

Minutes

NPCC FELWG, MEETING HOSTED BY MERSEYSIDE POLICE. TUESDAY 30TH JANUARY, 2018.

Security classification:	Not Protectively Marked
Disclosable under FOIA 2000:	Partial
Author:	DURHAM CONSTABULARY
Force/organisation:	NPCC
Date created:	27/02/2018
Business Area:	FIREARMS
Portfolio:	FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES LICENSING WORKING GROUP
Attachments @ paragraphs:	<u>None</u>

1. **ATTENDANCE**

1.1 Present

ACC Dave Orford, Durham Constabulary, Chair
Neal Bickford, Durham Constabulary
Graham Widdecombe, Home Office
Dave Coutts, North Yorkshire Police
Bridget Hodgson, Northamptonshire Police
Nicola Murphy, PSNI
Mark Groothuis, Op. Endeavour
Martin Parker, NaBIS
Mike Cox, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Andy Kirkwood, Police Scotland
Richard Kennett, Suffolk Constabulary
Joe Cooke, Devon and Cornwall Police
Fiona Smith, West Yorkshire Police
Darren Miller, Hampshire Police
Janet Jones, Merseyside Police
Bernie Turner, Met Police
Chris Lynn, NCA
Steve Millington, West Mercia / Warwickshire
Helen Rees, DPP



1.2 Welcome

ACC Orford welcomed everyone to Merseyside Police and thanked Janet Jones for hosting the meeting.

1.3 Apologies

Roger Arditti
Jonathan Cumberbatch

2. Action Log

201 amendment - Graham Widdecombe to expedite immediate changes to form 201 to cover the 'have ever' in relation to relevant medical questions.

Completed

ACRO DM to pen ChiefsNet Letter on behalf of FELWG advising of the importance of ACRO checks where relevant, and asking for compliance on the same

Completed by DM – DO to circulate on Chiefs Net

******This part is restricted – highlights vulnerability******

Open conditions on grant - Action for DC / RK to consider form of words in relation to the same to help ensure with consistency nationally

RK paper completed for discussion with 3 options. Discussion followed about what checks police would do to ensure assessment takes place, or if it is simply done on time? DC proposes focus on the individual from the outset as opposed to time frames. MG concurs it is the competency of the individual – can this be done by increasing the competency of the FEO initial interview?

DC – where is the risk? – most accidents are with shotguns.

DO – This is a tricky area, but his view is the responsibility should sit with the individual – general opinion from FELWG is that FEO's should inform the final decision based on how satisfied they are with the individual rather than an arbitrary timeframe. Ultimately DO cannot dictate to Chief Constables how to manage their own risk, but believes the better we can understand the individual, the more we should favour open conditions.

ACTION DO to write to HO and ask for their opinion on the matter. Likewise ask the shooting associations for their views. BSSC and NGO.

Security standards document - West Mids now have ownership of this document, and will complete and circulate.

Ongoing via NaBIS / Jo Chiltern – to be shared with HO.

STRATEGY DOCUMENT DO requires all regional reps to provide narrative on where their respective regions are in relation to the FELWG strategy document

Covered in main agenda

Medical- MG to share data of homicides, highlighting where medical intervention could have prevented death

Completed

Medical All reps to reply to NB with answers required by HO in relation to how the medical scheme is working or failing for their respective regions.

Completed

FEO accreditation - JC and NB to progress work with CoP on receipt of role profiles, and on the back of agreement of content from meeting at Suffolk on 20/Sept/17

Covered in main agenda

New explosives guidance SW to re-circulate detailed guidance on POLEX re. nuances of acquire and keep licenses.

Completed

**3 Medical arrangements - update
Paper on behalf of Northumbria**

**DAVE ORFORD
FIONA SMITH**

FS presented a paper on behalf of Northumbria police in relation to medical information exchange from surgeries on the border, where there is effectively a two-tier system and want FELWG steer as to what to do next. DO – sympathetic to Northumbria police, but ultimately it is a matter for Northumbria Chief as to how he wishes to manage this.

DO gave update in relation to Lincs police, and their stance on medical screening. DO understands this approach, but believes enduring medical marker is equally as important. Likewise, Country file article mentioned. DO's advice to HO is that guidance needs to come off the fence, and acknowledge the views of Chief Constable's against 2018 operating environment. DO to speak to Policing Minister on same. DO's professional opinion is until HO do come off the fence, the approach should be each case on its merits, as there will be unintended consequences of blanket policy in the absence of statutory change – for example, timeliness, efficiency, and proportionality, but ultimately this is a matter for individual Chief Constables, based on their own operating environment, systems, communities and risk tolerance.

GW gave feedback from FELWG to Minister in relation to lack of consistency nationally.

DC reminded everyone that when the initial medical evidence group began all parties accepted pre-grant screening was a good thing, the only issue is one of cost.

JJ – Merseyside are following the Scottish / Lincs model. This is the Chief Constables direction.

SM – Goodwill is still being eroded with GP's whilst there is a lack of clear direction from HO.

Group talked about potential for efficiency slips where forces go for 100% compliance in medical screening.

DO- HO need to provide clear direction, otherwise impasse will continue.

4 Home Office updates

GRAHAM WIDDECOMBE

GW – S5 fees consultation update – advice going to ministers shortly but nothing formally agreed.

Statutory guidance – drafted, but not gone for full consultation yet.

Extensions – NFLMS updates completed, but requires SI to change – needs to go to practitioners once agreement is reached.

Weapons directive – Commission have started some working groups in relation to Brexit impacts- in its infancy.

Obsolete calibres consultation ongoing – no definitive answers as yet.

