



Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary – getting organised



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A thematic report on the police
service's response to serious and
organised crime

CONTENTS

Executive summary	1
1. The threat posed by serious and organised criminality	5
2. National capability	11
3. Force capability	15
Appendix 1	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Serious and organised crime is a multi-billion pound enterprise which, according to one estimate, costs the UK economy at least £20 billion a year.¹ However, this may underestimate the real scale of the cost; for example, organised fraud alone has been assessed as accounting for a further £14 billion. The scope of illegal activity is extensive and includes trafficking in drugs, the importation of women and children for sexual and other exploitation and trading in contraband goods such as alcohol and tobacco. Analysis suggests that almost two-thirds of organised criminal groups (OCGs) deal in drugs, although many have diversified into other activities – wherever there is money to be made, the tentacles of criminality will spread if not resisted. The drug distribution network in particular is not confined to major urban centres but has spread to town centres large and small, and is linked directly to an increase in the use of serious violence. Indeed, what characterises this level of criminality is not just its illegality but the ever-present willingness to use extreme violence to secure and protect profits.

So how do government and law enforcement agencies counter this extensive network of criminality that reaches into every community? Is the solution as well organised as the problem? A substantial investment has been made by the Home Office in a structural response, namely the establishment in 2006 of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), accompanied by important legislation such as the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA).² In terms of processes, intelligence flows are critical and information is now shared between forces through new regional intelligence structures led by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and supported by an ACPO national co-ordinator. As a result, the UK law enforcement community now knows more about organised criminality than ever before. Worryingly though, this increased knowledge has highlighted the need for a more effective response by the police and other agencies. The reach of organised criminality is more extensive than previously acknowledged in the United Kingdom Threat Assessment (UKTA) – some 2,800 OCGs are believed to be operating across England and Wales, covering the full range of criminality, from local teams of criminals engaged in drug dealing and acquisitive crime through to international gangs committing acts of large-scale importation, kidnap, fraud and corruption.

In assessing whether forces and other law enforcement agencies are having a significant impact on this broad base of organised criminality, HMIC has drawn together three strands of work in this report:

- first, it combines key data from ACPO, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), SOCA and the Home Office on the scale and distribution of the threat;
- second, it assesses the national capability to prioritise and co-ordinate activity, so that those OCGs posing the greatest threat are targeted while opportunities are exploited to disrupt 'lower order' OCGs; and
- third, we evaluate the capability of English and Welsh forces – working individually and collaboratively – to combat the severe threat that organised crime presents.

¹ Serious Organised Crime Agency (2008) *SOCA Annual Report, 2007/08*.
www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/SOCA_Annual_Report_0708.pdf

² The national context and framework for responding to serious and organised crime is covered in Appendix 1.

The conclusion is that, despite evidence of impressive results achieved by a few individual forces and some collaborative efforts, the national response overall is blighted by the lack of a unifying strategic direction, inadequate covert capacity and under-investment in intelligence gathering, analysis and proactive capability. Given the scale of the threat that emerges from the mapping of OCG activity, this report seeks to provide an up-to-date picture of where the service is positioned and what actions need to be taken.

While collaboration cannot close the gaps in capacity acknowledged by ACPO and SOCA, effective partnership working across the broader law enforcement community can ensure that the best choices for interventions are made with the resources available. If collaboration is to be an effective part of a strategy for serious and organised crime, it needs to be put on a businesslike footing nationally and this in turn is likely to strengthen the rationale for local collaboration efforts. Collaboration nationally and regionally between SOCA and individual forces occurs around cases rather than within the framework of a well supported threat assessment, priorities and 'treatments' of organised crime.

Every force in the UK is carrying significant risks, with a 'working brief' or mitigation sometimes the only option in respect of a large tranche of OCGs. Support from the limited discretionary funds made available in CSR 2007 needs to be targeted on the known urban concentration of OCGs and in those other forces identified in this report, which for a variety of reasons need to develop key threshold components of capability to enable them to operate effectively individually and in concert with others.

The current assessment of OCGs is accepted as being immature and the definitions applied need refinement and support. A common understanding of critical practices and performance management needs to be promoted through easily accessible guidance, as has occurred for homicide and counter-terrorism.

