



THE BULLETIN

NABIS NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS
AND PARTNERS | MARCH 2012

WELCOME TO BULLETIN, THE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

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Introduction from Head of NABIS

This is one of the most important introductions that I have written for this newsletter. On the 8th February the Home Secretary formally launched a 12 week period of consultation. This follows the proposals that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF) and NABIS have submitted advocating the introduction of a new offence of possession of a firearm with intent to supply, and the increased sentence for importation of firearms to life imprisonment.

You will know that we have tried to take this forward as a result of extensive practitioner feedback. NABIS and the ACPO CUF practitioner group have been real drivers behind identifying the need for these changes in legislation. We have worked incredibly hard to overcome numerous obstacles to eventually persuade the Government as to the merit of our case. We are now at a crucial stage, the finishing line is in sight, but in order to cross it we need as many people as possible to visit the Home Office website and participate in the consultation process supporting the proposals.

This really is a one-off opportunity. I would be very grateful if all of you who read this newsletter could take any opportunity to publicise this within your own networks and partner agencies, but particularly amongst all elements of the community that you have interaction with. It is important that there is a widespread contribution to the consultation process.



A link to the consultation paper is below and I urge you to take the time to complete the consultation questionnaire. It really does matter that there is a strong response from all practitioners.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/firearms-legislation/>

Det. Chief Supt. Paul James
Head of NABIS

Operation Smolen

Stephen Greenoe Sentenced to 10 Years



Stephen Greenoe has been found guilty of smuggling a number of Glock handguns into the UK from America. A US Federal Court in North Carolina found Greenoe, aged 37, guilty in early January this year and sentenced him to 10 years imprisonment, followed by a three year supervision order upon his release.

Greenoe smuggled the guns into the UK on commercial flights, they were subsequently distributed by criminal networks and used in serious crime.

NABIS played a key part in Operation Smolen, which was co-ordinated by the North West Regional Organised Crime team, and the American authorities. NABIS was able to provide crucial evidence and intelligence to show that guns used in the UK were part of a cache of at least 63 firearms brought into the country by Greenoe over a six month period.

These guns have been used in a number of serious crimes. Nine guns have been recovered so far, one of which was used in a fatal shooting.

Brock Nicholson, Special Agent in charge of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Georgia and the Carolinas, said:

"By seeking to circumvent both US and UK laws to illegally export firearms, Mr Greenoe has potentially put the safety of countless law-abiding British citizens at risk".

Chief Superintendent Paul James, Head of NABIS said:

"This is an extremely high profile case that has highlighted a number of major concerns about the way in which these firearms were smuggled into the country.

"There is no doubt that the role that NABIS played in gathering intelligence at the earliest opportunity and the linking of weapons used in crimes to their source in the United States was integral to the success in prosecuting Mr Greenhoe."

This is an excellent example of partnership working and is exactly the type of work that NABIS was set up to deliver.

NABIS and ACPO CUF drive forward legislative change

Following the tragic shootings in Cumbria in June 2010 the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) launched an inquiry concerning firearms control. As part of this inquiry, ACPO CUF and NABIS submitted written evidence, as well as providing verbal evidence to the committee in November 2010.

The formal submission covered a range of issues including deactivated firearms and a recommendation that pre 1995 deactivated firearms be brought into line with the post 1995 standard of deactivation.

ACPO did not seek to have these items banned but simply to ensure a common standard was apparent across the different categories of deactivated firearms in order to prevent them being exploited by criminally minded individuals.

In addition to this recommendation ACPO also suggested that deactivated firearms be either subject to a license, such as those under section 1 Firearms Act 1968 or subject to another similar registration scheme.

Subsequently ACPO CUF have provided a problem profile concerning deactivated firearms to the Home Office for consideration and information, however to date, no formal changes have been made to the way the UK legislates and controls these items.

The submission also covered Section 39 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act (VCRA) 2006. Section 39 provides a legislative framework for the specification of blank firing imitation firearms.

ACPO CUF and NABIS recommended that the standard be revised with the utmost urgency to reflect the knowledge of NABIS with regard to the ease of convertibility.

ACPO CUF also recommended that a process of 'type approval' be brought into effect in order to ensure that blank firing weapons are in compliance with the standard before sale is permitted.

Since the committee concluded its report a new standard for blank firing imitation firearms has been produced and approved by Parliament. This is a fantastic step forward in ensuring that criminals are not able to exploit these firearms for the purposes of crime.

Sadly to date no progress has been made in adopting a formal type approval process, however it is hoped that this may be achieved via other processes.

Recommendation for new or revised offences

ACPO CUF also recommended that consideration be given to amending section 1(6)(b) Firearms Act 1982 due to the current legislation not reflecting the range of tools available within the domestic marketplace that could be used to convert firearms. The Committee supported this recommendation and it is hope progress can be made in the coming year.

One of the key recommendations made by ACPO CUF and NABIS was that a new offence of 'possession of a firearm with intent to supply' be created with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The proposed legislation was aimed at tackling the 'middle-men' who supplied the small number of firearms that are used on a frequent basis on a sale, loan or lease basis. In addition NABIS and ACPO CUF also recommended that tougher penalties be introduced to target those who imported illegal firearms into the UK.

Following these submissions and those of other agencies the HASC produced its report in December 2010. One of their conclusions was that well-designed legislation to regulate and restrict the legal supply of firearms can reduce gun crime.

In addition they concluded that the legislation governing the use of firearms is extremely complex and confusing and they recommended that the Government bring forward proposals to simplify and clarify various aspects of the legislation.

The inquiry also concluded that the Government should amend regulations under the VCRA 2006 to require imitation firearms to conform to a specification that makes it more difficult for them to be converted into firing weapons.

The committee also supported the recommendations regarding the creation of new a new offence of possession with intent to supply a firearm as well as larger sentences for those caught importing firearms illegally.

Consultation launched

Following this report the Home Secretary the Right Honorable Theresa May MP launched a consultation on illegal firearms on 8 February.

The public, police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), victims groups, the judiciary in addition to voluntary and community organisations are being asked their views on:

- the need for a new offence of possession of illegal firearms with intent to supply; and
- whether to increase the penalty for illegal importation of firearms.

It was acknowledged that the United Kingdom has some of the most stringent gun laws in the world and as a result firearm offences continue to make up a small proportion of overall recorded crime.

However, gun crime associated with street gangs and organised criminals, particularly in the largest cities, is a cause of major concern, with young people featuring disproportionately amongst both offenders and victims.

Home Secretary Theresa May said:

"We need to target not just those who use illegal firearms but those who import or supply them. These middle men are as responsible as those who pull the trigger for the terrible harm gun crime causes. We must ensure our laws properly punish and deter all criminals and protect our communities."

Commander Susannah Fish OBE, ACPO lead on the criminal use of firearms said:

"In driving the fight against gun crime forward it is essential that the police service has the right tools to tackle those individuals who import and supply illegal firearms. Both ACPO and the NABIS gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee and have continued to work with Government in order to develop the consultation process."

Commander Fish continued;

"The police service sees the proposed areas of legislative change as being vital to effectively deal with the people who are at the heart of gun crime within communities across the country.

"As we continue to target these 'middle men' we must ensure that they are appropriately dealt with and that the available sentencing provisions reflect the damage they cause to families and communities affected by this terrible crime."

NABIS and ACPO CUF will be working with stakeholders from across the country over the coming months to help communicate the consultation to all those who have an interest in ensuring gun crime is tackled head on.

NABIS presents Investigating Gun Crime Seminar

NABIS and ACPO CUF presented a 'Investigating Gun Crime' seminar which was held on 1 March 2012.

The one-day seminar was free of charge and aimed at Heads of Crime and Directors of Intelligence, Scientific Services Managers and Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs).

The seminar focused 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 were discussed and reviewed by subject experts.

There was 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.

A more indepth view of the seminar will be presented in the next edition of the newsletter.

For more information please contact the NABIS Central Team on 0845 113 5000 ext 7630 6204



NABIS assisted investigation sees man jailed

Robert Vincent was jailed for 13 years after a 9mm pistol was found in his locker.

Vincent's fingerprint was found on a carrier bag containing shotgun cartridges at the scene of a firearms raid in Wythenshawe. Police subsequently arrested Vincent and found keys to a locker, which contained a portable strong-box, inside was a Glock 26 handgun, two magazines and 143 bullets.

Vincent was charged with possessing firearms with intent to endanger life as well as drugs offences. He was tried at Manchester Crown Court where a jury convicted him on all counts unanimously after about an hour of deliberation.

NABIS assisted in the Greater Manchester Police led operation by linking ballistic material that helped the investigation, which culminated in the arrest of Vincent.



The Nick Tofiluk Award for Outstanding Achievement

The first Nick Tofiluk award for outstanding individual contribution to NABIS was awarded to Dr Joanne Short in December 2011. Nick was the former ACPO CUF Intelligence lead.

Joanne has worked at the Northern NABIS Hub since it opened in September 2008 and has consistently produced excellent work supporting her colleagues and the Senior Management Team at Greater Manchester Police, the host force for the Hub.

There are two situations where Joanne's dedication to her work has particularly stood out.

In June 2010 Joanne was assigned to the series of shootings which took place in Cumbria, resulting in the deaths of 12 individuals. Joanne, as a result of painstaking work at the microscope, succeeded in linking every scene where ballistic evidence was recovered. Subsequently, Joanne presented this evidence at the inquest, assisting the Coroner and jury in their findings. Considerable praise was given to the services provided by NABIS during this difficult investigation.

The Northern NABIS Hub was awarded ISO 17025 status last year, which is an essential step in demonstrating its commitment to produce work at the highest scientific standards.

Martin Parker, the NABIS Lead Scientist said

"Joanne was a driving force in drafting and amending procedures, designing forms and conducting audits, as part of creating a quality management system. Without her tireless commitment and dedication, it is difficult to conceive how accreditation could have been achieved, whilst still providing a full service to the police forces of England and Wales.

"Joanne is an outstanding employee, whose work is greatly appreciated and respected by all NABIS staff and all those involved in working to tackle gun crime in the UK."



Deactivated Firearms

The issue of deactivated firearms and their status in law has been in contention for a number of years. Inevitably an item that was once a firearm that continues to have the appearance and feel of a firearm can be problematical to accurately define and legislate for. This has the potential to become an emotive issue for those who have an interest in favour of, or against the possession of deactivated firearms.

NABIS produced a problem profile in January this year concerning the 'Scale and Use of Deactivated and Reactivated Firearms Across the UK.' The profile sought to evaluate the facts surrounding deactivated firearms and their use in crime. In doing so the study made a number of recommendations concerning the ownership of deactivated firearms and deactivation standards. The work also provided an insight into potential future threats and risks involving deactivated and reactivated firearms.

NABIS is able to understand how firearms are used in crime, including deactivated firearms that have been reactivated. By analysing this knowledge it is possible to gain a better understanding of the scale and nature of the use of these types of firearms.

The profile identified that although the number of reactivated firearms that have been discharged in crime is relatively low when compared to overall levels of gun crime, a proportion have been discharged in serious crime including murder.

Evidence concerning the high level of recovery of deactivated firearms following police intervention suggests that deactivated firearms are being used to cause fear of violence or for protection purposes.

NABIS and ACPO CUF will continue to work with the Home Office and the ACPO Firearms Explosives Licensing Working Group (FELWG) to ensure that issues surrounding deactivated firearms are developed, assessed and managed as effectively and proportionately as possible.



The NABIS communications toolkit

The NABIS Communications Toolkit will shortly be sent to those forces in Phase 2 of the NABIS Communications Toolkit roll out. The Toolkit is being sent to NABIS Operational Single Points of Contact (OSPOC), 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

An evaluation letter will also be sent to force ACPO gun crime leads asking them to report back as to how the toolkit has been used so NABIS can ensure it contains the right information for forces.

To receive more information about the Toolkit and the roll out phases, or to receive the Toolkit please email Louise Hewitt at: louise.hewitt@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



Firearms Tracing

The NABIS Intelligence Cell manages and tracks the progress of incoming firearm tracing requests from other countries via Interpol, relating to firearms known or believed to be linked to crime.

The NABIS Intelligence Cell is able to access the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) electronic tracing system, known as eTrace, on behalf of UK Law Enforcement.

eTrace is an internet-based system that allows participating law enforcement agencies to submit firearm traces to the ATF National Tracing Centre in West Virginia. This allows the UK to access firearms sales records held by US authorities in relation to firearms purchases.

The intelligence cell are also able to facilitate tracing result across the world in order to help identify the origins and path a firearm may have taken on its way to the UK. Firearms tracing is seen as a key part in our fight against gun crime as it enables us to further understand the story behind every gun.



Meet The Team

Andy Lewis

Andy is currently the Finance Support Manager for NABIS however, from 1 April he will be taking up the mantle of the Business Services Manager within the Business Services Team.

This is a new role for NABIS and certainly a new role for Andy;

“As with all new roles, there will be a massive learning curve for me, the team, as well as the organisation. I will lead the Business Services Team, which will comprise of the Secretary and two Business Support Assistants.”

NABIS Business Services will have responsibility for being a first point of contact for forces with queries about the NABIS Database, intelligence and forensic products.

The team will provide financial management and budgeting control; procurement; secretarial support; EMI reporting; POLKA updates and resilience for firearms tracing requests. In addition, through working closely with Helen Ryan, NABIS Database Administrator, Business Services will also be completing Database audits and amendments.

The team will also be working towards achieving ISO 9001 status for the Central Teams at Aqua House. Andy is looking forward to the challenges that the new role will bring;

“It will certainly be a dynamic role, which will encompass a wide range of tasks requiring different skills and strengths. I am looking forward to being more ‘hands on’ with some of the more operational elements of NABIS, and I am sure it will equip me with more knowledge and abilities on a personal level for the future.”

If Andy wasn't working for NABIS, he and his young family would like to travel to see some of the wonders our world has to offer. He added; “Europe offers such amazing sights and cultures in such a relatively small area, as well as experiencing life in destinations further afield!”

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

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