

Emerging issues within CO19 Specialist Firearms Command.

1. Whilst current performance trends for CO19 are discussed in Appendix C, this section of the report provides greater detail on some of the key issues that impact upon the Specialist Firearms Command's performance. Four key areas have been identified and are discussed here.
2. **Armed Policing – Could You?**
CO19 Specialist Firearms Unit has been providing presentations to internal and external stakeholders over the last few months. The inputs have aimed to increase the understanding of the role of an authorised firearms officer. The audience has included BOCU SMTs, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Community groups, school and youth groups, the Judiciary and journalists.

To augment these presentations CO19 has developed two new corporate presentation packages:

- 1) Devised by the CO19 Training and Development Unit, with the help of CO19 practitioners. This package can be tailored to suit all of the current audiences.
- 2) Informed by practitioners and instructional staff, the second package, 'Armed Policing-Could you' is designed for delivery to influential and strategic stakeholders.

On 23rd November, this newly created 'Armed Policing- Could You?' presentation was delivered to the Chairs of Community Police Consultative Groups after their bi-annual meeting. The presentation, designed to be thought provoking, incorporated the use of a Judgement Range and the playing of interactive video scenarios. These allowed participants to achieve an appreciation of some of the challenges and considerations faced by an armed officer. What was hoped to be achieved the presentations were a greater understanding of:

- the good judgement required of armed officers,
- the effects of stress and perceptual distortion,
- post-shooting support,
- the statistics on the rarity of shootings compared to armed calls and deployments.

As a result of the presentations, all those who provided feedback agreed that they had a better understanding of armed policing as a result. The audience were quick to stress their support for armed officers, and also asked that time was invested to further the appreciation of journalists and other wider public audiences around the needs for an armed policing response in the 21st century. They also articulated the recognition of the potential impact of such presentations on young people involved in, or on the periphery of, gun crime.

Future presentations are being given to:

Independent Advisory Group
Chairs, Muslim Safety Forum
Kratos Community Reference Group
Metropolitan Police Authority All-Party Parliamentary Group on Policing
Greater London Authority.

3. Positive action in recruitment

In January 2007, the Specialist Firearms Unit will be recruiting PCs to work in the OCU. One of the key issues they will be looking to tackle is achieving a more representative work force within the unit.

Following on from the Insight Days that were held recently and the Female Development Programme, the unit is positively encouraging female officers, who either attended the Insight Days or who have shown an interest in CO19 in the past. They are being provided with a trained mentor from within the unit. As CO19 only recruits officers during certain periods of the year and it has been recognised that between the time the person becomes interested and the recruitment phase, people often lose interest or confidence in applying for a role, this is particularly prevalent in female officers; the aim of this initiative is to prevent this happening.

The purpose of these mentors is to provide support for the officers right up till the point of application, in such areas as:

- Aiding understanding of the requirements of the role of firearms officer
- Providing an insight into the sort of training they will undergo if successful
- Increasing the person's confidence and offering support.

At present, this initiative is being carried out for female officers only and provided that it is successful and receives positive feedback, will then be used for interested BME officers in the future.

It is important to emphasise that this support is provided right up to the point of application at which time it will cease and selection will be on merit alone. All officers who are successful in applying to join CO19 as Firearms Officers are provided with an internal mentor upon recruitment.

The planned dates for the recruitment process are as follows:

12th January 2007 – adverts are placed in MetJobs

12th February – 2nd March 2007 – paper sift process

5th-9th March 2007 – result published

23rd March – Appeals processed

April 2007 – Assessment process to commence.

4. National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS).

A new interface has been developed to link the NFLMS to the National Firearms Holders Register on the Police National Computer (PNC). It will contain details of persons licensed to hold: Firearms/ammunition,

Shotguns & Explosives. It does not hold details of the weapons/ammunition an individual is authorised to hold.

NFLMS will provide two extra safeguards after it is linked to PNC and all holders are allocated identifiers: (a) police will be notified more promptly of holders coming to adverse attention (especially in other force areas), and (b) it will be easier to identify applicants who lie about having been refused/revoked elsewhere.

NFLMS (or, more accurately, its refused/revoked records) will be one of the databases checked under MoPI; this will arguably further protect public safety.