Under the broad headline message set out above, more detailed key messages include the following:

- The scale of the threat is more extensive than previously understood, with over 2,800 OCGs now believed to be operating in England and Wales.
- Two areas – London and North West England – appear to host a concentration of OCGs that have the furthest reach in terms of their impact on other areas. (However, caution is needed in interpreting the mapping results; it may be that some forces have more robust analytical approaches and are thus better able to identify the scale and nature of OCG activity in their areas.)
- The greatest predicted requirement for a strong response to OCGs is in London, the North West and the West Midlands.
- Two-thirds of all identified OCGs are involved in multiple criminal enterprises; the majority are involved in drug trafficking, with London, Liverpool and Birmingham acting as major distribution centres for drugs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National collaboration

Collaboration nationally and regionally needs to be strengthened by:

- (i) development of a comprehensively supported threat assessment complemented by the control strategy that flows from it, that takes full account of OCG mapping;
- (ii) priorities arising from that assessment being identified by an agreed process for national and local/regional tasking;
- (iii) development of an acknowledged process for tackling priorities that apportions resources and attention on the basis of harm caused by individuals and networks;
- (iv) initiating systems for monitoring progress on combined efforts to disrupt, dismantle or incapacitate (this is both a local/regional and national requirement). This will enable effective oversight by groups and bodies including police authorities, the Organised Crime Partnership Board (OCPB) and the National Policing Board; and
- (v) rationalisation of current committees and groups concerned with serious and organised crime in the Home Office so that the new OCPB is given clear responsibility and a mandate to support the development of collaboration as outlined at (i)–(iv) above.

2. Targeted support for forces

- (i) The limited discretionary funding available to support the ACPO serious and organised crime co-ordinator and this inspection should be focused on those geographical areas with the greatest demand.

This can be facilitated in the short term by the Protective Services Steering Group.

3. Developing consistent professional practice

- (i) Concerns about definitional matters associated with OCG mapping and issues associated with key priorities, for example the most effective interventions, should be addressed by the provision of guidance or manuals, as occurs for homicide and counter-terrorism.

This work should be undertaken by ACPO in liaison with the NPIA.

4. Performance management of serious and organised crime

- (i) Developing practice in managing performance, including police authority oversight and community impact, needs to be gathered and promulgated.
- (ii) Law enforcement indicators need to be selected from the existing and developing basket of data (including the National Protective Services Analytical Tool (NPSAT)) for use in the Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS).

The OCPB, in liaison with appropriate stakeholders, should facilitate this work.

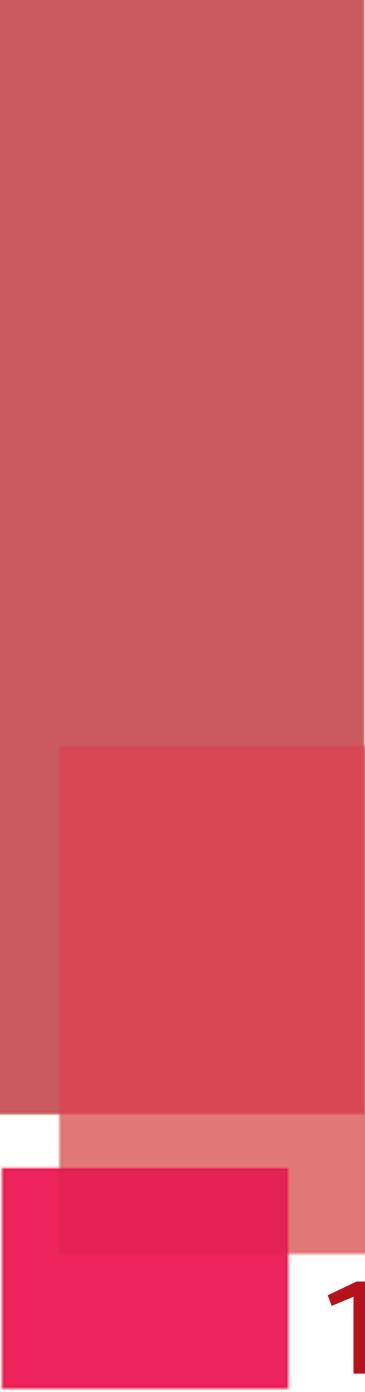
The combating of serious and organised crime must not only be seen in the context of the opportunities afforded to OCGs by significant events such as the 2012 London Olympics,

Executive summary

but in the delivery of the wider policing and public protection agenda as laid out in the Green Paper *From Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together*.³ In no small part the success of local community-based policing must be underpinned by the ability to deliver interventions that disrupt and dismantle OCGs that drive crime and criminality in our communities. If we are to deliver such a foundation for the future of policing, then serious and organised crime must be the subject of the same disciplined and focused approach to which homicide investigation and counter-terrorism have been subjected. This will require significant effort and investment.

