

THE BULLETIN

NABIS NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS
February 2011

INTRODUCTION FROM HEAD OF NABIS

Welcome to 'The Bulletin.' A lot has happened since our last edition, not least the drafting of the NABIS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). As our service has developed we have started to make a real difference in supporting police forces and law enforcement agencies in tackling gun crime at a local and national level. It is clear however, that there is still a marked difference in the way that police forces integrate the service we provide.

Some forces are not getting the full benefits from NABIS because they are not capturing ballistic material from scenes of firearms crimes and submitting them to NABIS Forensic Services, and they are not placing accurate information on the NABIS Database. It is also noticeable that only some police forces act on the intelligence products we produce, most commonly failing to feed the results back into operational or preventative activity. The development of the NABIS MoU by

NABIS Knowledge and Communications is the best way of demonstrating a clear commitment between NABIS and its stakeholders. It will provide a standard for the level of service our stakeholders can expect and give police forces a benchmark to aim for in how they adopt a consistent approach to dealing with NABIS.

The MoU provides for a senior police officer of ACPO rank, in each police force to oversee that their force complies with the MoU. It is seen as an important part of embedding NABIS into UK policing because the service can benefit every force, not just those that are seen to have a problem with gun crime.

Read the article on page 4 about the MoU and Meet The Team on the back page features the NABIS Liaison Officer role, which will help to ensure that police forces and law enforcement partners are getting the most from the service they pay for.

Det. Chief Supt. Paul James
Head of NABIS

WELCOME TO THE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

This issue includes:

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NABIS RECEIVES TOP AWARD

NABIS has been given the prestigious 2011 Interpol Presidents Award, in recognition of outstanding contribution to the science of firearms identification and crime solving. The award was presented to Detective Chief Superintendent Paul James, Head of NABIS, at the Interpol Firearms Forensic Symposium, held at the Interpol Head Quarters in Lyon, France in early February.

In receiving this award, NABIS was recognised for "its innovative, intelligence-led approach, which serves as a model for other countries trying to aggressively tackle gun crime." The success of combining three key elements (Forensics, Intelligence and Knowledge),

has led to NABIS being recognised as "a world leading firearms crime solving and crime reduction program."

The citation highlighted each area of NABIS from the forensic capability of the Hubs, to how the Intelligence Cell uses information to ensure investigating officers have everything they need to help solve the crime and to how Knowledge and Communications ensures that NABIS is promoted effectively to partners and stakeholders.

Quoting directly from the award citation:

"Since its launch in 2007 NABIS has generated over 500 IBIS hits helping to solve numerous crimes and keeping gun crime a relatively small issue in the UK at large. There is no doubt the approach NABIS takes has had a profound effect on

the volume of gun incidents, the solving of crime and the public perception of this issue."

Paul James, Head of NABIS said: "It was an absolute honour to be able to receive this award on behalf of NABIS. From the very beginning when the National Ballistics Intelligence Programme was working towards the Service going live, the vision was to provide an invaluable tool to law enforcement to tackle the criminal use of firearms. This award recognises the unique approach we take in doing that and how we continually strive to ensure that we produce information that can help forces and agencies solve gun crimes.

"This award is a credit to the NABIS team and recognition of their hard work."

NABIS FUNDING EXTENDED UNTIL 2012

The funding for NABIS has been extended until 31 March 2012 following agreement by Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This decision has been made against the backdrop of the challenges that the police service is facing in the current economic climate.

The extension of funding for NABIS is a reflection of how essential the service is in the fight against serious organised crime. NABIS provides a national centre of excellence in relation to forensic science, intelligence and knowledge around the use, supply and manufacture of illegal firearms and ammunition.

Paul James, Head of NABIS said:

"In the short time we have been active NABIS has assisted a number of police forces in complex investigations, some of which have started because our intelligence cell was able to provide linkages between weapons and people throughout the country.

"We want all police forces and agencies to use NABIS to its full extent so that they reap the rewards in quickly solving crimes where firearms have been used, by identifying the few individuals who actively import, store and supply illegal firearms, and tracking down the people involved in illegally converting or adapting firearms.

"NABIS is quickly gaining an international reputation for its holistic approach to tackling the criminal use of firearms and we have forged new partnerships for the UK between agencies in America and the Netherlands."

