

Operation motion mike

Disrupting firearms criminality using cease and disrupt process.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Knife and gun crime Intelligence Serious organised crime
Organisation	South Yorkshire Police
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Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	July 2023
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities General public Offenders
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Aim

The main aims are to:

- keep the public of South Yorkshire safe
- identify the key gun crime nominals
- take robust positive action against all gun crime nominals and maximise evidential opportunities
- support evidence-based policing
- improve public trust and confidence in police
- offer support to gun crime nominals who want to disengage from criminality

Intended outcome

The following outcomes will be measured from police data:

- reduction in firearms discharges
- increase in arrests and successful prosecutions of individuals linked to illegally held firearms
- increase in intelligence gathered about gun crime related nominals

Description

For the past few years South Yorkshire have had the third highest number of firearms discharges annually across all forces. This peaked in 2020 at 86 discharges. The force introduced a dedicated armed crime team (ACT) which consists of:

- one detective inspector
- three detective sergeants

- 21 staff (detective constables, police constables and civilian investigators)

This brought the discharges down to 55 in 2022 which was a 36% decrease. However South Yorkshire remained the third highest for discharges and the force sought out good practice from other forces.

Cease and desist process

In July 2023 the force implemented a cease and desist process previously used successfully by Merseyside Police. This process is aimed at identifying the top gun crime nominals in South Yorkshire and disrupting firearms enabled organised crime groups.

A nominal is a person listed in the Police National Computer database as having been:

- convicted
- cautioned
- recently arrested

The gun crime nominals are served by ACT with a notice and visited weekly in a robust tactic aimed at disrupting firearms enabled activity. ACT now take on most firearms discharges across the force and the ACT detective inspector chairs a daily intel meeting where all firearms intelligence gets reviewed and actioned.

Process

A structured process is followed whereby the ACT receive daily intel on all firearms activity in the force area over the previous 24 hours. The ACT consult each local intelligence cell, and cross reference this with ongoing and archived ACT investigations.

They then provide operational support unit with a list of the top gun crime nominals in South Yorkshire based on analysis of incidents, crime data and intelligence relating to armed criminality. The list is subject to review every six months at which point nominals can be renewed, removed or added.

Once a nominal is added to the list, a cease and desist notice is hand delivered to them by an officer. The notice clearly informs the individual that South Yorkshire Police has identified them as a gun crime nominal due to intelligence which links them or their associates to firearms.

It is made clear that they will be visited by police officers on a regular (weekly) basis to check on their safety and that of their family, and to dissuade them from being involved in criminality involving firearms. The individual is also informed of the partnership work South Yorkshire Police are currently undertaking, to make them aware of all available tactics and legislation the force is using to reduce firearm activity.

Tactics

These tactics may include:

- surveillance of the nominal and where appropriate those they associate with where it has been authorised
- the use of care proceedings to protect children and young persons who may be at risk if people in their family are involved with firearms
- anti-social behaviour orders to prevent individuals from frequenting certain areas or associating with other named individuals
- eviction from homes if they are disrupting their neighbourhood

These notices and visits conclude with an offer of the force referring the individual to partner agencies which can support them in changing their lifestyle and moving away from crime and firearms should they wish to do so.

Once the initial notices have been successfully served, the force continue with regular assertive management visits, continuing to check in and engage with the individual.

Overall impact

Between 2020 and 2022, South Yorkshire Police saw a decrease of 33 firearm discharges, incidents decreasing from 88 to 55.

The new cease and desist process was implemented in July 2023. At the end of 2023 there had been 42 firearm discharges, a reduction of 24% compared to 2022.

In 2023, the team removed over 100 converted blank firers from the streets of South Yorkshire. This was done via a variety of tactics, but we know from intelligence that some of these weapons were potentially planned for distribution as far away as Scotland.

There have been 28 nominals placed on the cease and desist process in the 8 months and the team has been operating at full capacity. Of these 28, five have now been archived, meaning the level of intelligence linking them to firearms is no longer substantial enough to support ongoing weekly action. However, if any new intelligence comes to light, the ACT detective inspector will consider re-commencing the weekly visits.

So far in 2024, the force has seen two discharges (a reduction of 80% from 10 when compared to the same period last year).

Learning

Merseyside sent South Yorkshire the design of their notice as well as brief details of how they implemented the process. The ACT detective inspector then tailored the process to fit in with the available resources and workstreams present in South Yorkshire Police (SYP).

The key to successful implementation in SYP has been getting buy in from other departments across the force. It is the force firearms officers who issue the notice and conduct the weekly visits while the armed crime team action any intelligence around the nominals and lead on disruption.

Providing the firearms teams a clear structure to their patrols and making their day around this process very task driven, meant a complete change of working for them. Through engagement and weekly briefings, the armed crime team have built strong working relationships with these officers and developed the shared objective of making South Yorkshire a safer place which has helped with this change.

The officers within the armed crime team have built strong relationships with the forensic science service. Due to officers doing forensic submissions on a regular basis they are never rejected, and the paperwork is always accurate and correct. The forensic lab will always turn around a submission within a custody time frame when a charge is sought.

The team have also developed and delivered training and reference materials to support other units to develop effective and compliant forensic submissions to improve the efficiency of this process.

Best available evidence

Currently, the [Crime Reduction Toolkit](#) includes the best-available evidence on [focused deterrence strategies](#).

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Tags

Crime reduction Criminal justice Operational policing