HMIC
30 September 2008

³ Home Office (July 2008) *From Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together*, Policing Green Paper. http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police-reform/Policing_GP/



1. The threat posed by serious and organised criminality

1.1 The United Kingdom Threat Assessment (UKTA) of serious and organised crime describes the threat as comprising: organised violence; heroin and other drug trafficking; organised immigration crime; non-fiscal and fiscal fraud; firearms offences; road freight crime; theft of vehicles for profit or to facilitate other crime; robbery of cash and valuables in transit; and intellectual property crime. Current data covers some but not all of these categories of activity; significantly, not all threats are encompassed, violent distraction burglary being a case in point. HMIC has sought to draw a realistic picture, based on the information available from SOCA, individual forces, the NPIA and ACPO. But this information needs to be supplemented with further waves of mapping and crime statistics before firm conclusions can be drawn. Additional datasets covering human trafficking, prostitution and fraud at force level would improve understanding. However, there are significant differences between the OCG mapping skills of forces, which might be categorised as working at four different levels of knowledge:

- Fully developed and providing a comprehensive multi-agency view of the OCG threat to the force – both domiciled in the force area and impacting from outside, and including unknown groups. The most developed process is ongoing, regularly updated, drives tasking and is a part of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) for that force.
- Partial, looking across the force and including HQ specialist departments and basic command units (BCUs).
- Limited, based on a mapping of those level 2/3 OCGs currently being addressed by specialist assets.
- Poor, effectively a one-off snapshot to satisfy a national ACPO or HMIC requirement.

The important consideration is that, while the current data, supported by NPSAT work, is indicative, it is not comprehensive and extreme caution should be exercised before conclusions are drawn.

OCG mapping

1.2 The ACPO organised crime national co-ordinator's office mapped OCGs nationally in August 2007; although some definitional problems emerged, most forces contributed and all forces of England and Wales were engaged in the second analysis of the intelligence (December 2007). The Police Service of Northern Ireland and forces in Scotland have now also committed to building a fuller UK picture. The mapping identifies that:

- just over 2,800 OCGs are known to operate in England and Wales, with a presence in every force area; of these, over 1,400 groups were identified in the second phase of mapping;
- two-thirds of all identified OCGs are involved in multiple criminal enterprises, presenting opportunities for UK law enforcement to impact more broadly and secure outcomes in an economic way;
- some 60% of all identified OCGs are involved in drug trafficking; and
- 10% have an international dimension.

The UKTA

- 1.3 The UKTA of serious and organised crime for 2008/09⁴ notes that, while London, Liverpool and Birmingham are significant centres for drugs distribution to all parts of the UK, other smaller cities and towns cannot be ignored. The markets providing both crack cocaine and heroin are now reported to be well established outside urban centres, and the overall picture is increasingly complex and diverse. Home Office crime statistics and data from other sources shed further light on organised crime in areas such as the most serious violence, gun crime, knife crime, Class A drugs supply, organised immigration crime, kidnap and fraud.
- 1.4 However, it is hard to draw firm conclusions from statistics alone, as crime reports do not always identify actual or possible links to organised criminality; forces need to improve their ability to determine such links. For some crime types, such as serious violence and firearms, this would certainly be worthwhile.
- 1.5 Two crime types in particular are, by their nature, frequently linked to organised crime – kidnapping and drugs importation/supply. Statistics show that the number of kidnapping offences has declined, but evidence from SOCA⁵ suggests that their seriousness and complexity is increasing, and that there is often an international dimension. It is also likely that kidnaps are under-reported, because they are often committed between OCGs as part of their way of operating. Although a number of large forces have the capability to respond effectively to kidnapping and extortion offences, most do not and instead rely on SOCA. Co-operation between the police service and SOCA is excellent in this area and has delivered a consistent improvement in investigative performance – the detection rate rose from 37% in 2004/05 to 42% in 2006/07. Recorded offences of blackmail and kidnap have fallen, with reductions of 52% (1,284 offences) and 15% (367 offences) respectively over the last year, but National Crime Recording Standard statistics are not the only lens through which kidnap and extortion can be examined.
- 1.6 The Home Office recently estimated the value of the UK illicit drug market at between £4 billion and £6 billion annually at 2003/04 figures,⁶ and that the market comprised 300 major importers, 3,000 wholesalers and 70,000 street dealers. The ACPO OCG mapping linked 60% of OCGs to drug trafficking, and the UKTA for 2008/09⁷ warns that, while London, Liverpool and Birmingham are significant centres for drugs distribution to all parts of the UK, other smaller cities and towns are now also prominent. The markets providing both crack cocaine and heroin are reported

