

Minutes

NPCC FELWG, DURHAM (VIRTUAL), FRIDAY 9TH JULY 2021.

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

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Apologies –

Neal Bickford (Durham Constabulary)
Matt Perfect (NCA)
Zoey Evans (TVP)

1.2 Present

Dave Orford, Durham Constabulary - Chair
Umberto Cuzzo, Durham Constabulary
Terry France, Durham Constabulary
Dennis Willmer, Home Office
Graham Widdecombe, Home Office
Ian Head, NABIS
Paul Morris – NCA
Ewan Henderson – Police Scotland
Lesley Gillespie – Police Scotland
Jonathan Cumberbatch, Staffs Police
Chris Downs, Met Police
Louise Seabrook, Eastern Police Region
Tony Hill, Hampshire Police
Bridget Hodgson, Northamptonshire Police
Fiona Smith, West Yorkshire Police
Sara Williams, South Wales Police
Michelle Moore, D & C Police
Janet Jones – Merseyside Police
Cat Starkey – Warwickshire Police
Darren Deex – Essex Police
Ben Ellen – City of London



Andy Killmurray – Gloucestershire
Mark Groothuis, Mowbray Partners
Ken Mcintosh, Mowbray Partners
Tim Madgwick, Mowbray Partners

2. **Action Log**

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was held virtually and DO welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Actions & Minutes

The minutes were agreed to be a true representation and the following two actions were discharged or carried forward:

A letter to be sent from DCC Orford to exec officers re FEO Training – **discharged**

A breakdown of the latest amendments to the Security Handbook on the HO website – **On-Going, TF to progress**

Main Agenda

Lead Update

DO gave updates on;

The next FELWG meeting is to be held this coming autumn in Durham and it is hoped that people will be able to attend in person.

DO will be stepping down as portfolio lead and hope to be able to announce a successor in the autumns meeting.

Once a successor has been agreed then it is hoped a transition period will take place to maintain good practice and relationships with partners.

FEO Training Package

Mowbray Partners gave an update on the FEO training package:

Since the training was launched there have been several forces who have signed up and have completed the package. The feedback from those forces is positive and supportive of the different learning styles.

Mowbray Partners are happy to present to anyone or provide a ‘taster’ of the course to assist forces in deciding to sign up for the training.

The reference part of the platform has been updated and added to with several reports, stated cases and legislative updates to provide a single point of reference for people.

Recent environmental scanning has shown that the majority of forces fall into 3 categories 1) those who are using Mowbray Partners, 2) Those who have adopted the current CoP standards and then validate via their own CPD & 3) Staff who attended a police facilitated course several years ago and no following CPD.

How valid any 'old' training is, is down to the individual Chief Officer.

Practitioners FELWG Update

Starter Pistols – Through environmental scanning the Metropolitan Police identified there were a number of S5 weapons within their area which were being held as 'Starting Pistols'. Across the Metropolitan Police area 60% of firearms discharges were by S5 Handguns. Further research into their LH's showed 12 individuals legitimately certificated holders of starter pistols. Further work with these people highlighted in most cases the security arrangements were 'poor'.

Conversations with UK Athletics have taken place and advice has been given around storage, transportation, and overall security. There has been an agreed standard of security which is a lift from the level two and three of The Security Handbook. There has also been an ask that during transportation the guns are stored within a safe – rather than in a motorcycle top box as someone was currently doing.

There is a further meeting with UK Athletics this coming autumn where further discussion will be taking place, including the move away from 'traditional' pistols and the use of electronic devices.

Explosives – Nothing to update.

Practitioners Update

Antiques – the current changes in legislation and on going 'window' to allow certification or surrender hasn't yielded many submissions into FLU's. Shooting groups are concerned that many people will miss the boat or fail to get them on certification before the window closes in September.

Across the meeting there had been no significant increase in demand because of the changes, it was felt that greater or better placed comms / publicity by HO would help inform those who may be affected.

COVID – now that restrictions are changing the shooting fraternity are hoping that things will get back to normal and the turn around times for applications will reduce. Everyone is grateful for the work done during this time especially those forces who have embraced technology and adapted to the imposed restrictions.

Home Office Update

Antiques – Firstly, thank you to everyone who responded to the recent email enquiring into the number of enquiries that have been made into each forces FLU. There was always a second bout of publicity planned for the halfway point of the transitional period. The initial message hasn't or didn't land, this has prompted conversations with other partners to piggyback their successful campaigns as well as a rethink of the messaging. Better use of 'modern' means to get the message to the general public not just the shooting groups or collectors who should have received or head of the changes via their respective communities.

