

# Police Scotland puts serious and organised crime in the spotlight



Over the past year, Police Scotland has put serious and organised crime in the spotlight, with significant successes in detecting and disrupting criminal networks.

Officers have tackled serious organised crime groups spanning the length and breadth of Scotland and the UK. The crime groups were capable of generating significant amounts of illegal profit at the expenses of law-abiding communities and businesses.

Although drug trafficking remains the key business of serious and organised criminals, officers from the Specialist Crime Division have reported seeing an extensive diversification into other areas of activity.

As well as significant drug and money seizures, 2015 saw the first conviction in Dundee of three men involved in a complex financial fraud known as Cuckoo Smurfing.

During the past year:

- a total of 2,107 arrests were made,
- 122 people arrested were described by officers as being principal players involved in serious and organised criminal activity.

Through investigations led by officers from the Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism units located across the country, working to support local policing officers and community priorities, a concerted effort has been made to reduce the threat posed by serious and organised crime groups. Officers

have worked closely with a wide range of partners to address the activity of serious and organised criminality.

Individuals involved in Serious and Organised Crime use violence, corruption and intimidation to target vulnerable individuals across the country and they pose a serious and significant threat to communities, individuals and businesses across Scotland.

Police Scotland and partners across the Serious and Organised Crime Taskforce are committed to disrupting and dismantling organised criminality across Scotland and work to ensure that Scotland is a hostile environment for criminal activity.

Assistant Chief Constable Ruaraidh Nicolson, Organised Crime Counter Terrorism Unit said: "Tackling serious organised criminals remains one of the highest priorities for Police Scotland and we remain determined to reduce the harm they inflict on communities.

"The work undertaken in 2015 across Scotland by Police and partners in the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce has led to significant successes not just in drug seizures but across a broad range of criminality including violence, robbery and counterfeiting. We look forward to demonstrating further significant successes in 2016. The public can help us to tackle Serious Organised Crime by reporting any suspicions they may have. We stand ready to act to keep people safe."

Lindsey Miller, Procurator Fiscal for Organised Crime and Counter-Terrorism at the Crown Office said: "The last year has shown that the combined work of the agencies on the serious organised crime taskforce is driving criminals out of business. The Cuckoo smurfing case was an international fraud on a truly vast scale. It clearly demonstrated the ability of police and prosecutors in Scotland to conduct investigations that stretch across legal jurisdictions and continents, to outsmart highly experienced organised crime groups, and to

bring to justice individuals involved in extremely complex frauds.

“We will continue to work closely with Police Scotland and the NCA to ensure that we stay one step ahead of these gangs and that we dismantle their networks and bring them to justice wherever they are found.”

Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said: “There’s no place for serious organised crime in Scotland and I’m proud of the efforts of our law enforcement agencies in taking on and taking down these criminals who are exploiting law-abiding communities and businesses.

“Since 2008, we’ve reinvested over £75 million of cash seized from these crooks, putting it back into community initiatives right across the country as part of our Cashback for Communities programme – funding 1.8 million activities for young people.

“Today’s latest figures show another successful year of operations in dismantling these criminal operations. It is clear that the concerted action taken by law enforcement agencies under the leadership and strategic direction of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce is making huge strides in stamping out these types of crimes across Scotland, making our communities safer. As we move into 2016, there will be no let-up in our efforts.”