⁴ Serious Organised Crime Agency (2008) *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime 2008/09*. www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/UKTA2008-9NPM.pdf

⁵ Serious Organised Crime Agency (2008) *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime 2008/9*. www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/UKTA2008-9NPM.pdf, page 20.

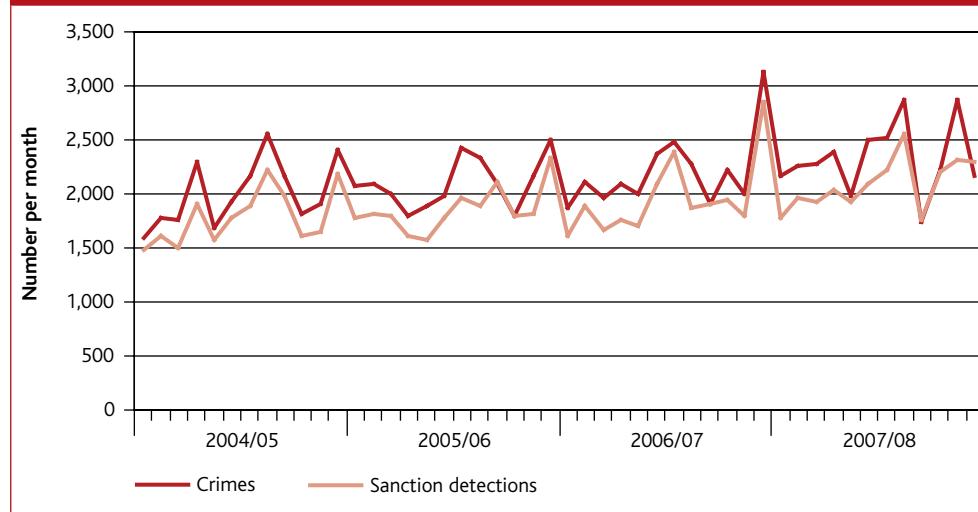
⁶ Home Office (June 2007), *The Illicit Drug Trade in the United Kingdom*, 2nd Edition Home Office Online Report 20/07. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/rds07r2007.pdf

⁷ Serious Organised Crime Agency (2008) *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime 2008/9*. www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/UKTA2008-9NPM.pdf

to be well established outside urban centres and the overall picture is increasingly complex and diverse. Street prices for heroin and cocaine have fallen consistently over the last ten years, which could suggest that supply chains are thriving, although the reality may be different. Cocaine seizures reveal a significant trend in adulteration, with drug purity halved between importation and deals at street level.

- 1.7 A report by the UK Drug Policy Commission⁸ highlighted the fact that forces are yet to understand fully the comprehensive picture of the harm caused by drug trafficking and the (limited) impact of supply reduction activity. A positive upward trend of successful investigation can be discerned, which indicates the importance attached by forces to tackling this crime type, and an increasing sophistication in the use of forensic examination (Exhibit 1). Recorded offences have risen in the last three years, from 24,190 in 2004/05 to 28,130 in 2007/08.