5. Authorised Firearms Officers

Officers who are authorised to carry firearms are held responsible if they are ever called to use their weapons in the course of their duties. Recent events, in particular the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes and the armed robbery suspect in Kent highlight the issues around the police use of firearms. The management of these perceptions of organisational support could affect potential recruits from joining CO19 and current AFOs from retaining their status. This would impact on the MPS ability to provide an armed police service to the people of London. This recognition is emphasised in dialogue with officers on recruitment presentations.

6. Training

CO19 are responsible for the provision of firearms training for all the armed commands within the MPS. As such, the implications and logistics to be able to deliver the training is a huge task for the OCU. As a Command, CO19 is dependant upon the ability to provide the bulk of firearms training at one large training facility. Although the OCU utilises opportunities for training at remote site where possible, these are reliant on other Commands and some outside agencies.

7. Olympics 2012

In July 2005, London was successful in its bid to host the Olympic games in 2012. CO19 will need to be involved in the security planning of the Olympic village and facilities in order to be able to formulate tactical plans to counter armed threats.

Training requirements for the armed officers who will eventually be deployed during this period need to be assessed and plans formulated. These are issues that are being considered now and will require decisions at Management Board level.

The Olympics would have a huge impact on the Firearms Enquiry Teams (FETs) if the Mayor's office were to sponsor competitors for the shooting events, i.e. the MPS would be required to issue all the visitors permits and collate/distribute all the temporary Home Office authorities to possess prohibited weapons (just as Surrey Police did during the

Manchester Commonwealth Games, when the National Rifle Association - based at Bisley - acted as sponsor). This needs to be planned for in terms of staffing levels.

8. Recruitment

Traditionally, CO19 have never had problems in recruiting quality candidates as ARV Officers. However, it is making strenuous efforts to create a Command, which is more representative of the community it polices (see paragraph 23). As part of this effort, it has run CO19 Insight Days for female candidates and BME officers looking to join CO19. These two-day events have run at the Specialist Training Centre (MPSTC) by CO19. The most recent being in December 2006. The days include an input on the selection procedure, post-incident procedure, training for the fitness test, shooting the handgun and carbine and judgement training. More Insight Days are being planned for 2007. These days compliment our current mentoring system for female candidates.

9. Accommodation

CO19 provides a pan London service. It operates from bases in East and South London. It has previously identified that its effectiveness would be enhanced in terms of deployment opportunities if it were to have a west London base. This would also ease the current accommodation squeeze, decrease travelling times to calls and make CO19 a more attractive prospect to aspiring ARV officers based in the west. A business case has been submitted for consideration and will be influenced by a decision with regard to quadrant bases.

Glossary of abbreviations

ANPR	Automated Number Plate Recognition
ARV	Armed Response Vehicle
ASU	Air Support Unit
BOCU	Borough Operational Command Unit
BTP	British Transport Police
CEC	Character Enquiries Centre
CJU	Criminal Justice Unit
CO	Central Operations
CO4	Disclosure Service OCU
CO10	Central Communications Command Unit
CO11	Public Order Branch OCU
CO12	Olympics OCU
CO14	Clubs and Vice OCU
CO15	Traffic OCU
CO16	Centralised Traffic Criminal Justice OCU
CO17	Transport OCU
CO19	Force Firearms OCU
CO20	Territorial Support Group OCU
CO MMR	Central Operations Monthly Management Report
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau

CSS	Customer Satisfaction Survey
DAC	Deputy Assistant Commissioner
DAC CO	Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Central Operations
DSU	Dog Support Unit
EWMS	Electronic Warrants Management System
FET	Firearms Enquiry Team
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injured
LOCOG	London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
LSPC	London Safety Camera Safety Partnership
MMR	Monthly Management Report
MoPI	Management of Police Information
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
MSU	Marine Support Unit
NIPs	Notices of Intended Prosecution
NSY	New Scotland Yard
OCU	Operational Command Unit
ODA	Olympic Delivery Authority
PA	Public Announcement
PC	Police Constable
PCN	Penalty Charge Notice
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PND	Penalty Notice for Disorder
PPAF	Policing Performance Assessment Framework
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RPI	Revenue Protection Inspector
SFO	Specialist Firearms Officer
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TCJ	Traffic Criminal Justice
TDA	Taking and Driving Away
TOCU	Transport Operational Command Unit
TRRL	Traffic and Roads Research Laboratory
TSG	Territorial Support Group
TST	Tactical Support Team
UCSST	Underwater and Confined Space Search Team