
FIREARMS

Version 4

1. Policy statement

In recent years we have seen a decline in valuable police units such as firearms due to police budget cuts yet firearms units play an invaluable role in protecting and reassuring the public.

As the figures for gun and knife crime continue to soar in the UK, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) continues to push for more police officers to be trained specifically as Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs).

Those officers that do volunteer for such a role should be safe in the knowledge that all has been done to protect their safety, this means appropriate, reliable equipment and sufficient back-up officers, should they be required. Following any incident involving a police firearm being used, that incident must be scrutinised, and lessons learned but this must be balanced against the support that the officers involved in the incident require. This includes the way officers are treated by any Post Incident Management procedure.

2. Responsibility

The National Board is responsible for all policy formation.

3. Summary

PFEW believes that police officers should not be routinely armed on duty. Officers who choose to carry a firearm are volunteers.

PFEW believes there are insufficient numbers of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs). There should be an urgent assessment of the Police Service's firearms capability and more AFOs trained. The attacks in Paris demonstrate the need to constantly revise the service's response to this type of incident. The attacks were on a scale that would require significant additional investment in specialist firearms roles across the UK to deal with effectively. Firearms is one aspect of policing, at the same time, PFEW believes that local neighbourhood and response policing must be maintained to provide reassurance and relationship building with communities.

PFEW recognises that following any incident involving a firearm being used, the incident should be scrutinised and any lessons learned but this needs to be balanced against the support that the AFOs involved will also require. This includes how our members are treated by any Post Incident Management procedure (PIP).

Those officers who have the difficult job of protecting our communities against those who have no regard for public safety and who choose to carry a firearm must have confidence in any process. The current Authorised Professional Practice Armed Policing adopted by the Service including the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) gets that balance right, it supports an effective investigation and ensures the integrity of the process and yet protects individual officers who are at their most vulnerable.

PIP is a recognised practice and is used nationwide by all forces in England and Wales. Conferring post incident is not a sinister practice. It is aimed at capturing the best evidence possible in extremely stressful and life threatening situations.

4. Procedures/implementation

PFEW will continue to engage with the NPCC, the Home Office and IOPC to review PIP to ensure that it facilitates the investigation, ensures the integrity of process and that the needs of the officers, who are at their most vulnerable, are addressed. PFEW will representative the interests of firearms officers and other officers involved in death or serious injury investigations both at the investigation stage and at the inquest stage. PFEW provides training for Federation representatives to familiarise them with PIP where there has been a death or serious injury involving police contact.

PFEW will continue to press the Service to undertake an urgent assessment of firearm’s capability and the training of AFOs.

Responsibility is delegated to the National Secretary and/or appropriate sub-committee.

| | Author | Date | Review date | Change |
|-----------|--------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Version 1 | EP-KP | Jan 2015 | Jan 2016 | |
| Version 2 | KP-EP | January 2016 | January 2017 | Minor changes |
| Version 3 | EP-KP | January 2017 | January 2018 | No change |
| Version 4 | KP | January 2019 | January 2020 | Minor changes |

Signed by:



National Chair



National Secretary