

Police and Crime Committee – 5 October 2017

Transcript of Agenda Item 6: Gun Crime in London

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): Our main business today is to discuss with invited guests the issue of gun crime in London.

I very much welcome our distinguished guests this morning. Andy French is from the National Crime Agency (NCA). Kevin Southworth, Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, and Jim Stokley, Temporary Commander [Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)]; hopefully not temporary for long, whatever it is that you aspire to. Martin Griffiths is a Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital [and Major Trauma Centre Barts NHS Trust], and other stuff as well, no doubt; we will hear all about it. It is a very long title you have there, Martin, and I am sure we will hear lots about it. Mike Eveleigh, thank you very much for coming along and representing the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC). Again, guests, thank you very much for coming along today.

This is a piece of work that we have been wanting to do for some time. This Committee has in the past visited this subject of gun crime in London. We think it is right again to spend a bit of time working on that, bearing in mind that as we are aware, gun offences did fall, which is to be welcomed over period of time, but we have seen over the last two/three years an increase in those numbers. We are very conscious that gun controls in this country are some of the strongest in Western Europe. Notwithstanding that, however, we have seen some issues around that.

I would like to start the initial questions, first of all to Jim [Stokley] and Kevin [Southworth]. The first question I have to you is: in your experience, how prominent an issue is gun crime in London today, perhaps compared to, for example, a decade ago? Perhaps an answer from the MPS initially might be helpful.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Good morning, Assembly Members, and thank you very much for inviting us here today to discuss this very serious topic.

To answer your question, sadly, gun crime is rising across the country. It is not an issue peculiar to London. It is rising around the country. Year on year, compared to last year, we have had 11% higher gun crime discharges than we had last year. However, towards the end of last year, we were up to nearly 60% higher. That percentage, although still too high, is starting to fall. This is replicated around the country, as I say. If we look at the last three months compared to the previous three months, we are starting to see a decline in London, but there is certainly no room for complacency. Compared to longer trends - I do not want to get too much into a statistics debate - for me, one gun crime discharge is one too many and we will do all we can within Trident and the MPS to bring gun crime.

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): I will bring in Andy in a minute to talk about the broader United Kingdom (UK) comparable because that will be interesting to see. You said across the country. It will be interesting to see the comparison between London and the rest the country.

You mentioned about the increase in discharges and we will talk a little bit later about the measurements because one issue that we can talk about is, when a gun is threatened and intimidated, it is registered as a lethal

weapon and we have seen an increase in the use of lethal weapons, shall we say, when often that is hidden. There is an issue around that, but the figures you quoted are discharges?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): That is correct: lethal barrelled gun crime discharges. That rise in London is 11% on last year, but that rise is lower than it was at the end of last year, if that makes sense. It is still too high, as I said, and we are working tirelessly to bring that figure down.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Andy, London compared to the rest of country: would you like to comment on that?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): The figures around firearms discharges - rather than recorded crime - are co-ordinated and put together by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS), along with other contributors such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the Home Office around it. That is their information.

Just as a suggestion, perhaps for your future debates, NABIS would be keen to join that and can probably add some value to that information, but certainly nationally on the information that we have been provided from them, it is about a 20% to 25% increase within the last year in terms of discharges that they have seen. Therefore, nationally, it is an increasing picture around discharges.

The areas around the country where we see significant increases around that, more so than the MPS regions, are the likes of the West Midlands and Merseyside, the northwest, where that activity includes pistols and shotguns predominantly as the weapons of choice that are discharged. The MPS [area] is lower than recent six-month activity around the country. We have seen bigger rises than that and on an average about 25% on the latest figures to January this year.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We are actually seeing - and this often is unusual - higher increases in other parts of the country, certain specific parts of country, than we have seen in London in the recent measured period?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): That is right, from the NABIS statistics, but bear in mind that is to January of this year and does not take in the last six months.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is interesting. Martin, if we may ask you a question or two, based on your experience, what changes have you seen in the level and severity of gun crime in London from your end of the operation?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): Thank you for that question. I represent the trauma centre for North East London at Barts NHS Health Trust and since we went live as a major trauma centre in 2012, our numbers of victims of gun injury have doubled. Gunshot injuries represent about 2.5% of our penetrating trauma and, year upon year, we have been seeing 20% to 30% rises and increases in the past two or three years. We will admit 50 to 60 patients this year with gunshot injuries. We will also see another dozen or so under our pre-hospital team who will die at the scene of injury.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): You gave us lots of really interesting figures there. You said that gun-related trauma was about 2.5% of the whole?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): For penetrating trauma.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Yes. Of that whole, that has in itself increased over a period?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): And the rise is disproportionate and so we are seeing a bigger rise in gun injuries than we are seeing in knife injuries.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is interesting. We have done lots of work and thinking about knife-related crime as a real issue in London, but the figures you have from your people are actually that there has been a more significant increase in gun-related penetration injuries than knife, a bigger increase comparably?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): Absolutely so.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That was really interesting. Again, Martin, just to explore that, you are saying that the numbers have been increasing. The severity or the different sorts of guns used: is that anything to comment on?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): As was previously said, we see a lot of pistol ammunition and shotgun injuries. The tendency has moved more towards shotguns in the recent past.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): A tendency towards shotguns in the recent past, more so than --