Antiques – in the original changes there were some calibres that were missed. These have been identified and an amendment is being put through Parliament to cover the gaps. There are a small

number of firearms effected but this amendment should be in place by the end of the transitional period. In turn not impacting upon FLU demand.

Consultation – there were over 12K responses to the recent consultation paper and the HO are currently categorising the responses. Once these have been logged and analysed then they will be presented to ministers.

Fees – Concern about mixed messages from HO regarding making the payment of fees. Following discussion – it was established that there is one purchase order per invoice.

New Certificate – following the initial teething trouble upon going live the new certificate is working ok. Concerns were raised regarding the ability to mark or highlight variations. The previous certificate allowed the use of symbols to identify individual conditions on each weapon should multiples be listed. This acknowledged and will be fed back to be looked at.

Statuary Guidance – the current amendments are still awaiting ministerial sign off. Once this has been completed, they will be published ASAP – no dates or time scales.

Best Use of Intel - PND

PND Pilot with Northants – to date there have 2 x meetings with CGI and Northants. At present work is ongoing to establish the search criteria for all the 10K LH's the belong to Northants. This is a joint discussion between CGI, Northants, NFLMS & FELWG. Amendments to the current PND Part A document have been submitted to allow the required changes in the current structure for this pilot. Should these be agreed and implemented it will allow for the industrialisation of the process to work on a national scale. It is hoped the pilot will go live Aug / Sept '21.

It was acknowledged that this pilot and the forthcoming guidance amendments are steps towards a 10yr certificate.

CUF Update

It was recognised that and supported the importance of the PND pilot with Northants to enable the best use of intelligence and information for both the lawful and unlawful use of firearms.

NABIS Update

PowerPoint presentation

NCA & Prevent Board Update

The Prevent board is building links with the 'lawful' community.

Currently the national picture is showing a reduction in thefts relating to lawfully held firearms, this is in line with the downward trend in inquisitive crime. It is anticipated that the COVID regulation changes will trigger an upturn in criminality, unknow if this will impact upon firearms thefts etc.

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

NFLMS

There is requirement for a lead force for this project. Durham Constabulary will pick up the project in the immediacy, but a longer-term lead is required?

The current 'next generation' of NFLMS is currently part of a Home Office spending review along with NABIS and NCA projects. A recent Firearms Data Systems Board discussed the NFLMS options going forward. It is felt that there is a requirement for representation from both NABIS and NCA at the meeting.

Action – NFLMS NUG to be arranged

AOB

- Forestry Commission employees who are crown servant being in possession of firearms:

Should be managed on an individual case by case basis. It is the individual to justify their possession outside of the workplace and this should be checked with the Commission to establish if it is in the course or their employ.

Intel to be submitted and fed into PND to highlight the individual is a Forestry Commission employee.

- Project Artemis:

For those persons who are part or on the project to be allowed an overarching access to every piece of surveyed land.

It was felt that the project could be acknowledged upon a certificate however the individual would still need to satisfy the criteria for the land on which they wished to shoot.

Target Ranges that are utilising the Firearm Certificate – Condition 1:

A trend of certificate holders setting up ranges on land and inviting people to come and shoot, using the Condition 1 to legitimise the activity.

Also, concern that people are abusing the term 'zeroing' when shooting at such "events.

Following group discussion, it was noted that any group of certificate holders can get together and form their own shooting club, they must be a member of a Home office approved club and shoot safely.

The concern is the public safety aspect – any issues or concerns regarding the safety of the group would be enough to terminate the 'shoot' and consider revocation.

There would also be the requirement that the firearms used are inline with the good reason and any condition on the respective license(s). The permission and conditions of the land being used would also have to be complied with.

- **Club Administration:**

If a club intends to have its own firearms and the application is to the local FLU for the area in which the guns will be stored.

If the club has no storage facilities, then the application should go to the FLU for the area in which the club principle operates.

There is also that there is professional courtesy should there be cross boarded issues.

- **Burglar alarms to be made mandatory for holders of firearms:**

The Security Handbook references that it should be applied with full regard for the individual circumstances and the type and location of the premises subject to any recommendations. Any additional security or variation should be managed locally and need to be captured to show the rational, justification and proportionality of the decision.

Next Meeting

October 2021 – date to be confirmed