Updates in relation to .50 cal / MARS rifle – HO have had scores of FOI's in relation to this – another one for Ministers to preside over.

DO – Issue of defining / classifications will prove difficult.

5 Air weapon consultation

DAVE ORFORD

DO gave update in relation to air weapon consultation, and his responses on behalf of FELWG to HO. Believes ultimately that this is a matter of risk and cost for Ministers, but numbers would be significant.

GW – HO have had a high degree of responses – Cat Protection league very active in canvassing. DO has made similar point, that some of the misuse of air weapons is against cats.

RK – Licensing of air weapons would not have prevented the fatality in his area. He does not believe that licensing is the answer. MC – reports similar for the Bristol case.

RK- Much of the problem with air weapons is not licensing per se, but addressing perceptions – there is still a perception that air weapons are not dangerous – can we address these flaws in perception without legislation?

DC- Air weapons are the most abused weapons in circulation, but it is a nonstarter without significant resourcing.

AK- Scottish experience is mixed – it presents a significant pull on resources, huge numbers are unlicensed, and majority of those certified are by definition those that do not pose significant risk. The administration burden is huge.

MP – On a cost benefit analysis this is a waste of time. NaBIS experience of weapons unlawfully discharged is that it is overwhelmingly weapons that are unregistered – there is nothing to suggest this would not be the case if air weapons became licensed. DO concurs this is a horrible position in which to start law enforcement from.

6 FEO course / College of Policing

JOE COOKE / NEAL

JC – Gave update in relation to work with college – role profiles of FEO has been completed. Modular topics for new FEO course has been developed, and programme specifications are being completed. Lead in CoP is pushing everyone very hard to have completed specifications documenting core competencies for FEO's.

DO – really pleased with progress; Needs to go to consultation with stakeholders as soon as specs are complete. After this it is incumbent on him to launch with Chief Officers, and HMIC.

JC advises that next annual CPD even is likely to be 22nd May likely content as follows;

Home office to run a work shot
Darren Miller - NFLMS workshop
Martin Parker - Ballistics
Mark Groothuis – RFD inspection and visitors permits
Dave Orford – FEO Course.
Another work shop on legal required.

7 National Strategy – Heat map

NEAL BICKFORD

NB gave update in relation to National Strategy and forces' self-assessment. Compliance has been excellent, and we can now move to a position of reporting by exception only- this will help us inform nation threat group.

IAG / scrutiny panels is still ad-hoc – DC to look at prospect of collaborative approaches.

8 NFLMS and ecommerceupdate

**DARREN MILLER /
DAVE ORFORD**

DM gave update on NFLMS. Budgets are sound, and numerous requests for changes have been submitted, including enhancing business objects, and daily reporting function. Database is also being updated which will increase efficiency. There are also improvements in relation to Notes.

DM – Welsh language certificates need to be considered – it is doable, but will be costly – DO – HO to conclude whether this is proportionate against operational policing risks.

DM – NFLMS – performance issues being addressed – PNC service desk unaware of issues- no service calls were received – DM emphasises need to highlight poor performance. –Much of this may be to do with force IT infrastructure, rather than PNC / NFLMS per se.

**9 NaBIS,
Op. Endeavour inc paper re. Edmunds and calibres
Paper surrounding visitor's permits**

**MARTIN PARKER
MARK GOOTHUIS**

MP indicated there may be an upcoming surrender operation for dealers following the success of the national surrender.

Op Gold dust has had a successful conclusion. Coming out of the case is a formal debrief, with lessons learnt – particularly between legal, investigative and forensic teams.

Expanding ammunition – Treasury Council reinforced view that only ammunition that can be used in a pistol is covered by new legislation.

ACTION – MP to circulate findings on the same.

MG – Refers to a paper he has written on ensuring accurate descriptions of ammunition on a firearms certificate.

ACTION – REGIONAL REPS TO ENSURE THAT THIS DIRECTION IS FED TO ALL FORCES

MG Gave an update in relation to his designing a scheme/process for the accreditation of RFDs which will involve him working with the BASC and GTA. MG will be updating the Good Practice Guide for Registered Firearms Dealers to take account of the changes in respect of “Antiques and obsolete calibres” once the Home Office decide what they are going to do following the recent consultation. DO is keen to enforce standards, regardless of size – there will be some common denominators that are cross cutting regardless of size.

ACTION – MG to establish these common denominators.

10 Pistol judgement- South Wales Police

HELEN REES

HR gave an introduction to a paper in relation to a self-loading pistol judgement in South Wales, and how this might impact on the rest of the UK.

DO – Personal belief that ‘good reason’ is key to such decisions, and such ‘good reason’ needs to be considered in great depth.

MP – Has given evidence on these cases – Forestry Commission were key in relation to their Experience, but notes in this case, the Judge dismissed this, the rationale was not explained. GW – This should be every case on its merits.

ACTION – HR – Take back to SWP – establish if they are doing further, and secondly, to feedback to FC to see if they can come up with a form of words to go forward.

11 Explosives

ANDY KIRKWOOD

AK gave update in relation to explosives and a number of reminders of process which will be circulated.

ACTION – AK / SW to circulate papers accordingly.

12 Transfer Intel paper

RICHARD KENNETT

RK on behalf of Essex; Receiving forces require intel packages in relation to transferees. Essex are asking for clarity on what is being requested. DO requires all forces comply, due to lack of details on PND, it is in the interests of public safety. Police cannot sleep walk into another Ian Huntly – all forces need to support robust information exchange.

13 AOB

CL gave update in relation to Op. Calibre and thanked all forces for their compliance.

DC gave updates from practitioners meeting.

Next meeting;

Durham Constabulary HQ, TUESDAY 15TH MAY