Exhibit 1: Recorded offences of drug trafficking and sanction detections



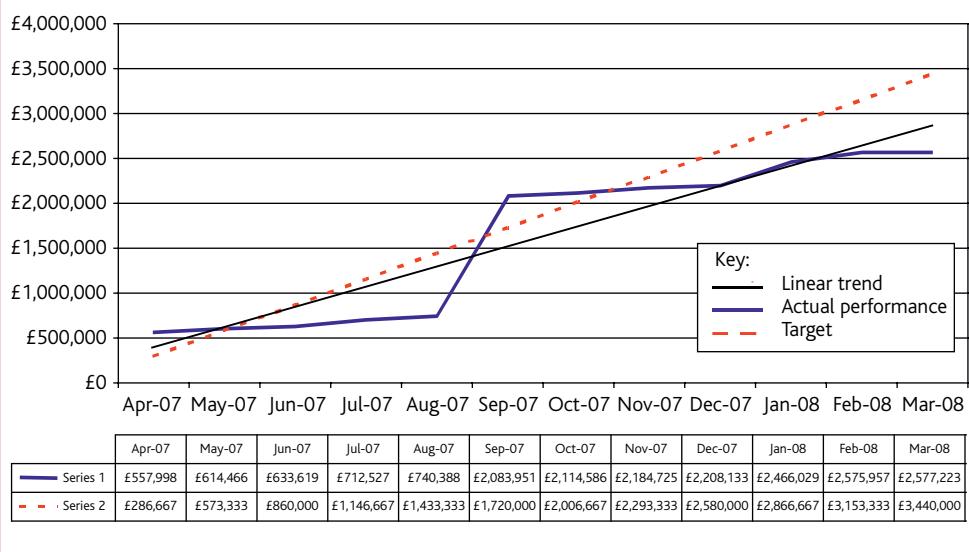
- 1.8 Of concern is the fact that the detection rate for drug trafficking is less than 100%. HMIC recognises the accuracy of force reporting post-search warrant execution and pre-charge, but the scale – on occasions as much as a 25% shortfall – warrants examination by forces into their processes.

Proceeds of Crime Act

- 1.9 Since the introduction of this powerful piece of legislation, with the accompanying financial incentives for forces to increase their level of activity, forces have focused on asset recovery as a principal tactic to disrupt and disable OCGs; some have been more successful than others, but, overall, seizures continue to rise. In 2007/08, the service's performance for cash forfeitures and cash seizures exceeded national targets, but confiscation orders still fall some way short of the target (Exhibit 2). This is due in part to the length of time needed for some of these more complex investigations to come to fruition. However, this approach is not necessarily about the cash but must be seen in the context of providing a significant tactic to disrupt OCGs.

⁸ UK Drug Policy Commission (July 2008) *Tackling Drug Markets and Distribution Networks in the UK*. www.ukdpc.org.uk/resources/Drug_Markets_Full_Report.pdf

Exhibit 2: Progress in the use of POCA – confiscation orders



- 1.10 Some £250 million worth of assets has been linked to 20% of known OCGs. As knowledge increases on the activities of the remaining 80%, further opportunities to exploit POCA powers will present themselves. While cash and asset seizures are improving, there are other untapped prospects to make serious and organised crime less profitable, while using criminal gains to fund policing operations against criminals. The powers provided by POCA need to be an integral part of operational planning objectives if these opportunities are not to be lost.

Organised immigration crime

- 1.11 This crime type covers both the organised facilitation of immigrants to the UK (people smuggling) and the trafficking of people for criminal exploitation (human trafficking). SOCA's UKTA for 2008/09 noted that the scale of people smuggling far exceeds that of human trafficking, and that both provide serious and organised criminals with opportunities to exploit illegal migrants for profit.⁹ The UK Human Trafficking Centre was established in 2007 to support SOCA's efforts, specifically by co-ordinating the UK policing response to trafficking through a multi-agency approach. It co-ordinated two successful operations (Pentameter 1 and Pentameter 2) – involving every force in the UK – to rescue and protect victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and to identify, disrupt, arrest and bring to justice those involved in this criminal activity (Table 2).

⁹ Serious Organised Crime Agency (2008), *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime 2008/9*, page 8.

Table 2: Comparison of Pentameter 1 and Pentameter 2 operations

	Operation Pentameter 1	Operation Pentameter 2 (figures correct at time of publishing)
Establishments visited	515	822
Arrests made	238	528
Victims recovered	87	167
Number of originating countries of victims recovered	22	26

- 1.12 Operation Pentameter 2 successes are attributed to significant partnership involvement, assisted by a national intelligence infrastructure used throughout the operation to identify UK-wide organised crime links. The UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking sets out a broad range of responses, from support to source and transit countries through to activities to suppress demand in the UK, and includes efforts to raise awareness about the realities of trafficking by high-profile enforcement campaigns. This wider model for attacking the supply chain, not in itself new, has been strengthened successfully by formal agreements between countries. Dr Timothy Brain, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and the ACPO lead for prostitution and vice-related matters, recognised the success of Pentameter 2 matters at the joint National Pentameter 2 Feedback/ACPO Vice Conference, but stressed that more work needs to be done to combat this kind of crime.¹⁰
- 1.13 HMIC's work on this inspection reveals a co-ordinated multi-agency response to counter illegal entry into the UK, which is developing promisingly with the roll-out of immigration crime partnerships and joint police/UK Border Agency teams active in 85% of forces in England and Wales. These efforts should be encouraged, although it would be premature to attempt an evaluation of their success in tackling a range of immigration-related crime.

