

Minutes

NPCC FELWG, MEETING HOSTED BY D & C POLICE, WEDNESDAY 9TH JANUARY 2019.

Security classification:	Not Protectively Marked
Disclosable under FOIA 2000:	Partial
Author:	DURHAM CONSTABULARY
Force/organisation:	NPCC
Date created:	JANUARY 2019
Business Area:	FIREARMS
Portfolio:	FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES LICENSING WORKING GROUP
Attachments @ paragraphs:	<u>None</u>

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Apologies – ACC Dave Orford
Nicola Murphy, PSNI

1.2 Present

Neal Bickford, Durham Constabulary - Chair
Bridget Hodgson, Northamptonshire Police
Mark Groothuis, Op. Endeavour
Martin Parker, NaBIS
Fiona Smith – West Yorkshire Police
Mike Cox, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Joe Cooke, Devon and Cornwall Police
Nikki Leaver, Devon and Cornwall Police
Darren Miller, Hampshire Police
Tony Hill, Hampshire Police
Janet Jones, Merseyside Police
Suzanne Hassel, Merseyside Police
Bernie Turner, Met Police
Roger Arditti, Met Police
Simon Brough, National Crime Agency
Sara Williams, SWP
Jonathan Cumberbatch, Staffs Police
Ronnie Megaughin, Police Scotland
Richard Kennett, Suffolk Constabulary
Graham Widdecombe, Home Office
Michael Stuart-Buttle, Home Office



1.3 Welcome

Neal Bickford welcomed everyone to Devon and Cornwall Police HQ, and passed his thanks to Joe Cooke for hosting.

2. Action Log

Declaration of deactivated weapons; - Covered in main agenda

HUMINT presentation; - Has been cascaded - HUMINT also covered in main agenda

Dorset coroner reply; Completed - discharged

Auction houses presentation; in progress – MG working with Auction Houses – will be complete by April.

Main Agenda

College of Policing – FEO standards

JC gave update on work with the college of policing. All standards have been widely circulated, including on NCALT. The early adopter forces have begun their FEO accreditation, and work is being done with the college to complete an assessment matrix, with the main focus now being on QA and consistency across forces.

NB requested all forces discuss the learning standards and ensure plans are in place as to how they will achieve the standards. **ACTION – REGIONAL REPS TO PUSH.**

QA event planned for April time to do full launch, and ensure all forces are assessing to the same standard.

JC outlined his desire to hold a training sub-group to run in tandem with FELWG – **ACTION – Volunteers to JC please.**

JC also touched on desire to host a future CPD event in May – **ACTION – Suggest topics to JC**

Home Office updates

GW gave brief updates from HO.

.50cal dominated much of the recent debate in the commons – provision on .50cal has been removed from the bill and the HO wish to now have a broader consultation at some unknown point in the future. Debating time is at a premium due to Brexit taking up the majority of the time.

SB made some observations about seeking prohibition of weapons, and how law enforcement needs to learn from some of this – Much of the legislation is retroactive, and the NCA position was based on a normative argument not on incidents of criminality, though SB stressed the need for a more unified assessment across law enforcement groups.

MG observed that CT made a report seeking prohibition, but was somewhat surprised that the recommendation went straight in to the bill without any consultation.

Air weapons consultation has yet to draw anything conclusive.

Medical evidence pre-grant screening; - No progress - the form of words in relation to statutory guidance has not been agreed, and statutory guidance is no closer to being published, and not even got to public consultation yet. SW gave an update that all Welsh forces are now adopting the Kent model – No pre-screening will equate to no grant throughout Scotland. More and more forces are now following suit. NB challenged GW as to what the delay was – we will never have all parties being happy with the medical position, and we need to accept this. Chiefs understandably are no longer waiting on statutory guidance given the self-evident value in medical screening. RA made the point that regardless of the form of words come out with, forces are unlikely to reverse this given the proven efficacy and need for this information, ergo delays are unacceptable.

DM also sought clarity on this, and expressed nervousness that guidance may contradict his work with the single-online home, and again request clarity from the HO on the same. GW – this is in the hand of the ministers.

RM gave a very impassioned support of the scheme and advocated the Scottish model which he firmly believes has saved lives and led to a much more robust licensing regime – massive areas of risk are being uncovered, and applicants are blatantly lying – we cannot ignore this- it is essential it is progressed.

Overwhelming view from the room was that this has gone on too long, and we should no longer procrastinate waiting the severely delayed statutory guidance which may or may not come. **ACTION; NB to brief DO with a view that the FELWG position is now that pre-medical screening is now the norm, and all forces should be doing this. Should DO agree, then this should be driven through NPCC.** RK agrees, though counsels consistency in approach, all agree – **ACTION – Subgroup to consider a single methodology on the same should DO accept FELWG recommendation.**

Antiques – still awaiting processing the SI but again delayed because of Brexit.

