

Committee(s): Economic and Cyber Crime Committee	Dated: 27 January 2023
Subject: National Lead Force and Cyber Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1- People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 09-23	For Information
Report author: Kevin Ives, Det Inspector Staff Office Economic and Cyber Crime	

Summary

This report provides information on key activities delivered as part of the National Lead Force Plan. These activities include:

- Effective crime prevention over the Christmas period.
- Results of some service improvement trials by National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB).
- A cross section of results from operational activity.
- An update from the National Co-ordinators office nationwide visits.
- Update on Proactive Economic Crime Team (PECT) performance

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The meeting of this Committee has fallen fairly close to the previous Committee which was at the end of November 2022. The updates are therefore briefer than would be usual. The new performance measures are now in place and presented on the accompanying NLF performance report.

Outcome 1: Supporting and Safeguarding Victims.

NLF Role: We provide a service for victims that is accessible, user-friendly and easy to engage with, and we successfully support and safeguard victims.

Next Generation service project update

There is no written update owing to the recent FCCRAS Procurement Committee and PAB discussions on Next Gen held in December 2022.. If required, an FCCRAS update will be given verbally in addition to this report.

National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit (NECVCU)

Within this period both Staffordshire and Lincolnshire Police have been visited to progress the expansion of the service. Lincolnshire are currently drawing up a request which will outline which services they need assistance with, they have voiced support for the concept and are working out how to include with their current processes.

A follow up meeting with Staffordshire to help plan how the service fits in with their local delivery plans is to occur in January 2023.

A further meeting with Hertfordshire is to take place in early February to give further detail before their decision on full engagement.

34 forces are now supported or have requested support at level two (most vulnerable victim support). 40 forces (including three new forces whose engagement formally begins in April) are engaged at level one service. This will be 43 if the above mentioned forces take up the offer of assistance.

Worthy of note is that as a result of the Fraud Strategy work the Prime Minister's office asked a direct question of the force as to whether the NECVCU service was unique in the world. The response has been given that this great service is one of a kind and nothing like it is known of anywhere in the world.

National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB)

Solvability survey

There is a solvability and a vulnerability trial running to improve the NFIB service. Results are already available for the work carried out in this reporting period.

The 'solvability trial' involves a change in how the service prioritises fraud review and dissemination. This method uses a new formula which better identifies lines of enquiries on each report in order to be much more accurate and efficient in relation to which cases are disseminated to local forces. This trial showed a 35% increase in reports reviewed and a 15% increase in reports receiving an outcome of some kind, whether it be investigation or disruption activity.

The vulnerability trial is aimed at improving our service and response for the most vulnerable victims of fraud and cybercrime. A new 'vulnerable person alert' process sends fast time messages to receiving forces in order to highlight the most vulnerable victims of fraud in their area. This works alongside the current dissemination process.

The trial gave an 80% increase in vulnerable children (under 18) protected and a 41% increase in the number of potentially vulnerable people that local forces are now aware of. One of the biggest benefits is that the maximum response period to these

vulnerable victims has now dropped to a fantastic 72 hours, historically it was up to 28 days.

Outcome 2: Disrupt Fraudsters.

NLF Role: We disrupt fraudsters that operate domestically and from overseas in order to make it harder for them to commit crime here in the UK.



NPCC Cyber

Police CyberAlarm – At the start of January a review showed that Small and Medium Enterprise uptake continues to grow significantly with 6000 organisations now signed up with 3000 having suspicious activity data collectors now live on their systems.

NFIB

The NFIB Cyber team has a new collaboration with the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre). This work was initiated when approximately 200 Russian based websites began targeting UK citizens with a cryptocurrency fraud. The websites were sadly beyond the reach of the NFIB team due to where they were hosted and registered. Engagement took place with the NCSC team and the agencies carried out joint work and a majority of the websites were then suspended. The success of the work has led to new intelligence pathways and relationships that are being formalised. These new routes will increase the takedown figures and public protection provided by the unit in future as well as bring many more foreign based websites within their reach.

Outcome 3: Investigate and Prosecute.

NLF Role: We successfully lead the local to national policing response in investigating and prosecuting fraudsters, ensuring better criminal justice outcomes for victims.

Lead Force Operations Room

The unit played a key role in Operation Elaborate. The widely publicised activity initiated by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) into large numbers of fraudsters using text message ‘spoofing’ fraud. A website was ‘taken down’ by the MPS and this website gave them access to details of large numbers of users who were committing fraud. Over 50 cases were disseminated around the UK for co-ordinated action and this dissemination was overseen by the Lead Force Operations Room.

National lead Force teams

Operation Quinn - The suspect committed a courier fraud and was identified by technical work that was carried out to locate the victim’s stolen phones (taken by the suspect) and by tracking goods purchased using the victim accounts. A successful operation led to 2.5yrs imprisonment.

