

Minutes

NPCC FELWG, DURHAM (VIRTUAL), MONDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2021.

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Attachments @ paragraphs:	<u>None</u>

1. **ATTENDANCE**

1.1 Apologies –

Neal Bickford (Durham Constabulary)
Matt Perfect (NCA)
Martin Parker, (NABIS)
Karl Eenmaa (South Wales)

1.2 Present

Dave Orford, Durham Constabulary - Chair
Umberto Cuzzo, Durham Constabulary
Terry France, Durham Constabulary
Mark Groothuis
Ken Mcintosh, Mowbray Partners
Zoey Evans, TVP
Jonathan Cumberbatch, Staffs Police
Alisson Higgins, Police Scotland
Darren Miller, Hampshire Police
Chris Downs, Met Police
Louise Seabrook, Eastern Police Region
Tony Hill, Hampshire Police
Bernard Lane, Home Office
Suzanne Hassall, Merseyside Police
Joe Cooke, Devon and Cornwall Police
Bridget Hodgson, Northamptonshire Police
Mathew West, Scottish Government
Dennis Willmer – Home Office



Graham Widdecombe – Home Office
Fiona Smith, West Yorkshire Police
Sara Williams, South Wales Police
Michelle Moore, D & C Police
Ian Head – NABIS
Richard Stant – NCA
Janet Jones - Merseyside

2. Action Log

DO – Welcome and opened the meeting, thanking those present for attending. Outstanding actions to be covered as part of the main meeting.

Main Agenda

Lead Update

DO gave updates on;

FELWG Staffing structure –

D/Supt Umberto Cuozzo -	will lead on intel and PND matters
Supt Neal Bickford -	will continue to link in with the practitioner groups
Insp Terry France –	will manage FELWG admin and Home Office matters.

DO has provided a DFELWG response to the Home Office to their circular about HVM's and Miniature Rifle Ranges.

FEO Training Package

DO introduce KM from Mowbray Partners to give an update on the FEO training package.

The national launch of the package was imminent. The anticipate cost being £2.5k which will CMI accreditation as well as access to the CPD platform and blogs from MG relating to legislation changes or other related topics.

Group discuss several points raised;

The annual cost for the on-going access is anticipated to £500 but this isn't finalised and Mowbray Partners would like to have contact with FELWG to see how it can be made interesting and people make best use of the platform.

CoP accreditation. CoP involved from the beginning following the HMICFRS inspection that referenced the need for accredited training for FEOS. The syllabus has been through the CoP quality assurance process. CoP have seen the training package and are comfortable with its means of delivery. CoP accredited – the training syllabus that the Mowbray course is based on has been seen and meets their accreditation standards.

Should another provider decide they want to deliver FEO training then it is up to FELWG to say 'yes' as was the case with Mowbray Partners.

Assessment – the course will provide the training with an assessment pass mark of 90%. At the minute there is no national standard for the practical assessment of candidates. Mowbray Partners would like to develop this so there are agreed competencies or a place within the platform to record these and work towards a national standard and consistencies.

DO – This isn't the silver bullet that fixes the FEO training its just 1 part and gives FELWG governance that previously was a local process. The approval of this course and subsequent training will go through FELWG.

Practitioners Update

TF – nothing significant report. Thanks from various shooting groups around how forces have been managing the COVID restrictions. Also, from the shooting groups, thanks and appreciation of the management of the surrender scheme and the timely turnaround of money from the Home Office.

Home Office Update

Antiques

DW – The start of the forthcoming changes date back to 2015 due to their being a lack of a definition and this was being abused. The forthcoming definition is based closely on the pre-existing date of 1st September 1939 with reference to obsolete propulsion systems and calibres.

Anyone who owns or possess one of these weapons will no longer be exempt from certification. If they wish to retain the weapon then it will need to be held on a certificate. This process will be the same what is in existence ie suitability & security checks etc are still required.

From the implementation of the new changes there will be a 6 month period of time to allow people to licence, surrender or otherwise dispose of their guns. This time frame is designed to reflect the current COVID restrictions.

Should someone commence their application before the end of this 6 month window then they will be covered even if the application hasn't been finalised.

Don't know for definite how many guns these changes will effect but it is estimated to be approximately 26K.

At the minute we are about 1 month away from the commencement to the changes.

Security – generally level 3 security but if only a couple are held then level 2 plus any suitable conditions.