Declaration of deactivations – Transposition of European directive. NB updates that no firearms manager saw this as a priority, and could not really understand the efficacy of this directive, particularly in light of other member states not complying, and the fact that the UK position is one of leaving the EU in little over two months' time. NB outlined real areas of risk that licensing managers wish the HO to progress, but this has never been one. Equally serious reservations exist about GDPR given we would be collecting data we would consciously not be doing anything with.

GW states HO has a letter from the European Commission outlining the fact that the UK has not complied with this; GW warns of potential fines and infraction proceedings in the absence of a medium for recording deactivated weapons. GW advises other countries are rejecting this, but regardless we need to progress this obligation. NB advises this is not DO's view, and is a waste of time. GW; - we should get the SI in place and work out the mechanics later – Room disagree completely, as once in place the onus will be on policing to implement.

DM; - this needs explicit legal advice before anything is progresses, as there is no policing purpose to recording this data. RK; - The directive does not have to involve police – why can the HO not be the agency responsible for monitoring this should they want it so badly? Conclusion – **ACTION NB will**

brief DO on the same, but in the meantime, we will not be tasking anyone within policing to address this.

MC – even if the HO put the SI in place, do we have to comply? – If not, what is the consequence?

Compensation for prohibited weapons

MSB gave an introduction in to compensation considerations for guns that will become prohibited under the new bill. – We are looking at less than 1000 guns throughout the UK, but the number of knives is anyone's guess. Group feedback was that the knives and guns need to be approached differently with different methodology.- MSB should approach the lead for knife crime in relation to that aspect of the bill. Re the guns, all forces will happily comply in contacting the owners, but require early notification of the numbers, and people concerned, in addition to a comprehensive explanation of compensation procedures. **ACTION; MSB to produce guidance re. compensation, and comms plan for all forces, so they may approach recovery on a by-appointment basis – the earlier notification the better.**

RK advises that whatever comms plan is drawn up, that it also considers guidance on disposal – a previous scheme resulted in forces holding prohibited weapons for years and years due to the absence of this consideration in the past – **ACTION – MSB to ensure this is considered.**

NABIS update

MP gave a position on the LP50, and his view that it was not self-indexing as per the act.

Air bows continue to be discussed, but his view is that it is not a firearm.

Finally the Elon Musk device 'not a flamethrower' is indeed not a flame thrower according to the Met's laboratory, though this opinion has yet to be tested in court. MP would not consider this as 5-1(b).

Op. Endeavour

MG updates – good practice to firearms dealers has been circulated, including deactivation.

MG gave the most recent stats on lost or stolen and offers any FELWG member the opportunity to be included in this circulator. MG advises that NFLMS has a glitch which affects recording, using the status 'lost / stolen' – this should not be used. **ACTION MG to link with DM re. designing this out of NFLMS.**

ACTION ALL FORCES TO UPDATE LOST OR STOLEN GUNS ON NFLMS WITHIN 7 DAYS AT MOST – REGIONAL REPS PLEASE CASCADE THIS DIRECTION.

MG updates he is finalising a checklist for RFD inspections.

NFLMS update

DM – gave update on single online home – now launched in the three force trial areas – soft launch in Hampshire, TVP and the Met – uptake is positive, with an even split between grant and renewals.

DM also updates on the

NCA Updates inc Supply conf.

SB gave update in relation to the recent NCA European supply conference. This had a deep undertone of Brexit considerations. SB advises that all parties re-enforced the reciprocal agreement of intelligence sharing in relation to European Supply, and was assured that regardless of how Brexit pans out, he believes this reciprocity will continue.

******THE NEXT PART OF NCA UPDATE IS RESTRICTED FROM WIDER CIRCULATION AS IT HIGHLIGHTS OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY AND VULNERABILITY******

ACTION; All to email NB with any other BREXIT considerations.

Regional meetings

NB appealed to all regional reps to ensure continued robust regional meetings to facilitate the two way flow of information from FELWG , and ensuring key messages are landed. **ACTION – All to ensure key messages are delivered and robust regional forums better inform the two way flow between National FELWG and individual forces.**

Modular rifle systems paper

FS presented a query raised on behalf of NYP in relation to the accurate / best method for recording modular rifle systems with multiple serial numbers on NFLMS. **ACTION MG to prepare a paper of advice for all forces re. best practice.**

Practitioners plus 11(6) proposal

RA presented a paper submitted via practitioner’s forum in relation to 11(6) applications, to establish if FELWG would support this universally. Whilst noting this is a non-stat form, no one took exception to this proposal, save for a couple of minor tweeks suggested by TH and MC, and MG advocates adding a declaration to say that the shooter is not a prohibited person. **ACTION – TH and MG to link with RA re. the improvements – RA to brief practitioners on the same, then inform all forces that FEWLG supports this medium.**

AOB

Next meeting –Birmingham- Lloyd house, date tbc.