



# THE BULLETIN

NABIS NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS  
AND PARTNERS | DECEMBER 2011

## WELCOME TO BULLETIN, THE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

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## Introduction from Head of NABIS

One of the key roles of NABIS is to have an oversight of the 'bigger picture' so far as the criminal use of firearms is concerned. By looking at the totality of gun crime that is occurring across the country, new threats can be identified, significant new sources of firearms can be picked up at an early stage and strategies and tactics developed to counter the problem.

The unprecedented events that occurred in August of widespread rioting and looting, presented the police service with one of its biggest challenges in living memory. It has posed many questions that various reviews and enquiries will seek to answer. One question that we have been looking at is the part that firearms played in the disorder.

What has been widely reported is that the incident that sparked the initial disturbance in Tottenham was the shooting of Mark Duggan during a police operation carried out by the Metropolitan Police Service. Whilst the full circumstances of this incident are still to emerge, what is known is that an illegal firearm was recovered during the course of this operation.

The recovery of this firearm was a prelude to a number of instances where illegal firearms played a part in the disorder. In Birmingham shots were fired at police officers trying to quell a disturbance near a pub, whilst shortly afterwards further shots were actually fired at the force helicopter – thankfully the shots missed on both occasions. In Lambeth, London police officers on a cordon were approached by a man who pointed a sub-machine gun type firearm at them. The man who was wearing a balaclava walked away without discharging the weapon.



In Leeds, a fatal shooting occurred in the Chapeltown area following a family dispute. Disorder continued in the area for three days following this shooting. In Croydon, at the peak of the trouble a man in a car was shot dead after the vehicle he was in was stopped by two other vehicles.

In the aftermath of the riots, when the offenders were being arrested and their houses searched a number of guns and various types of ballistic material were recovered.

NABIS has developed an intelligence report concerning the known extent of firearm usage during the disorder, which will be circulated in the near future. It puts the issue into context and is an example of how understanding the 'bigger picture' is a key function of NABIS. It is one that we are committed to delivering in order to help inform the appropriate operational response.

**Det. Chief Supt. Paul James**  
Head of NABIS

## NABIS funding update

In September ACPO Crime Business Area, Led by Chief Constable Jon Murphy, agreed the continuation of funding for NABIS. The business case presented by Chief Constable Brian Moore, ACPO Lead for Violence and Public Protection, outlined a continuation of funding held at current levels for 2012/13 of £1.65m. The business case also allowed for a pro-rata budget for 2013/14 to allow NABIS to transition to the new National Crime Agency (NCA).

This pro-rata funding for 2013/14 will mean forces will contribute to NABIS for the months NABIS still operates as an ACPO organisation, before the service moves over to the NCA. There was however some discussion as to whether ACPO may continue to

support NABIS financially after its transition. This will now be a matter for the NABIS Senior Management Team (SMT) and the NCA Programme Team to pursue as the NCA programme develops.

The funding renewal comes with the caveat that NABIS will need to make efficiency savings of 5% in each year during the agreed 2 year funding cycle. The NABIS SMT will continue to work hard to make these savings whilst ensuring minimal impact on the service.

## Launch of NABIS Scotland

NABIS Scotland was launched on 18 November 2011. A NABIS Hub has been launched at Strathclyde Police Force Headquarters, which will carry out all the ballistic examinations for Scottish forces. Revised guidance in respect of ballistic submissions and associated intelligence has already been produced and disseminated to Scottish police forces and training has already taken place with identified individuals at the Scottish Police College.

As well as launching NABIS in Scotland, the event will also raise awareness and increase knowledge and understanding of the system and the associated processes. Head of NABIS, Detective Chief Superintendent Paul James attended the launch along with NABIS Lead Scientist Martin Parker.



## Consultation Announced for Change in Legislation Relating to Possession of a Firearm with Intent to Supply

The Home Secretary, Theresa May has announced a consultation to look at creating a new offence of possession of a firearm with intent to supply, lengthening the prison sentence for supplying guns to gang members and lengthening the sentence for illegally importing firearms from 10 years to life imprisonment. There has been concern amongst the police and law enforcement agencies that a number of weapons are being traded between gangs and used in different attacks throughout the country.

NABIS and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF) portfolio welcome the announcement. ACPO lead for criminal use of firearms, Assistant Chief Constable Susannah Fish said:

"Intelligence from crime scenes and operational experience shows that frequently, the same firearm is used in multiple incidents. These weapons are obtained from middlemen who loan or lease these firearms to other criminals. The police service has given evidence to Parliament showing how an offence of possession with intent to supply firearms would directly target these middlemen who cause a disproportionate level of harm in our communities.