The communications for these changes will be a light touch with a request to forces to keep a record of the guns that get licenced, the applications that are refused, guns that are surrendered etc so the numbers can be collated ideally at the 3 months point and then at the end of the 6 month window.

Group discussion

Communication with shooting groups – will this be provided or will HO be contacting them directly, especially considering the ongoing Offensive Weapons Surrender scheme?

Communication is very challenging because the exact number of guns and who has them is relatively unknown and there isn't 2 or 3 governing bodies that would cover those who are effected by the changes. There will be a HO circular that will have a plain English summary, HO will provide some words to the shooting & trade groups, which can be used. If a force should add to this via website etc then HO more than happy to provide some words.

Approach to dealers including RFD's and antique dealers?

In both cases, if they want to continue to trade these previously antique firearms then they will need to be registered as S5 Dealers.

Surrender Scheme

BL provided an update – Thank you to everyone who has or is involved in the Offensive Weapon Surrender & Compensation scheme.

940 rifles and a considerable amount of ancillary equipment handed in.

There have been approximately 5K bladed articles handed in as well.

Scheme will close on the 9th March will all compensation paid out by the end of that month.

Misuse Data - Data attached

ZE – Thank you for all of the data provided. There are still forces who aren't providing any please can people encourage forces to provide data.

Reporting has increased since 2019 onwards.

Occupation column to be added to the form by ZE.

AH – reference recent loss of life in Scotland following terminal diagnosis. Subsequent concerns raised about the lack of markers on LH's medical records and therefore missed opportunities for intervention.

DO – This featured strongly in the negotiations between HO and the medical profession. The MOU between the HO and the Medical profession and their (medical profession) undertaking was their 'best endeavours'. When the statutory guidance comes out then this can be referenced and the question asked "Please explain what your best endeavours were in this circumstance?" This was put in place to cover the vast variety in GP practices and their structure. Excellent work by ZE some simple and meaningful stats.

Home Office

GW – Consultation has finished think 13K responses work through these and then decide with ministers what the next steps will be.

New Certificate – work on going around a new certificate and hopefully issued very soon. Just some work being finished with the certificate number on every page.

NFLMS – discovery project, consultant company have been asked to look into the next generation of the system. They will be canvassing people for their opinions and what the future needs to provide and hopefully incorporate Scotland into the next generation.

DO – It is important that the strategic requirement for NFLMS are more than just the user requirements for the firearms enquiry officer. Issues for the future are making best use of technology and the data within NFLMS and make better decisions and better target who our FEO's see in person.

GW – Statutory Guidance, conversations have been taking place between the shooting groups, FELWG and the HO around the wording.

BL – HO, just about set on the final text of the guidance. Made some big changes including the applicant going to their GP or another registered GP who has access to their records. The guidance will include a standard GP proforma to try and ensure some consistency. A lot of the shooter requirements have been met. The minister is very comfortable to where the process is, there are still some technical issues to sort but very close to finalisation. In parallel to this the HO are working with the Department of Health and Social Care around getting the enduring marker onto the IT system used by GP's so that the risk of the GP not seeing it is greatly reduced. This is linked to the request from the shooting community to move to a 10 year license, which ministers are relatively comfortable with provided the marker works. There will probably be a 12 month period to test it and make sure it's working before any big changes are made.

Best Use of Intel - PND

UC – Using intelligence to best manage risk, from both a criminality and vulnerability point of view. Every force is sharing their intel via PND. This includes crime, intel, custody (including images) and child protection and domestic abuse which amounts to an excess of 4 billion intel records. As part of this sharing PND maps OCG's which equates to approximately 12.5K groups and 97K nominals. These 4 billion records are going to help 'us' manage our license holders and RFD's in particular if we move to a 10 year license. There have been a couple of pilots within forces across the country around FLU's to develop a safeguarding capability built upon automated technology. A lot of learning came out of these pilots both from an operational and system perspectives. There are two work streams that are part of this evolution – one being lead through FELWG via a pilot force and the other is working with the NFLMS and PND leads and the NCA to look links and associations with OCG's and County Lines. The second will probably by the means of a working group to look at a shared vision which feeds the tactical and strategic requirements.

JR – requesting further information from UC so the request for a pilot force could be fed into the regions. Also, she would make enquiries to see if Merseyside would consider being nominated?

