

Prevent

OPERATION NICOLE

ACPO Prevent Delivery Unit



Operation Nicole is a table top exercise that has been developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Prevent Delivery Unit in conjunction with independent facilitators. It is predominantly aimed at Muslim communities and specifically designed to break down barriers between police and communities by promoting an understanding of how counter-terrorism operations work.

Operation Nicole supports the *Prevent* strand of the Government's CONTEST strategy specifically in relation to one of its objectives, 'to increase the resilience of communities to violent extremists'.

The table top initiative is hosted by a police force and delivered by independent facilitators using a storyboard style format based on a realistic counter terrorism incident. Members of the community attending the exercise are divided into individual groups and invited to adopt the role of the police during the exercise. To help them make decisions as the 'incident' unfolds, they are also advised on operational and legislative guidance from a counter terrorism senior investigating officer and a police tactical firearms advisor.

Whilst Operation Nicole has been designed to provide communities with an understanding of the police response when managing counter terrorism incidents, it just as importantly provides police officers attending the event with an insight into Muslim community concerns and the impact that counter terrorism operations can have. It also addresses some of the myths that surround counter terrorism work.

Although other similar interactive exercises are aimed at all communities, Operation Nicole takes a different approach. The initiative is specifically developed for Muslim communities and feedback during the event has helped to

shape the exercise and its content. While we know that terrorism isn't solely a problem for these communities at this time the most significant threat to the UK comes from Al-Qaida groups or Al-Qaida influenced ideology who purport to act in the name of Islam. Therefore counter terrorism operations can disproportionately affect members of Muslim communities. Operation Nicole provides a safe space for community members to discuss their concerns.

Operation Nicole is delivered by police forces across the country and receives positive feedback from those attending. Every event is evaluated and learning from the initiative indicates that it has enhanced understanding between the police and their communities.

Operation Nicole is one of a number of similar initiatives that have been developed for a wider audience to raise awareness and encourage debate about counter terrorism policing. Depending on the local community requirement, the format could be adapted in future to cover different audiences or other forms of extremism.

By recognising, engaging and listening to our local communities, we can all contribute to tackling the challenge from violent extremism.

For further information about Operation Nicole, email Prevent@acpo.pnn.police.uk or call 0207 084 8776.