Operation Altair – The case involved an employee theft of over £107,000 from the restaurant chain 'Giraffe' and subsequent money laundering. Nine defendants were charged – three pled guilty at the first court hearing and received non- custodial sentences for their roles as money mules. The other defendants went to trial and either raised guilty pleas on day one or were found guilty of Fraud and money laundering. Sentences for defendant ranged between nine months suspended and four years in custody.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

Operation Brunel – Warrants were executed in Manchester by PIPCU. 18 Suspects were detained as three Badging Factories and a large volume of counterfeit goods were seized over 2 floors of a factory building. London PIPCU were supported by Northwest PIPCU and the Operation Vulcan team from Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

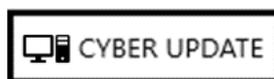
Operation Vulcan is a new large multi-agency operation which has PIPCU as a core member. It has increased resource to deal with the prolific counterfeiting and organised crime in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester. This has been partly driven by the huge successes PIPCU have had in exposing the criminality in the area over the last five to seven years.

Outcome 4: Raise Awareness and Prevent Crime.

NLF Role: We raise awareness of the threat and prevent fraud impacting people and businesses.

Action Fraud

Action Fraud launched the '12 Frauds of Christmas' campaign on Thursday 1 December. The campaign focussed on 12 different fraud types in the lead up to Christmas, including but not limited to: charity fraud, courier fraud and investment fraud. A partner pack for social media was produced and distributed which contained a social media schedule and newly created digital assets. Various content pages on the Action Fraud website were refreshed with Christmas imagery to accompany the campaign messaging. This campaign has been Action Fraud's best Christmas campaign to date with 94 million impressions and 21 million reach.



NFIB

There has been a large increase in social media posts and impressions. This relates to the annual online shopping campaign which was delivered in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). The campaign reached a potential audience of 20 million individuals achieving 49 million impressions. As part of the campaign the NCSC paid for targeted advertisements on social media sites, providing a tailored message to males aged 19 – 25, who according to Action Fraud reporting are most likely to fall victim to this crime.

As a direct result there has been a 12% reduction in online shopping and auction fraud reported to Action Fraud during November and December 2022 when compared with the same period for the previous year (2021). This campaign, alongside the other work has clearly provided excellent crime prevention over the Christmas period.

Outcome 5: Building Capacity and Capability.

NLF Role: As National Lead Force we work creatively and with partners to improve capacity and capability committed to fighting fraud, both across policing and the wider system.



National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)

On the 23rd November 2022 the NPCC crime co-ordination committee considered the single cyber HMICFRS proposal that 'Policing adopt a nationally networked model for delivering the response to cybercrime'. The recommendation is that the model should be nationally led, regionally managed and locally delivered. The committee endorsed the recommendation and it now goes to the next Police Chiefs Council in February 2023.

As a result of the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) the NPCC National Cyber Crime Programme has secured £1.5million for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to fund a NPCC National Crypto Currency Team and monies towards national crypto currency licences, a tender is being prepared and will go to tender in January 2023.

National Coordinator's Office (NCO)

The team has now visited 42 of 43 forces and are now to visit the MPS in February. This is great progress and means that after the visit in February every force in England and Wales will have been subject to a physical visit during which an assessment was conducted in relation to each forces capability and capacity to deal with fraud matters. Strategic oversight, investigation, intelligence development and protect activity were the key areas for assessment. These visits were further enhanced by peer to peer Chief Officer Team engagements for each force where local matters and the national fraud landscape were discussed.

The NCO are now represented at all the Regional Threat Groups and Economic Crime Strategic Governance Groups where both forces and regions are represented.

Economic and Cyber Crime Academy (ECCA)

On Thursday 17th November 2022 the Economic and Cyber Crime Academy presented to law enforcement from across the UK, delivering a training event in collaboration with UK Finance on 'Tokenisation' (A method of dealing with sensitive data used in cyber processes). This is part of the Academy series of short 1-hour events to provide detailed knowledge on economic crime risks and emerging threats to 532 delegates online.

Proactive Economic Crime Teams

Recruitment is on-going and the teams are operating well. A current status update on recruitment is as below;

PECT	TOTAL	DS	DC/PC
ERSOU (Eastern Region)	13	2	11
WMROCU (West Midlands)	6	1	5
NWROCU (North West)	6	1	5
YHROCU (Yorks and Humberside)	10	1	6
SWROCU (South West)	10	2	7
TARIAN (Wales)	13	1	9
NERSOU (North East)	5	1	0
SEROCU (South East)	3	1	2
EMSOU (East Midlands)	0	0	0

Please note that the EMSOU PECT recruitment is underway and has seen local delays. Leicester and Northamptonshire are supplying six officers each and a further financial investigator is being recruited. A delivery manager is now in place to achieve this.

Performance is increasing. November and December saw 52 Arrests or voluntary interviews. The highest number yet across two months. November also brought 20 charges/convictions and 20 asset recovery actions taken. The highest numbers yet. December also saw 10 asset recovery actions taken. the second highest behind the November figure. It is clear these teams are having a large impact in their areas.

Conclusion

2. This update is provided as part of the regular items to the ECCC.

Kevin Ives
Detective Inspector
Staff Officer

E: Kevin.ives@cityoflondon.police.uk