



## Precursor events

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## Document information

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This revised advice has been produced and approved by the NABIS and the National Criminal Use of Firearms Group. It has been approved by NCOCC and VPP portfolio lead. The operational implementation of all guidance and strategy will require operational choices to be made at local level in order to achieve the appropriate police response and this document should be used in conjunction with other existing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) produced by the College of Policing. It will be updated and re-published as necessary.

Any queries relating to this document should be directed to either the author detailed above or the Head of Knowledge and Communications at NABIS on 0121 626 7114

## 1. Precursor events

Firearms incidents need to be reviewed by intelligence analysts to help understand what has led to the incident and to look for opportunities to prevent a reoccurrence or reprisals. This can only be done when forces have up-to-date problem profiles and operational intelligence summaries in respect of their gangs, OCGs, homicides, and firearms-related criminality, and robust practices in relation to community threat assessments and community impact assessments.

Investigators must be mindful of the possibility that a shooting incident or precursor event may be linked to CT activity, and also of possible links between urban street gangs and CT. Where there is any likelihood of such links, contact must be made with the relevant CTU.

Despite variations in the characteristics of those involved in gun crime and the nature of firearms incidents across force areas, it is possible to identify a number of precursor events that might indicate an emergence or escalation of gun crime. These include:

- drug disputes
- new drug markets opening up (eg, crack houses)
- drug market displacement (eg, appearance of criminals from outside the force area)
- migration and displacement of individuals linked to firearm offences from high gun crime areas to areas where this type of criminality is less prevalent
- aggravated burglary with use of a firearm
- territorialism within the force area (eg, postcode rivalries)
- music events — key nominals travelling into another force area to attend an event
- an initial shooting in their own or other force area
- imprisonment of key nominal — leaving a void for others to fill
- key nominal released from custody.

Precursor events can involve other forms of criminality, long-standing disputes within and between different groups and reprisal shootings. Firearms use outside a gang context should also be considered as a potential precursor event, for example, commercial and cash-in-transit robberies.

Any event which may be a precursor event should be thoroughly investigated. In some cases, it may be wise to manage it within a [gold command](#) meeting structure from an early stage. This will enable decision-makers to draw on the knowledge and expertise of partners and agencies so the fullest assessment can be made and actions developed.

### **1.1. Case Study**

This case study briefly describes a series of precursor events which, had they been properly identified and investigated as such, may have prevented a subsequent firearms discharge.

The timeline started with intelligence that a member of an urban street gang (the Stanley Crew) who was serving a custodial sentence at the time, had found out that a member of an opposing urban street gang (the TH Crew) had been seeing his girlfriend. This was low grade E41 intelligence, its provenance being from the prison. This led to criminal damage at the address where the girlfriend was living. It was her grandmother's address. The grandmother was interviewed and, probably correctly, did not know why the address had been targeted.

Two nights later, police received a report from a local A&E department that a member of the Stanley Crew had presented with minor stab wounds. Ultimately, this series of events culminated with a shotgun discharge into a group of the TH Crew causing minor facial injuries to one gang member.

While appropriate and relevant threat management had been put in place, there was a need for greater coordination and more proactive tactics towards fairly minor trigger events which could have prevented the discharge. On Merseyside, this level of detail is now considered at a daily threat management meeting to ensure relevant actions are now put in place.

### **1.2. Intelligence collection**

A detailed intelligence collection strategy is an essential part of any firearms-related investigation and should be developed as soon as possible to allow more informed and timely decisions to be made. Such a strategy may include:

- commissioning NIM products: problem profile, operational intelligence summary and operational intelligence assessment
- community threat assessment
- engaging with key individual networks (KINs)

- consulting with independent advisory groups
- tasking of family liaison officers deployed to related incidents
- covert human intelligence source (CHIS) tasking
- monitoring social media, for example, Twitterfall, Google alerts, Facebook groups
- gauging reactions through the service of disruption or threat to life notices
- prison debriefs
- prison intelligence
- prompt review of any useable intelligence products gathered as the result of associated investigation
- house-to-house enquiries
- CCTV trawl
- appeals for information
- reiteration of Crimestoppers telephone number by appropriate means.
- ensuring intelligence sitting within the investigation is shared more widely as appropriate
- tasking officers and staff working within neighbourhoods affected with trying to fill intelligence gaps and ensuring they submit intelligence promptly
- reviewing intelligence and property that may sit within HOLMES and therefore not readily retrievable by other force systems
- lawful intercept.