Kevin Bradford, NABIS Liaison Officer is in the process of visiting all police forces throughout the country to assist in their use of NABIS and how they can get the maximum capabilities out of the service from it. **Read more about his work in 'Meet the Team.'**

OLYMPIC .380 BBM: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS CIRCULATED TO STAKEHOLDERS

The programme of activity surrounding the Olympic .380 BBM has been reviewed as part of our ongoing commitment to the learning and developing of good practice. Key recommendations from the operational debrief were circulated to stakeholders towards the end of 2010 to ensure that good practice and lessons learnt are communicated effectively at a national level.

The programme of activity was instigated after evidence identified the Olympic .380 BBM as being 'readily convertible' under the provisions of the Firearms Act 1982. This means that it is open to classification as a prohibited weapon under the provisions of section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.

The operational debrief will not be made public due to the sensitive material that it contains however some of the key statistics contained in the report are:

- There were 179 recoveries of converted Olympic .380 BBM revolvers in 13 police forces in England and Wales, between January 2007 – March 2010
- Olympic .380 BBM revolvers were used in crimes such as grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent, attempted murder and resisting arrest.
- 799 Olympic .380 BBM revolvers were surrendered to police forces during the amnesty period.
- 98 other blank firing firearms were also handed in during the amnesty.
- 476 blank cartridges were handed into police during the amnesty period.

- At present police are in possession of 1322 Olympic .380 BBM revolvers. This includes the 799 as well as others already recovered, declared or in police possession

Key recommendations from the report are:

- A specification for blank firers is introduced in line with Section 39 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.
- A type approval process is introduced to ensure blank firers meet the required specification before sale in the UK.
- Consideration be given to amending section 1(6)(b) of the firearms act 1982.

Assistant Chief Constable Sue Fish, ACPO Lead for the Criminal Use of Firearms said:

"It is important after the comprehensive approach taken by NABIS and ACPO CUF during the amnesty that these key recommendations are shared with stakeholders. We are keen that the recommendations from the debrief are implemented in future operational activity and as such some of these recommendations were submitted to the Home Affairs Select Committee, which is currently looking at firearms controls."

NABIS and ACPO CUF will continue to work with their stakeholders and partners to ensure that any future activity surrounding firearms control can benefit from the lessons learnt during the Olympic .380 BBM work.

HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON FIREARMS CONTROLS

The Home Affairs Select Committee published their report in late December 2010 into Firearms Controls after hearing evidence from the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF). Detective Chief Superintendent Paul James, Head of NABIS and Matt Lewis, Head of Knowledge for NABIS gave their evidence alongside ACPO CUF lead, Assistant Chief Constable Susannah Fish OBE in November last year.

The session was held in private to allow ACPO CUF to give a clear picture of firearms criminality in the UK. ACC Fish on behalf of ACPO CUF made a number of suggestions and recommendations.

Recommendations included;

- Pre 1995 deactivated firearms bought in line with post 1995 standards
- A standard for blank firing items be introduced with the utmost urgency. (As per Section 39 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006)
- A 'Type Approval' process for blank firing items be introduced to ensure items on sale in UK meet the required standard
- A Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) system to be introduced to allow the reporting of suspicious or large scale purchases of blank firing or deactivated items
- A new offence of 'Possession with intent to supply firearms' is introduced. It is the view of ACPO this should carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment
- A new offence of 'Importation of firearms into the UK without licence' is introduced. It is the view of ACPO this should carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment

Suggestions included;

- Deactivated firearms either to be subject to licence as per section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968, or another form of registration scheme
- Deactivated firearms become subject to Section 21 of the Firearms Act 1968 prohibiting ownership by 'Prohibited' person
- Section 1 (6)(b) of the Firearms Act 1982 be amended to better reflect the tools available on the high street
- Shotgun holders to retain test fire to surrender to law enforcement in the result of theft or loss

ACPO CUF also supported the recommendation made by Assistant Chief Constable Adrian Whiting that current firearms legislation is in the main fit for purpose. However the legislation has been made complex because of the many amendments that have been added over the years.

Within the report the Committee has made formal recommendations regarding regarding the evidence it heard from ACPO CUF and NABIS. It also urged the Government to "codify and simplify" the law, which regulates and restricts the legal supply of firearms to help reduce gun crime.

ACC Susannah Fish said:

"It is important that the experience of practitioners in conjunction with knowledge provided by NABIS is used to support the work of the Home Affairs Select Committee and the recommendations and suggestions of ACPO.

"It is encouraging that the Committee have accepted the majority of our recommendations, which can have a



big impact on the tackling the criminal use of firearms in the UK."