UC – will provide further information to anyone who would like it via his email address.

NABIS

IH – No update

NCA

RS – delivered Firearms Threat Leadership presentation including an overview of the multi-agency / partnership Prevent Board.

DO – FELWG have given feedback to the NCA around their strategic assessment products as well as the threat picture. These then feed in at ministerial level and it's important that we are adequately able to describe the threat so that we reduce anyone being put in harm's way and to make best use of our FEO's by reducing 'wasted time'. It's key that we work together!

NFLMS

DM – work ongoing at Hendon to move everything onto the cloud and is challenging as daily business is ongoing around the move.

Single Online Home – work has not started to get

New License – previously mentioned by GW, including the page number issue, looking to go live in March.

Business Objectives Work upgrade work has started. The team will be contacting forces soon to discuss the reports. The reports are critical and a lot of people use them, they won't be getting removed and will be getting migrated into the new system.

Discovery Project – 1st step towards a business case around funding and a clear direction once everything is moved into the virtual world. This work is also supported by the Serious/Organised team with their work in the wider firearms world.

ZE – Single Online Home - website consistency but concerns about the lack of information around Firearms Licensing compared to other forces. This lack of information is creating additional work for FLU's having to manage phone calls and enquiries.

DM – will feed into the Single Online Home team.

DO – It's important that there is liaison between NFLMS and FELWG, hence DM looking after the user group. The work done in this space by DM has been brilliant and you've done a lot of work with the ICT company. The stabilising of things is down to the grip you've had on things which has allowed other work to be achieved - personally from myself and Neal (NB) thank you for the work you've done!

DO – There is still a requirement for the work to be done and a replacement for DM. Now is the time to speak to DM to understand the work involved as well as the benefits of doing the role. If anyone is interested please contact myself.

Explosives

FS – There have been 4 x UN no's and descriptions added to NFLMS. All the UN numbers are already there – absolutely no requirement for anyone to add additional UN numbers. Should this happen again contact will be made by myself directly to the force involved and they will have to recall the explosives certificate making it invalid.

Single Online Home – Explosives Licensing isn't as it should be. I will be speaking to the Single Online Home team to rectify the discrepancies.

Acquire / Acquire & Keep – HO looking to looking possibly altering the licensing process. This in its infancy so no ideas what is proposed or may be proposed to the regulations.

AOB

Remote Visits

FS – West Yorkshire have purchased the GoodSam platform. There is a section that is similar to FaceTime and WYP are going to conduct a 3 month trial for all renewals unless it's a grant. Ask if anyone else will be trailing it.

LS – Yes and will be potentially looking to do a virtual visit for grants.

AH – Scotland have been using a different video conference facility and have been doing remote renewals March 2020. The feedback is positive and we're more than content with the process. Not used for grants.

DO – In line with previous FELWG's, if forces have the technical capability to use an app or similar then why wouldn't you and in terms of getting backlogs etc down around renewals. Grants, need to see more evidence irrespective of any existing requirements. I am happy to have conversations with individual CC's managing the risk and how satisfied can people be when managing the risk. When the 1968 Act was written then no one would have envisaged anything like this. Not that long ago we did telephone renewals and we moved on from there and I'm not against moving forward but if people are stepping outside of certain lines people need to fully understand what they are stepping outside of.

CPD Event

BH – CPD event this year, either in person or virtually?

DO – This will be an agenda item for the next FELWG meeting. Please consult within the regions and let us know what you need. Due to the leave restrictions etc this year, my preference would be we agree a 1 day virtual session.

Security Manual

BH – Can an addendum or similar be added to make it easier to track any changes?

DO – TF to pick up the action.

FEO Training Course

The cost for the FEO training package is very expensive and would cost Hampshire £25K to train 10 FEO's.

DO – More than happy for someone else wants to deliver the CoP syllabus. Mowbray Partners are the only provider at the minute and if their market research falls flat and forces don't take up on the training that is for them to cope with. Equally, if there is an alternative force who wants to provide this training, then bring it to FELWG and we'll check it against the syllabus. I don't endorse this company and I don't say their pricing is the cheapest you'll ever get. I would like to have two or three other providers who are able deliver the training, at the moment we're in the virtual world albeit there are still some people who prefer to interact and do face to face training. The occupational competency will always be a sign off for each force and for the future we can build on that and make it more standardised across all forces.