See APP [Intelligence management](#) for further detail

### **1.3. Prepare, prevent, protect and pursue strategies**

Where it is determined that an incident or event is likely to be a precursor event, then a prompt and effective response needs to be put in place to mitigate/remove the risk of firearms-related activity taking place.

#### **1.3.1. Prevent/disruption strategy**

- Closure power
- Criminal behaviour orders
- Gang injunctions
- Involve force legal services team
- Imposing/enforcing bail conditions
- Arresting suspects for outstanding matters
- Serving threat to life and/or disruption notices
- Target hardening (crime prevention and design advisers)
- High-visibility patrols
- Visible deployment of armed officers
- A-frame trailer messages
- Use of knife arches
- Use of multi-purpose police dogs.

#### **1.3.2. Prepare/Protect (Engagement) strategy**

- Consider a silver lead for media and communications
- Event organisers
- KIN/IAG
- Community leaflets/meetings
- Publish Crimestoppers phone number
- Press release with appeal points.

#### **1.3.3.Pursue (Investigation) strategy**

- Ensure it is both working promptly and effectively – are there any quick wins?
- Consider a peer review
- Early engagement with CPS
- Ensure it is sufficiently resourced
- Ensure it is being managed at the correct level – PIP 3 and PIP 4.

#### **1.3.4.Response strategy**

Force control room staff, firearms teams and duty officers should be briefed sufficiently in terms of any precursor event, the risks, locations, premises and persons likely to be involved in any subsequent events. This will ensure they are better able to identify subsequent events

that may be linked and minimise any delay in responding appropriately. Where possible, clear trigger plans should be in place to ensure the most prompt and effective response is given to linked events from the earliest opportunity.

### **1.3.5. Merseyside's example of a 4P plan**

Merseyside Police's approach to managing gun- and gang-related crime: Project Relentless.

#### **Pursue phase**

##### **Deliverable:**

Police will recognise threat, harm and risk from gun and gang crime and ensure that there are appropriate action plans in place to manage and reduce the levels of threat and risk.

##### **Activities:**

- Develop action plan to enrich the intelligence picture in relation to supply and distribution of firearms into and across the force.
- Develop proactive intelligence-gathering strategies that identify and fill the knowledge gaps in relation to passive factors, impact events and risk factors that lead to firearms being discharged.
- Develop the threat, risk and harm matrix to capture the impact events in relation to gun and gang activity and ensure that there are relevant threat management plans in place.

##### **Deliverable:**

Police will disrupt and dismantle OCGs/ urban street gangs (USG) engaged in gun crime or associated with firearms criminality through effective investigation and disruption supported by the comprehensive use of all legislation and engagement with our partners.

##### **Activities:**

- Lead responsible officers (LROs) will be appointed for all organised crime groups perceived to be causing the highest levels of threat due to their association with firearms criminality in order to ensure effective disruption through the delivery of structured plan management under the relevant tiered operational response.
- Develop and implement strategies to remove and disrupt the drivers of gun crime.
- As part of a broader communications strategy, police will publicise any success.

##### **Deliverable:**

Police will focus on specific offenders linked to firearms criminality.

**Activities:**

- Linking to the force integrated offender management processes ensures that there is a process to identify gun crime offenders for prioritised attention.
- Continue to develop the management of gun crime nominals through the firearms threat management meeting.

**Deliverable:**

Police will develop a proactive response to linked series firearms.

**Activities:**

- Review the NABIS picture for force in order to identify the weapons/inferred weapons that have been used in more than one incident.
- Develop and resource an investigative process that seeks to remove the linked series weapons.
- For all recovered weapons, develop and implement a process that explores the life of the weapon to inform the intelligence picture/investigative activity.

**Prevent phase**

**Deliverable:**

Working with a range of partners, police will work to stop young/vulnerable people becoming involved in gun crime.

