

News story: Government launches new strategy to tackle serious and organised crime

In a speech this morning, Minister for Security and Economic Crime Ben Wallace said preventing criminals from laundering money made from operations such as drug trafficking and human trafficking is a key element of the government's new [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy](#).

The strategy also sets out how the government will build the UK's defences against serious and organised crime (SOC), track down the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

According to the National Crime Agency there are around 4,600 serious and organised crime groups in the UK. These criminals use violence and intimidation in communities to operate and they prey on the most vulnerable in society, from victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to young people suffering sexual exploitation and abuse.

The strategy is backed by funding of at least £48 million in 2019 to 2020 to further ramp up law enforcement capabilities to specifically tackle illicit finance.

Security and Economic Crime Minister, Ben Wallace, said:

Serious and organised crime is the deadliest and most damaging national security threat faced by the UK. It undermines our economy, damages our international reputation and has a corrosive effect on individuals and communities.

Many serious and organised criminals think they are above the law. This strategy is determined to challenge that assertion.

Our new strategic approach not only improves our government and law enforcement capabilities, but also ensures that working with the private sector, the public and international partners are integrated as part of our response.

And working together, implementing this new strategy, we will show them just how serious we are.

New measures in the SOC strategy include:

- additional investment in the multi-agency National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) which is now operational and includes officers from the NCA, HM Revenue and Customs, City of London Police, Serious Fraud Office, Financial Conduct Authority Crown Prosecution Service and the Home

Office

- piloting new approaches to preventing people engaging in serious and organised crime and building community resilience against it
- establishing a new national tasking framework for law enforcement
- improving engagement with the private sector, particularly the information and communications technology industry
- expanding our overseas capabilities, including establishing a new network of overseas policy specialists

The NECC will bring the full force of government, law enforcement, civil society, regulators and the private sector – particularly the technology and financial sectors – to bear against those engaged in this criminal activity.

Mr Wallace set out how the government will:

- use all the powers and tools available to target the most dangerous and determined criminals and deny them access to their money and assets
- work with communities, businesses and the vulnerable to build resilience against serious and organised crime
- stop the problem at the source, supporting those at risk of engaging in criminality and more closely managing offenders who are unwilling to cease their involvement in SOC
- align the collective efforts as one, cohesive system establishing a new national tasking framework for law enforcement, improving engagement with the private sector and expanding overseas capabilities

The Minister was joined by Lynne Owens, Director-General of the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Bob Wigley, Chair of UK Finance at the launch event at The Shard in central London.

Director-General of the National Crime Agency, Lynne Owens, said:

The threat from serious and organised crime is changing rapidly, increasing in both volume and complexity. It now affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat.

Tackling this ever-changing threat is a daunting task. This is why, as part of this strategy, we are introducing a new, revised operating model for law enforcement, which will allow us to drive more effective collaboration and prioritise tackling the issues that cause the most harm to the public.

We welcome the funding injection for next year across law enforcement tackling serious and organised crime and look forward to further commitment to provide the resources needed to deliver this whole-system approach.

Our ambition is to deliver a layered capability, from the local level through to the national, which will identify and exploit the best opportunities to tackle serious and organised crime and stop the harm it inflicts on the UK public.

Chair of UK Finance, Bob Wigley, said:

Stemming the flow of illicit finance that underpins serious and organised crime is an absolutely priority for the UK's banking and finance sector.

Banks already spend over £5 billion a year fighting economic crime, constantly developing new approaches and finding more effective methods, but there is more we can all do.

The new strategy launched today is exactly what is needed – providing the right legal and regulatory system, while ensuring effective collaboration by all the regulated sectors of the economy, because as a country we are only as strong as our weakest link.

The Serious and Organised Crime Strategy complements the Serious Violence Strategy launched in April which sets out the government's response to serious violence and increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide.

It also has links to other government strategies, including the UK's Strategy to Counter Terrorism, the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy, the National Cyber Security Strategy and the Modern Slavery Strategy.

The £48 million funding to enhance the response to illicit finance is in addition to the £21 million over the next 18 months to boost the law enforcement response to child sexual exploitation and abuse which the Home Secretary announced in September.