"Police forces continue to work with the National Ballistics Intelligence Service to trace and track illegal firearms and impede criminals' access to weapons to keep communities safe from harm. This consultation is to be welcomed as a positive step towards further disrupting the supply of illegal firearms."

NABIS has been the driving force responsible for lobbying the Government to make these recommended changes to the law. The loophole was first raised 3 years ago and since then NABIS has taken every opportunity to push the case for legislative change.

Head of NABIS, Detective Chief Superintendent Paul James said:

"We desperately need these law changes because people who hold or stockpile weapons for criminals to use can currently only be charged with straightforward possession of a firearm, or in some circumstances with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life. The latter charge is notoriously difficult to prove as it puts the onus on the prosecution to prove a specific intent to endanger life and often means that juries are reluctant to convict.

"Investigators keep telling us that we need a change in the law but it is only since the introduction of NABIS that we have been able to establish the evidence base that is necessary to persuade the Government to bring in new legislation. The pattern of use of firearms, the linking of cases by ballistic material and the identification of inferred weapons were all key factors in influencing Ministers."

The announcement on 1 November was part of wider Government activity looking at gangs and gang culture.

Link to HASC report  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmhaff/447/44702.htm>

## Evidential Microscopy

The NABIS Northern and Central Hubs are able to offer an evidential service for comparison microscopy.

This means that any investigation where a statement is required to prove that a bullet has been discharged from a weapon can be provided by NABIS. Similarly, where a statement is required detailing connections between bullets recovered at different crime scenes, or the identification of the number and type of weapons used in an incident, can also be provided by NABIS.

All other evidential services will continue to be carried out by external forensic providers.

This new service will ensure that forces continue to receive high quality microscopy services and remove

the need for work to be duplicated. There is no additional charge for the service meaning there will also be savings for the forty-one forces using the hubs. Evidential Microscopy was used in Operation Bridge, the Cumbrian shootings carried out by Derrick Bird. Video evidence was used to describe Bird's two guns, and demonstrate how they were loaded and discharged.

Martin Parker, Lead Scientist for NABIS said:

"This service forms part of the subscription from forces and as such it is something that they need to be aware of, so they can use it when their case reaches court. It provides a jury with evidence of how a weapon was used and how it was linked to other crime scenes in a manner that is easy to understand."



## Operation Lapworth - Eight people given jail sentences totaling 100 years.

Eight people have been jailed for their part in the smuggling of illegal firearms into the UK from America. Operation Lapworth, an investigation led by West Yorkshire Police supported by NABIS and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) began in July 2010 when two parcels, destined for two addresses in Bradford, were intercepted by the UK Border Agency at East Midlands Airport.

West Yorkshire Police's Organised Crime Group were alerted to the packages, and search warrants were executed at the two addresses where nine people were arrested. Three further arrests were made several days later at Manchester Airport as the individuals disembarked from a flight from Morocco.

Over a 12 month period the gang was involved in smuggling a total of 13 firearms into the country, concealing them within 27 packages containing electrical equipment including DVD players and portable radios. Two of the convicted men were the main co-ordinators of the conspiracy. They ordered a Taser gun from an American 'auction style' website. They went on to purchase guns from the seller who was based in Texas, he would break down the gun parts and conceal them within the consignments destined for addresses across Bradford. Officers liaised with the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) who arrested the seller and two women in Texas for their involvement in the importation. All three have since been dealt with by the American authorities.



Matt Lewis, Head of Knowledge and Communications for NABIS, said:

"NABIS has developed the most comprehensive knowledge base of illegal firearms and gun crime intelligence of any country in the world. Our ability to trace, track and forensically examine illegal firearms was central to the success of this investigation.

"This complex investigation has demonstrated the value of NABIS to UK Policing. By using the forensic, intelligence and knowledge capabilities of our unique service NABIS was able to successfully assist West Yorkshire Police in this international investigation.

"Gun crime has a devastating impact on victims and their families. NABIS will continue to work with partners such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), UK police forces and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to keep illegal firearms out of the country and keep our communities safe from harm."

Full details of those convicted can be found on the NABIS website:  
[www.nabis.police.uk/pressarea.asp](http://www.nabis.police.uk/pressarea.asp)

## NABIS to become an integral part of the Senior Investigating Officer Development Programme (SIODP)

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has recently revised the Senior Investigating Officers (SIO) training programme. The Detective Inspector course run at Wyboston between the 17th October and 4th November was the first to be held in the new format.