**Activities:**

- Develop effective multi agency processes across the respective hotspot BCUs in order to manage children and young people at risk.
- Ensure schools officers are given the appropriate training and knowledge to implement and assist in the delivery of educational programmes designed to promote good behaviour and deter involvement in gun and gang crime.
- Utilise the experiences of ex-offenders willing to work with young people as a deterrent to becoming involved in gun crime.
- Develop voluntary sector action plans that support and complement the work of the statutory partners
- Research and assess the female involvement in criminal gangs with a view to implementing a 4Ps plan to address the critical issues.

**Deliverable:**

Police will develop focused intelligence management in relation to gun and gang crime, the components and symptoms.

**Activities**

- Utilising the group offending continuum as the framework, analyse crime hotspots and crime statistics to ensure the identification of intelligence gaps and the development of plans to fill them.
- Ensure effective management of intelligence trackers to ensure effective management of all received intelligence.
- Working in specific areas, we will work with our partners to implement strategies to improve the levels of community intelligence.
- Develop plans to benchmark and improve the use of Crimestoppers, both in terms of volume and success ratio.

**Deliverable:**

Police will work with partners to ensure the delivery of focused intervention to prevent the rooting of gun and gang crime in local communities.

**Activities:**

- Develop multi-agency problem profiles to direct the implementation of action plans aimed at the root causes of gun and gang crime.
- Identify controlling influences for the key areas of threat and ensure that they are subjected to the highest levels of response.

**Deliverable:**

Educate our communities in relation to the threat and indicators of gun and gang crime.

**Activities:**

- Develop [educational programmes](#) designed to influence the decisions of children and young people, eg, [Terriers, Guns and Knives programme](#).
- Working with communications and marketing, we will deliver a strategy aimed at deterring young people from becoming involved in gun and gang crime as well as encouraging the reporting of gun and gang issues.
- We will utilise the media to send out reassurance messages following gun crime incidents with the aim of promoting intelligence and preventing further events.

**Deliverable:**

Police will research and review key trigger events and motivating factors for gun crime to inform the strategic approach.

**Activities:**

- Analyse gun crime topography to identify possible causation factors and/or trigger events.
- Develop corporate responses to remove gun crime drivers from our communities.
- Ensure that there is continuous environmental scanning to develop and build good practice.

**Protect phase**

**Deliverable:**

Police will propagate community consolidation strategies to support local areas following localised intervention.

**Activities:**

- Working in collaboration with partners, templates of multi-agency activity will be developed to ensure areas that have been subject of police intervention are prioritised to promote and build strong community values.
- Through locally focused delivery of action plans, demonstrate effective seeding/building plans in key geographical areas.

**Deliverable:**

Police will work with statutory partners and the voluntary sector to ensure that vulnerable people and locations are protected.

**Activities:**

- Utilise the full range of criminal legislation to deliver and increase the rates of witness compliance around gun and gang crime issues.
- Where people are willing to support the police, ensure that every possible avenue is progressed to manage their protection and engagement with the criminal justice system.
- Develop corporate advisory group networks in order to identify community concerns and tailor appropriate responses including benchmarked community impact assessments.
- Recognise the vulnerabilities of people linked and vulnerable to criminal influence particularly young children.

**Prepare phase**

**Deliverable:**

Working with a range of partners, police will work to address the causes of gun and gang crime.

**Activities:**

- Research and implement good practice in relation to dealing with the causes and symptoms that lead to progression through a group offending continuum.
- In consultation with academic institutions, commission research into the causes of organised crime and the resultant symptoms to inform future action planning.

**Deliverable:**

Police will develop corporate meeting structures to manage the individual threats while ensuring effective tasking and coordination of resources and full engagement with our partners.

**Activities:**

- Review firearms critical incident management templates in order to ensure that they reflect the new strategy.
- Develop partner agency protocol to ensure there is a multi-agency response to the management of critical incidents.
- Develop the force operational platform to ensure effective and efficient response to criminal incidents by all emergency services.

**Deliverable:**

Devise and implement a performance management framework that captures the impact of police and partner agency actions against gun and gang activity.

**Activities:**

- Implement a performance management/quality assurance regime that measures the impact of the work to reduce harm that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures and delivery of operational outcomes.