¹⁰ ACPO News Release 81/08.



2. National capability

2.1 The analysis set out in the first chapter scopes the scale and nature of organised and serious criminal activity, although the service must be relentless in its efforts to improve further its understanding of how these criminal markets are operating. Knowledge is power, and at present we lack sufficient knowledge. If the top echelon, in particular, of OCGs is to be tackled effectively, there needs to be:

- a clear governance framework, fit for purpose;
- national agreement on priorities;
- an underpinning network of robust collaborative arrangements, at both regional and local level; and
- objective evaluation and learning.

There is potential for the principles of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) to be utilised for OCGs. The issue remains one of identification, risk assessment and effective management. Issues such as governance, performance and shared responsibility should not only be considered at national level (OCPB, National Policing Board, etc), but also at force level – including BCU/crime and disorder reduction partnership level.

Governance arrangements

2.2 National governance is not clear – a number of groups and bodies¹¹ are competing to set directions and priorities for the service, reporting to different Home Office directorates and, in the case of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), a different ministry. Clarity is needed urgently in order to define the threat, agree on priorities and assess progress. Interestingly, the counter-terrorism model provides such clarity and, with an appropriate degree of tailoring, useful lessons can be imported from this work.

2.3 Among the activity being pursued to bring greater clarity is the establishment of the OCPB, chaired by the ACPO level 2 portfolio-holder (Chief Constable Martin Baker). This board seeks to develop the capability and formalised practice that will allow law enforcement agencies to:

- identify the end-to-end threat from serious and organised crime;
- assess and manage risk; and
- establish adequate intelligence and operational assets, capable of delivering an effective response at all points on the continuum of harm.

2.4 But this endeavour will not succeed if the whole of the governance landscape is not addressed (over and above force and regional-level arrangements), or if the direction of travel is not set by the Home Office and agreed by the services involved. At the regional and force level, tasking and co-ordinating arrangements are in place and chaired by senior ACPO officers.

¹¹ These include the Protective Services Steering Group, the UK Control Strategy Programme Review Group and the OCPB.

- 2.5** Development of collaboration on serious and organised crime at all levels clearly affects police authorities because it impacts police resources and priorities. As the work of the OCPB progresses to the point where there are practical proposals for developing tasking and targeting in relation to priority networks or individuals there will need to be active consultation with police authorities on the implications for them and their forces.

Securing national consensus

- 2.6** The challenge is to make sure that 100% of OCGs are being addressed. This is not overly ambitious – indeed, it is essential and what the public would expect. The reality is that tackling/managing an OCG is complex, with a huge range of tactical and partnership opportunities. Thinking has to be more sophisticated than 'level 2/3' tactics as the only approach, and has to recognise the alternatives. Securing consensus is an important test of effectiveness; although the OCPB has only recently been established, early proposals represent a solid basis on which to move forward. A vital early task for the chair is to unite the partners behind a common, proactive agenda. Without central direction, the risk is that the response will be reactive, localised and ultimately ineffective. It is essential that operational momentum at the regional and force level is built up and sustained.

Collaboration at the regional and local level

- 2.7** Collaboration offers a real prospect for improvement, providing that the forces involved enter such arrangements with the same high degree of commitment; parochialism or other misguided sentiments that prompt some to resile against cross-border solutions pose a threat to the development of effective regional collaboration. In some parts of the country collaboration is beginning to yield results. However, some forces still do not seem to want to accept learning from elsewhere and are obsessed with 'one solution doesn't fit all' and 'we don't want a standing army'. While it is true that, with regard to homicide investigation, a long-term low demand profile might lead a force to have limited resources and rely on others for extra support on a formalised mutual aid basis, there is little evidence that anything other than dedicated and specialist resources will work in the field of serious and organised crime, as whatever assets are in place will always be fully deployed. There is not the potential for slack that can be taken up that there is with some other protective services. There is a need to distinguish between those arrangements that genuinely add to the existing capacity and capability and those where regional efforts are in effect 'propping up' a weak partner.
- 2.8** Collaboration is promoted as one model for enhancing capability and capacity at a regional (or in some cases sub-regional) level. To that end, the Government is funding 13 demonstrator sites, involving 34 forces, to test a variety of collaborative approaches and then disseminate lessons learned. The evaluation of these projects should be completed and available in 2009. HMIC applauds these and similar initiatives but suggests that collaborative goals could be more swiftly achieved if specific threats were the focus of attention. Indeed, the OCPB could consider prioritising some initiatives specifically to encourage complementary joint working, particularly between ACPO and SOCA.

