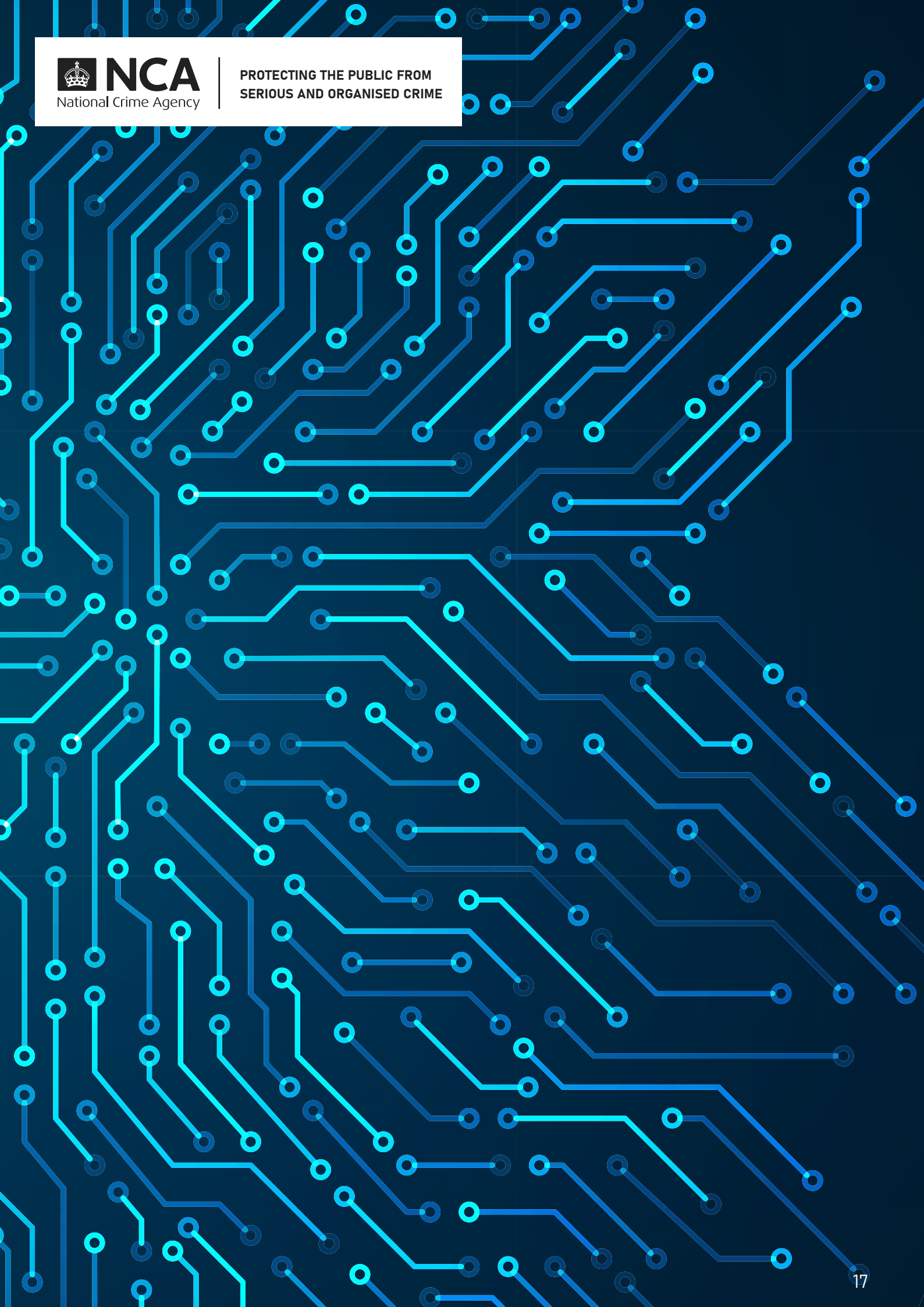
The Government's proposals for Police Reform will likely lead to change in how policing and the Agency are structured and operate in the longer term. The Agency is supportive of the reform and is working closely with the Home Office and operational partners (notably Counter Terrorism Police and ROCUs) to develop specific proposals.

International Partners

The NCA works closely with law enforcement organisations across the world to fight SOC and protect our respective publics. This is necessary as SOC in the UK often has an international nexus; the Agency must be able to connect global to local. Cooperation on intelligence sharing and joint investigations happens through multilateral organisations such as Interpol and Europol and though bilateral relationships facilitated by the NCA's network of some 167 international liaison officers. The NCA hosts the UK's Joint International Crime Centre, which acts as the link between UK police services and global law enforcement. The NCA also hosts the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre, which brings together specialist law enforcement officers from multiple agencies around the world to tackle allegations of grand corruption. In 2025-26:

- We will contribute to hardening the UK border and unlocking new opportunities in key countries of interest.
- We will roll out a new international case management system in July 2025 to automate our administrative processes and enable officers to focus on higher value activity.




NCA
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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 services and prosecution authorities.

The Agency works collaboratively with local, national and international partners to identify, tackle and disrupt SOC threats impacting Scotland and Northern Ireland, and remains committed to protecting their communities. In 2025-26, the Agency will:

- Disrupt organised criminal activity with the greatest impact on local communities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 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
- 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 memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Police Service of Scotland. The NCA has bespoke arrangements in place, including a Scottish General Authorisation which is an agreement with Scottish Ministers that authorises a suitably designated NCA Officer to exercise the powers and privileges of a constable in Scotland. The Director General appears before 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 and has regard to the Northern Ireland policing plan. The delivery of those functions is subject to an MOU 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 and privileges of a Northern Ireland constable. Our officers will comply with the PSNI code of ethics training requirements. The Director General appears before the Northern Ireland Policing Board to account for the NCA's activities and performance in Northern Ireland.

Measuring Impact



The Agency's strategy has focused our efforts on the highest impact disruptions rather than the total number, on the basis that this is where the most unique value is added and where the biggest difference in protecting the public from SOC is made.

In 2024-25, pursue disruptions, with 442. In 2024-25, the Agency delivered 450 high impact disruptions against the most dangerous OCGs. This exceeded the target, set three years ago, of increasing disruptions by 50% by the end of 2024-25. The target for 2025-26 is to maintain the high level of performance from 2024-25, whilst further increasing the number of OIC disruptions, noting these are often more resource intensive to conduct than disruptions against other threats.

We are now adopting more complex cases requiring expensive and niche capabilities to identify and disrupt highly sophisticated criminal targets. In addition, some areas of demand on the Agency have grown, for example through increased border seizures (where individuals are arrested at the border for drugs smuggling offence and referred to the Agency); at sea drop offs of drugs; and referrals in online child sexual abuse material from online providers.

In 2025-26, we will identify opportunities to streamline our processes to drive productivity and efficiency benefits, maximising our operational impact within a limited resource envelope.

The overall threat and impact of SOC is set out in the annual National Strategic Assessment. It showed that the overall threat increased in 2024, albeit at a slower rate than previously.

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 2024-25, 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 technical systems and capabilities.

Risks relating to information management and commercial were also de-escalated from the corporate risk register following a review which concluded that they could be managed within directorates.

New risks that have been added include our ability to deliver forensic services and to comply with recommendations from the Financial Action Task Force. These risks all have defined management plans in place.

NCA resource and budget

For 2025-26, the Agency's total budget is £1,012m. This represents an initial budget allocation from the Home Office Letter of Comfort.

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 2024-25.

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

Table 1: Agency budget 2025-26

Funding type	Vote*	External*	Total
Resource DEL (£m)	618.83	-	**-**
Capital DEL (£m)	112.3	-	**-**
Total DEL (£m)	731.13	280.39	**1,011.52**

*Numbers based on 2025-26 Home Office budget allocations Letter of Comfort received in June 2025. External split of Resource and Capital spending will be agreed through Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant funding bodies.

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 2025-26. 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 2025-26 financial year with 5,952 full-time equivalent (FTE) officers.



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