Head of NABIS, Detective Chief Superintendent (DCS) Paul James provided an input on NABIS to this inaugural course. This consisted of providing the background to the development of NABIS and an oversight of the services which NABIS provides. Paul then acted as a 'subject matter expert' to assist those on the course in dealing with an emerging crime scenario surrounding a firearms discharge.

The students had to make a series of policy decisions about how they would manage a potential firearms crime scene, recover ballistic material and prioritise their decision making process in submitting recovered items to NABIS. None of the 12 Detective Inspectors on the course were from one of the traditional 'gun crime forces' that are most used to dealing with firearms crime. Accordingly there was a wide range of experience and differing levels of initial knowledge about the way that NABIS can help investigators.

DCS Paul James said of his experience:

"Once the students became aware of the speed in which NABIS is able to work on forensic submissions, and the comprehensive intelligence that we are able to provide, they were very keen to make use of our services within their crime scenario."

"There is no doubt that all the students learnt a lot from the input we provided. It did highlight however that there is still a lot of work to do in communicating the full range of NABIS services available to operational detectives, as some of their initial knowledge of NABIS was sketchy."

This course will now be rolled out on a national basis with at least 10 courses being run in different regions over the next 12 months. The role of NABIS in tackling gun crime will now be an integral part of the course, which provides a great opportunity for raising knowledge of what we do across a key target audience.

DCS Paul James continued:

"I even managed to make Twitter during my input when the Course Director Simon tweeted that he was receiving a "brilliant input on the #NPIA DI course.... students making lots of notes."

"Whilst very complimentary this is the first time I have experienced live feedback on my performance being communicated to a worldwide social media audience. I am only grateful that Simon obviously liked the input otherwise it could have been most embarrassing."

## NABIS presents Investigating Gun Crime Seminar

NABIS and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF) present a seminar on 'Investigating Gun Crime' to be held on 1 March 2012. The one-day seminar is free of charge and is aimed at Heads of Crime, Directors of Intelligence, Scientific Services Managers and Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs).

The seminar will focus on a fascinating case study involving the manufacture, supply, importation and use of criminally held firearms in the United Kingdom. Throughout the case study tactics and strategies to counter the criminal use of firearms will be discussed and reviewed by subject experts.

This is a multi-media presentation delivered by NABIS and the SIOs involved in the case, to showcase the work of NABIS with police forces, the services it provides and its development in an operational environment both in the UK and in other countries.



## The NABIS communications toolkit

The NABIS Communications Toolkit has been sent out to 24 forces to date. The Toolkit is being sent to NABIS SPOC's, who are being encouraged to work with their force communications team to use the material effectively.

The NABIS Communications Toolkit is also available to download from the NABIS website at [www.nabis.police.uk/marketing.asp](http://www.nabis.police.uk/marketing.asp)

To receive more information about the Toolkit, or to receive the Toolkit please email Louise Hewitt at: [louise.hewitt@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:louise.hewitt@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)



# Meet The Team

## Rachel Sharpe- Forensic Firearms Examiner for NABIS Scotland

Rachel Sharpe is a Forensic Firearms Examiner for the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) Forensic Services in Glasgow. As well as providing forensic evidence to their customers, she is also a trained NABIS Expert, which involves the following:-

- Test firing recovered firearms;
- Loading all recovered ballistic material onto the IBIS system for outstanding crime checks against the national server;
- Keeping the NABIS Database up to date with all relevant submissions and acquired information and
- Providing customers with intelligence based evidence, linking firearms incidents across the UK.

In addition to the routine forensic work for NABIS, Rachel has also been active in the development and subsequent implementation of NABIS throughout Scotland. She has given presentations on the necessity and effectiveness of IBIS and will continue to assist in promoting NABIS and the services it provides.

Rachel says of her role:

“I most enjoy working with the IBIS equipment but I also like getting involved in promoting NABIS by telling people about it, and how successful it has already been and will continue to be as a tool to tackle the criminal use of firearms.”

Although Rachel enjoys her role with NABIS Scotland, her other dream job would be as a mountain bike tour guide but, she says; “for now, this is ok.”

## Got something to say about NABIS?

We want to hear from you about the service provided by NABIS.

If you have feedback on any aspect of NABIS work please send your comments to:

[nabissnapshot@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nabissnapshot@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)

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