Matt Lewis, Head of NABIS Knowledge and Communications added:

"I cannot emphasise how much the work of everyone in NABIS has gone to formulating these suggestions. For the Committee to recognise the validity of our evidence is a huge step forward in our fight against the illegal use of firearms. We will now begin the task of working with Government and other associated partners to turn the Committee's formal recommendations into action".

NABIS GAINS UKAS ACCREDITATION

The northern and central NABIS Forensic hubs have been recommended to be accredited to ISO 17025 standard following an assessment last year by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS).

The ISO 17025 standard provides an assurance that a forensic lab will produce a quality of product, by having in place the policies, training, validation methods and customer care. The standard demonstrates that NABIS is an organisation that is committed to continuous improvement.

The two hubs will be re-visited in March this year, to ensure that a number of non-compliance policy issues have been corrected. If this is successful, NABIS should receive accreditation, by summer 2011. As part of the accreditation UKAS carry out annual audits in addition to an internal audit programme.

Martin Parker, Lead Forensic Scientist said:

“NABIS has been working towards accreditation since the service became operational. All our work to date has been carried out to a high standard, but gaining accreditation by UKAS is an essential requirement of the Forensic Regulator as well as a reflection of our ongoing commitment to the service we provide.”



The two remaining hubs in London and Scotland are already part of organisations accredited to ISO 17025, but they will have to extend their scope to cover NABIS work by the end of the year.



NABIS MoU - OUT FOR CONSULTATION

The effectiveness of NABIS as a national service is dependent on police forces and agencies sharing their information in relation to ballistic material and associated intelligence. The new NABIS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) being developed by NABIS Knowledge and Communications will provide a clear understanding of the level of service that stakeholders can expect from NABIS. It also places an obligation on police forces and law enforcement partners to ensure that all relevant ballistic material is submitted to NABIS Forensic Services as soon as practicable, after it has been recovered. This is in addition to timely, quality focused, entries on to the NABIS Database for both incident and intelligence data.

The draft MoU is currently being circulated to stakeholders for consultation. Any feedback will be assessed and considered before being presented as part of the final draft.

We all have a part to play in the fight against gun crime nationally. The MoU between forces, agencies and NABIS goes a long way in ensuring that the commitment required by all parties is documented, measurable and consistent.

DUTCH VISITORS TO NABIS

NABIS and SOCA hosted a visit from a number of people from various Dutch law enforcement teams in early February. The delegates included a Deputy Chief Constable from the Regional Police Force Utrecht, a Programme Manager from the Council of Chiefs of Police Forensic Investigation Programme and a Firearms Examiner from the Netherlands Forensic Institute.

The 11 visitors were given a number of presentations including an overview of the impact on the UK of international firearms trafficking, in addition to a review of the issues faced by both the UK and the Netherlands. The group also spent time at the NABIS offices speaking to Head of Knowledge and Communications Matt Lewis, before visiting the NABIS Central Hub where they had a tour of the facility and the technology NABIS uses.

Ian Head, NABIS Intelligence Manager who helped to organise the visit said:

“This visit was an opportunity for develop international relationships and to understand the issues in tackling firearms in the Netherlands. Serious organised crime, which includes the criminal use of firearms, cannot be tackled by one country alone and both NABIS and SOCA are keen to ensure that the UK work with international partners to tackle this criminality.”

NABIS PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN INTERPOL CONFERENCE

Members of NABIS were invited to the Interpol Forensic Firearms Symposium (IFFS), which was held in Lyon in early February. Paul James, Head of NABIS, Ian Head, Intelligence Manager, Martin Parker, Forensic Manager and Chris Porter, the Metropolitan Police Scientific Services Manager attended the conference, which was jointly hosted by Interpol and Forensic Technology, the latter of which manufactures the IBIS equipment that is used in all NABIS hubs.

NABIS was invited to be part of the conference, which was an opportunity for firearms examiners, laboratory directors, ballistic experts and other stakeholders to learn about good practice, advances in ballistic technology and the Interpol Ballistic Information Network (IBIN). Workshops, demonstrations and presentations all combined to provide a rewarding agenda.

Paul James and Ian Head were both guest speakers alongside the United Nations, Bureau of the ATF, South African Police Services and

the Australian Federal Police. Paul gave an overview about NABIS and how it operates and its role in UK law enforcement. Ian spoke about the active use of intelligence within NABIS alongside some examples of our work.

Paul James said:

“NABIS is very highly regarded by both Interpol and Forensic Technology and both were very keen for us to participate in the symposium. We have not only been able to listen to the work being done by our international partners, we have been able to showcase NABIS and its holistic approach to tackling gun crime.

