

Committee: Economic and Cyber Crime Committee	Dated: 9 November 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?	1,10, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	NA
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 121-23	For Information
Report author: Kevin Ives, Staff Officer	

SUMMARY

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

- Economic Crime Briefing 2023- 19th October bringing together police forces from across the country to discuss how fraud and cyber-crime can be tackled on a local, regional and national level.
- Some good cross border work from the operational units.
- One of the biggest and most complex Fraud Operations convictions ever achieved.
- Effective communications campaigns.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

MAIN 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.

Action Fraud/National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB)

Good progress is being made on the review of National Fraud Intelligence Bureau's assessment criteria for reported fraud and cybercrime (following the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) announcement on investigating all solvable cases). Early indications are positive – suggesting National Fraud Intelligence Bureau crime disseminations are compliant with the new policy / approach.

Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting and Analysis System (FCCRAS)

The second meeting of a joint Home Office / NLF Home Office Crime Counting Rules group took place. Changes to the existing Home Office counting rules for fraud and cybercrime are being explored. This will necessitate Chief Officer and NPCC support and facilitation in due course.

Re-branding for the new FCCRAS is being discussed with relevant interested parties this will continue into the next quarter.

National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit

At the start of September the National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit (NECVCU) confirmed victim recoveries passed the £3m mark since becoming a national service, NECVCU's Victim Advisers have been instrumental in helping to recover £3,044,852 on behalf of victims.

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.

Dedicated Card and Payment Crime Unit (DCPCU)

Op Tomsl centres on a telegram threat actor who is believed to run a telegram channel named 'work' which advertises and sells 'phish kits'. Phish kits are designed to mimic legitimate websites and are used to defraud victims by capturing personal information, which are used to commit fraud. The phish kits advertised for sale include ones for UK banks, Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), the NHS, HM Revenue and Customs, crypto companies and a huge number of international banks and brands. Finland and Switzerland have both suffered losses into their millions at the hands of phish kits and DCPCU have been working with the respective countries and Europol to ensure the maker and distributor of the phish kits is disrupted along with those deploying kits in their respective countries. This is good pre-emptive work protecting UKPLC.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

Operation Creative, the PIPCU operation which removes advertising from pirate websites now has an agreement to start work with La Liga (Spanish major football league) and the Spanish police. Internet Piracy is cross border and this will result in many millions of pounds worth of disruption against international illegal streaming crime groups.

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.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

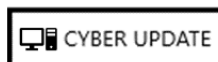
Italian authorities requested PIPCU attendance at EuroPol to discuss Operation Cassandra. The operation involves a Senegalese crime group based in Bristol, who are at the centre of importing counterfeit clothing / watches / handbags into the UK from China, which are then exported to Italy and Spain. The meeting covered links between the two cases and the best way of sharing information and evidence.

National Lead Force (NLF)

Op Sanguine - An employee invoice fraud that caused losses of £2M to the victim law firm. The trial concluded last month with two guilty verdicts. The defendants were sentenced this week to 6 years imprisonment and 5.5 years imprisonment.

Insurance Fraud Enforcement Dept (IFED)

A confiscation hearing led by CoLP Financial Investigators resulted in a confiscation order of £210k, with 3 months to pay, and 5 years in default. The confiscation includes £200k for a villa in Grand Canaria. The three suspects were involved in several insurance fraud plots, orchestrated by a known Boxer.



NPCC Cyber

There has been a run of action against cryptocurrency and dark web criminals by the Home Office funded Regional Dark Web Operational teams founded under the NPCC portfolio. These are included to show the impact of the units that exist under the portfolio. Op Roulard was an operation against a prolific drug dealer who had £400,000 in crypto seized after using the dark web to deal drugs. The second, Operation Tower was a very prolific drug dealer and online work has recovered £7million of cryptocurrency in the Leeds area and £2million in cash. This led to Op Reverse, a linked case in the Leeds area of drug dealing in the dark web and that led to a further £7million in crypto currency seized.

Outcome 4: Raise Awareness and Prevent Crime.

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

Engagement events

The Economic Crime Briefing was held on 19th October 2023 bringing together police forces from across the country to discuss how fraud and cyber-crime can be tackled on a local, regional and national level. Speakers ranged from Commander Nik Adams, AC Pete O'Doherty, MP Anthony Browne to Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Poolman from South Yorkshire Police and Rachel Herbert from the National Economic Crime

Centre (NECC), all of which brought their expert areas of knowledge to the table. The Briefing rounded off with a panel session/ Q&A.

Media Communications

Corporate Communications ran a romance fraud awareness campaign on social media. It included a media interview with LBC Radio on the topic of romance fraud. The topic also appeared on ITV's Tonight programme for a background research chat on the most prevalent types of fraud reported to Action Fraud.

ITV regional news ran a thematic story on the government's new cold calling legislation. This included a pre-filmed piece with NECVCU (National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit) and an interview with the head of Action Fraud. The piece was positive in tone and showcased NLF's focus on supporting victims of fraud and cyber-crime.

Throughout the summer there was continuing media coverage of Action Fraud's warning about the rise in mortgage fraud. The UK's cost of living crisis, and the recent hike in the bank base rate which have created an environment conducive to criminals exploiting homeowners / potential homeowners.

The Operation Vanbrugh investment fraud conviction which resulted in a 14 year sentence for the largest investment fraud ever dealt with is now being recorded as a Podcast by a major broadcaster.

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 Fraud Intelligence Bureau /NECVCU

Teams from National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and NECVCU participated in a floor walk visit by the Shadow Security Minister, Dan Jarvis MP. Mr Jarvis was interested in understanding the victim's perspective and an offer for a more in-depth briefing was made.

FCCRAS/NFIB

On Thursday 20 July Action Fraud / NFIB hosted a delegation of Tanzanian senior prosecutors and police leaders. The visit was arranged by the Foreign office and included NCA (in-country) representatives. Delegates were informed about CoLP / NLF's existing operational relationships with African nations - including Ghana and Nigeria. This work is crucial for several crime types including romance fraud which is becoming more and more prevalent and has been for some time.

National Lead Force

T/Assistant Commissioner Nik Adams visited Nigeria with the NCA and the NECC. This was focussed on building partnership to deal with frauds originating in the region. Progress was made on several crime types including the pervasive romance fraud. Future co-operation to help UK victims is now much more likely to succeed.

A management delegation attended the offices of the Fraud Policy Team at the Home Office on 3rd October to speak about fraud investigations, police powers and legislation in an operational context. They presented on the lifecycle of a fraud investigation from reporting and triage, through investigation, strategies and decision making to post trial and asset recovery. They also discussed challenges in combating fraud and potential solutions and some of the work CoLP are doing in this space and the role as National Lead. This was a good opportunity to give national fraud policy makers at the home office an insight into some of the successes and hurdles faced on the front line and it was extremely well received.

PIPCU

Officers attended the Anti-Counterfeiting World Law Summit in London, providing a presentation on PIPCU's key work.

Economic and Cyber Crime Academy

Senior Leaders from Ghanaian Law Enforcement, led by their Commissioner, attended ECCA's "Senior Leader Fraud Investigators Workshop". The ECCA and Ghanaian Law Enforcement have built strong working relationships and more workshops/training courses are anticipated going forward with 84 police officers/police staff across the force enrolled on forthcoming cyber related Courses. This followed a visit by Cmdr Adams and Director Adrian Searle from the NECC to Ghana earlier this year.

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