- 2.9 It is also important to identify situations where sustainability can be demonstrated as and when financial support from the centre (Home Office, ACPO, etc) dries up. This should be a key element of evaluation of the Home Office-funded 'demonstrator sites'. Details of developing and proven models of collaboration can be found on the Home Office collaboration hub by emailing: police.collaboration@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or at <https://policecollaboration.hub.uk.com>.
- 2.10 Operations Pentameter 1 and 2 demonstrate what can be achieved when priorities are agreed and clearly articulated. But the impact of Pentameter in addressing one important area of criminality – human trafficking – must be extended to encompass other national operations covering a broader range of criminality. Pockets of effective collaboration, designed to meet regional priorities, are commendable and include the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) and Operation Tarian, serving the southern Welsh force areas, but ultimately they are just pockets. As national and regional priorities are developed and agreed, regions and forces need to collaborate and co-operate better in order to address the identified threats.

Evaluation and learning

- 2.11 In the absence of robust evaluation, oversight is currently often limited to resourcing (how is the money being spent?) and final outcomes. As a result, most forces cannot be entirely sure which tactics work in which environments. What learning does exist is rarely shared across the service in an accessible way, and success is frequently attributed to key individuals rather than embedded processes. Evaluation and learning methodology from major crime investigations is abundant and could be adapted to serious and organised crime investigations. However, progress has been disappointingly slow and the inspection revealed no obvious reasons for delay other than a need for greater commitment. The NPIA clearly has a role to play in improving this picture, learning from the work of the Homicide Working Group, in raising awareness of its processes and products, being a reliable and tested model that could be followed. Once good practice is established, the NPIA and various national working groups should be well placed to promulgate the latest and most effective interventions.



3. Force capability

- 3.1 The overview provided by this inspection identifies some good practice but also marked gaps in provision. The capability of individual police forces is extremely variable. A small number – predominantly the large metropolitan forces exposed to the highest levels of threat – stand out above the rest, but even these display scope for improvement against threshold standards. The best operators all had mature, well developed processes to create strategic assessments and use these to inform key deployment decisions. Key characteristics are summarised below.

Force strategic assessments – examples of good practice

The best strategic assessments:

- review the current force control strategy (FCS);
- identify appropriate threats/risks/harm, drawing useful inferences about each to assist decision making (adopting or rejecting recommendations);
- use intelligence from a variety of sources, including key partners and communities, recognising the implications of external stimuli;
- identify appropriate operational priorities to manage identified risks or the likelihood of harm being realised;
- for each FCS recommendation, define the current situation, review current activity, and highlight intelligence gaps, barriers and emerging trends and predictions;
- indicate emerging threats that sit outside the current FCS;
- review force assets, identifying organisational threats to FCS delivery; and
- include a scoping assessment of issues and vulnerabilities.

- 3.2 Where force strategic assessments do identify serious and organised crime as a priority, their focus is too often narrowly linked to gun crime and drug trafficking. National evidence suggests that these offences are the tip of the iceberg, and in fact two-thirds of OCGs commit a wider range of serious offences. To disrupt these organisations more effectively, forces need to gather specific intelligence on:
- the vulnerabilities of particular locations and communities;
 - how markets and networks operate;
 - the 'business processes' of OCGs;
 - the impact of organised crime on the quality of life in those communities; and
 - weaknesses in the defences of OCGs (ie, how best to penetrate and dismantle their operations).
- 3.3 Success will depend to some extent on the accurate tasking of Neighbourhood Policing teams, but this inspection found only a limited appreciation of how these key resources could contribute. For example, the development of key individual networks¹² and the introduction of joint strategic assessments with crime and disorder reduction partnerships can help to develop an informed picture of the impact of OCG activities on particular communities. The same investment in awareness raising that has been made in relation to counter-terrorism needs to be made in relation to serious and organised crime.

¹² Individuals in key individual networks provide informed views of a community and issues of concern, facilitating a structured approach to gathering community intelligence.

- 3.4 ACPO and SOCA are now moving the debate in this direction, to gain an understanding of harm across a wider spectrum.