“It is important that we show the benefit NABIS brings to law enforcement and how our use of intelligence actively links weapons and criminals throughout the country, to bring a coordinated approach to tackling this type of criminality.”



ACPO CUF GOES LIVE ON POLKA

The Criminal Use of Firearms community went live on the NPIA Police OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA) in September 2010. POLKA is aimed at facilitating a culture of collaboration, cost reduction and efficient communications across the police service. The Criminal Use of Firearms community aims to provide practitioners with a forum to share information, policies and best practice on all issues related to the criminal use of firearms.

The community is run by NABIS Knowledge and Communications and currently includes an overview of Law Enforcement Programme 5, ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF) Group, NABIS Forensic Services, NABIS Intelligence Cell, NABIS Knowledge and Communications and SOCA Programme 5 (criminal use of firearms).

There is a section for documents that currently contains information relating to ACPO CUF, force examples of good practice, national good practice guides, NABIS and Programme 5. These are uploaded as PDF files.

The 'Blog,' 'Wall' and 'Discussion' applications provide an interactive way of communicating key messages, current areas of interest and press notices to community members. Forthcoming events will also be detailed on the community pages as well as relevant press notices.

To ensure that the site becomes a useful forum and central repository for practitioners, it is essential that any relevant documents and examples of good practice are uploaded. This can include force strategies for tackling gun crime, problem profiles, examples of community impact statements and case study examples of investigations.

NABIS Knowledge and Communications, Professional Practice and Information Manager Michelle Wright said:

"Currently, over 170 members have joined the Criminal use of Firearms community. These include individuals in roles such as force Heads of Crime, major crime investigators, force incident managers, firearms instructors and analysts. We want to build on the information that is available on the site. To do this we are asking that practitioners use the site to share examples of good practice and any relevant force strategies."

Examples of good practice, relevant documents and any feedback on the site should be forwarded to Michelle at: michelle.wright@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

To become a member join POLKA at: <https://polka.pnn.police.uk/> and search under communities for 'Criminal Use of Firearms'.



MEET THE TEAM

Kevin Bradford NABIS Liaison Officer

Kevin joined NABIS Knowledge and Communications in August 2010 as the NABIS Liaison Officer, following 30 years service with Warwickshire Police. Kevin retired in February last year as a Detective Chief Superintendent in the role of Staff Officer to Chief Constable Keith Bristow QPM, working on his Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Crime Business Area portfolio. Kevin worked mainly in detective roles throughout his career with the police, which included secondments to both the Regional Crime Squad and National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Kevin's role with NABIS is essential in providing a main point of contact between police forces and law enforcement agencies, and NABIS. His work involves;

- Identifying opportunities for collaborative working between NABIS and individual police forces and law enforcement agencies.
- Creating a constructive working relationship with police forces throughout the country Kevin is able to identify key opportunities where NABIS can assist an investigation or develop proactive work to tackle the illegal use of firearms.
- Working with police forces and law enforcement agencies to develop their processes in relation to the information they provide to NABIS, either via the NABIS Central Team, NABIS Database, or through the ballistic submissions to NABIS Forensic Services.
- Ensuring that police forces and law enforcement agencies are aware of all the NABIS services so they can use them to their advantage.
- Assisting in providing an 'investigative bridge' that helps forces and agencies in tackling and investigating illegal firearms activity.
- Ensuring that NABIS is providing its service in line with the needs and expectations of police forces and law enforcement agencies in alignment with the NABIS Memorandum of Understanding.

Kevin has been able to use his past extensive experience in dealing with police forces from his work with Chief Constable Bristow:

"It has been eye opening visiting some forces and seeing what robust systems and processes they have put into place in order to contribute to the work that NABIS does.

"These visits have provided me with some great learning opportunities during the early days in my role. Conversely, in some forces there remains a significant amount of work to be done in order for them to use NABIS to its full extent."

Kevin helps to ensure that forces and agencies recognise the support that NABIS can provide them if they use the services it provides correctly. This is important, especially in the current financial climate when resources to support the NABIS functions in forces are constrained. Kevin is able to help forces recognise the operational risk in not utilising NABIS.

Kevin continued:

"Forces are paying for NABIS via the annual subscription, everything else is free at the point of delivery and I would encourage forces and other agencies to use the services that NABIS provides."

Kevin is currently visiting all police forces and law enforcement agencies that subscribe to NABIS.

Kevin can be contacted on: 0121 626 7122 or k.bradford@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

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:

ah_nabis@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk