

Police operation disrupts serious and organised crime in Scotland

A joint operation involving officers from Police Scotland, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and police forces across the UK has resulted in controlled drugs with a street value of over £25 million being recovered in Scotland in recent weeks.

Cocaine, heroin, cannabis, herbal cannabis and thousands of Etizolam tablets have been recovered and officers have arrested 59 people.

Over £7 million of laundered cash and a number of firearms, ammunition, explosives and industrial pill presses have also been seized. Six stolen cars and a stolen motorcycle have also been recovered.



ACC Angela McLaren

The operation has culminated in the takedown of Encrochat, an encrypted global communication service used exclusively by criminals, which offered a secure mobile phone instant messaging service. The company's encryption has now been cracked by an international law enforcement team. In Scotland, more than 50 warrants have been executed by hundreds of officers at addresses throughout the country.

Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable Angela McLaren said: "Police Scotland's is absolutely committed to disrupting those involved in serious and organised crime in Scotland.

"These intelligence-led proactive operations, which have been undertaken in partnership with the NCA, UK police forces and Border Force, have resulted in some of the largest seizures made by the service.

"Keeping people safe and continuing to make the country a hostile environment for those who seek to bring misery to our communities through their organised criminality remains a priority for Police Scotland.

"This underlines our commitment to the country's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy through the SOC Taskforce and our

collective determination to target those involved and strike at the very centre of their illicit operations. Criminals do not recognise borders and we have been working closely with our UK and European law enforcement partners throughout this intense period of activity.

“We recognise the impact that serious and organised crime has on individuals and communities. I would urge anyone who has information that can assist us in tackling criminality, or anyone that needs our help or support, to get in touch with Police Scotland or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.”

Jennifer Harrower, Procurator Fiscal for Specialist Casework, said: “These recent operations by law enforcement in Scotland exemplify our determination and capability to pursue those involved in serious and organised crime and halt the damage they do to our local communities.

“These seizures and arrests are the result of months of extensive work, but it doesn’t stop there. COPFS will use all the available resources to bring to justice those who seek to profit from serious and organised crime. This includes staff and prosecutors who are experts in preparing and prosecuting these kind of cases, and a raft of legislation created in Scotland specifically to target serious and organised criminals.

“Beyond this, we will seek Serious Crime Prevention Orders to provide security for communities when those prosecuted are released from prison, and pursue them for their proceeds of crime to be restored to the communities where they belong.”

Gerry Mclean, the NCA’s Regional Head of Investigations for Scotland, said: “This piece of activity in Scotland and across the UK was unprecedented in scale. It is without doubt the broadest and deepest ever operation into serious organised crime, with the people targeted at the top end of the criminal

tree.

“The NCA has worked with international partners and every single police force across the UK, but the extraordinary results we have had here is testimony to the partnership we have with Police Scotland, the support from COPFs and the strategy set by Scotland’s Organised Crime Task Force.

“By working together we have had tremendous success in penetrating organised criminal networks, seizing huge amounts of criminal cash, stopping firearms and drugs reaching our streets and protecting the people of Scotland.”