In conclusion, there is much work to be done to bring all forces to the same level of understanding.

As a first step, good practice needs to be disseminated by forces with a track record of success, set in the context of the UKTA and the National Intelligence Requirement.

Second, forces need to review their strategic assessments to ensure that they include a better assessment of the emerging OCG threat.

Gaps in provision – processes, staffing and policies

- 3.5 A critical plank of a strengthened response to serious and organised crime is improved collaborative arrangements. Since HMIC published Closing the Gap in 2005, prompting a service-wide debate on how to bridge this level 2/3 gap, all forces and police authorities have committed resources to improve protective services capacity and capability. Some forces without adequate in-house facilities have developed mutual support protocols with neighbours, but these need to be formalised and tested to ensure that they will deliver when required. This is particularly important in respect of 'crimes in action', when the time and opportunity for negotiating access to specialist resources are heavily constrained. One example is the informal arrangement to access armed 'bolt-on' capability to supplement conventional surveillance teams. Forces with low demand for specialist assets must ensure that they have effective agreements to secure this type of resource.
- 3.6 Police forces should ensure that intelligence is shared internally and externally by all units – both uniformed and specialist – subject to appropriate vetting mechanisms and relevance.
- 3.7 Finally, forces need to improve their use of intelligence to inform robust tasking processes. The concept of tasking and co-ordinating meetings at force and regional level is well developed, but there is considerable scope for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. NATIONAL COLLABORATION

Collaboration nationally and regionally needs to be strengthened by:

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- (iv) initiating systems for monitoring progress on combined efforts to disrupt, dismantle or incapacitate (this is both a local/regional and national requirement). This will enable effective oversight by groups and bodies including police authorities, the OCPB and the National Policing Board; and
- (v) rationalisation of current committees and groups concerned with serious and organised crime in the Home Office so that the new OCPB is given clear responsibility and a mandate to support the development of collaboration as outlined at (i)–(iv) above.

2. TARGETED SUPPORT FOR FORCES

- (i) The limited discretionary funding available to support the ACPO serious and organised crime co-ordinator and this inspection should be focused on those geographical areas with the greatest demand.

This can be facilitated in the short term by the Protective Services Steering Group.

3. DEVELOPING CONSISTENT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- (i) Concerns about definitional matters associated with OCG mapping and issues associated with key priorities, for example the most effective interventions, should be addressed by the provision of guidance or manuals, as occurs for homicide and counter-terrorism.

This work should be undertaken by ACPO in liaison with the NPIA.

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

- (i) Developing practice in managing performance, including police authority oversight and community impact, needs to be gathered and promulgated.
- (ii) Law enforcement indicators need to be selected from the existing and developing basket of data (including NPSAT) for use in APACS.

The OCPB, in liaison with appropriate stakeholders, should facilitate this work.



Appendix 1

CONTEXT FOR THE INSPECTION

The police service's response to the serious and organised crime threat benefits from direction by the Government, ACPO and the Association of Police Authorities, as set out in the following:

The *National Policing Plan 2005–08* (www.police.homeoffice.gov.uk/national-policing-plan/policing-plan-2008.html) encouraged inter-agency co-operation to combat serious and organised crime, within and across force boundaries.

NPSAT brings together a range of indicators to inform assessments of the demand arising from serious and organised crime. These indicators include firearms offences; life-threatening and gun crime; cash-in-transit robberies; blackmail; and problematic drug users.

ACPO's National Strategic Assessment for 2007 (www.acpo.police.uk) confirmed the requirement to fill the identified gap in the provision of protective services, with a trilateral focus.

The Home Office strategy *Cutting Crime – A New Partnership 2008–11* (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07).

SOCA was confirmed as the leading law enforcement agency tackling serious and organised crime, leading nominals and their illegal profits. The Home Office assessed the harm caused by serious and organised crime as costing upwards of £20 billion per annum.

HM Government's *National Community Safety Plan 2008–11* (www.police.homeoffice.gov.uk/national-policing-plan/national-community-safety-0609) declared the Home Secretary's key strategic priorities for 2008/09, including a focus on more serious violence and on joint working to tackle serious and organised crime.

HM Government's drug strategy for 2008, *Drugs: protecting families and communities*, (www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drug-strategy) states an intention to work with international partners to disrupt and dismantle serious and organised crime through SOCA, police forces and HMRC. It recognises that drug offending cannot be defeated by the police alone.





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