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): Looking at our hard data, yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I just quickly ask: are you under an obligation to report shotguns when they appear in your hospital and is that data included in the national statistics?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): Absolutely. All these victims are accompanied by the MPS or the appropriate police officer and so that is not really an issue for us.

Joanne McCartney AM: And they are part of the statistics?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): The national framework for reporting seized firearms is through National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS). Then, yes, the responsible police force would take that action, yes.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): More importantly, should we receive information regarding weapons carried, regarding relatives or associates, we are obliged to report that.

Andrew Dismore AM: You mentioned the injuries you are dealing with. Are those injuries intended to kill or intended to wound or can you draw a distinction between the two?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): From my perspective, I just see injuries. It is very difficult to understand motivation based on the injuries we see. We do not have enough of a population of trained or committed shooters who can distinguish between intention to kill and intention to wound in my experience.

Andrew Dismore AM: I do not know if the police can comment.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, I would agree with that. As well, it is important to remember that the majority of gun crime discharges are at property and so might be at a vehicle or at premises rather than always at a person. However, I completely agree with the panel here over that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): The majority of discharges are at property as opposed to at a person?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, that is right, but I do not think if someone is firing a gun at someone else, they would distinguish between injury or trying to kill.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Yes, and from the little I know of shotguns, particularly of shotguns.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That leads me on to Mike and welcome this morning. You represent the BASC, which is a very large organisation representing members and sporting people and gun users. Thank you for coming along today.

Mike, how does your organisation - or does it; I am sure it does - monitor gun crime statistics in order to identify issues that may or may not affect your members?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Thank you for inviting me. That is a question and something that has bothered me over the years. The Home Office used to produce some extremely useful figures which included the type of gun, where it was stolen and when it was stolen. Since about 2005, they have not been producing these figures and so we are at a bit of a loss to answer that. We do work quite closely with NABIS and personally I work quite closely with the MPS and we are told about matters and where there are rises in crime and the like. However, of course, as a sporting organisation, it is not exactly our main issue.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): OK. Again, remind us. What are the figures you are not getting that you used to get?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): The Home Office used to produce [figures] from every police force. As I was a police officer, we used to submit figures to the Home Office every year to explain what guns were stolen from where and how in our area. These were collated and then circulated, but I am afraid since 2005 the Home Office has not done that. I have been trying to persuade them to do it ever since but I am afraid they have fallen on deaf ears. Our monitoring really is the media and what our police friends tell us.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We will get to some questions later about control or protection and storage of legal guns and how other people get their hands on guns and they are some questions for later. Your members are there and are people who, we hope, legitimately own guns and have to go through a proper

process to do so and they become members of your organisation. What is that relationship, then, between the people who own guns legally and the organisation? You are there supportive and --

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes, we are there to support, to assist, to give legal advice, to provide standards of behaviour with firearms, which includes security - I will come to that later on; I know you want to have further questions on that - and, yes, give them general advice and try to produce an ethos of sensible, safe possession of firearms. It is very much in our own interests.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): The question here is: the MPS reported that there were just over 2,500 gun crimes in 2016/17. How reflective is this statistic of the true nature of gun crime in London? That is probably for Kevin and Jim. Does that figure reflect the true position?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I would say that it does because we have heard from panel members here around how people who suffer gunshot injuries go to hospital and it is reported and so they are either with the police or it is reported when they are at the hospital. On the majority of occasions, it is with the police and so we would be aware of that.

We do not have a gun crime culture in this country and so, when there are gunshots heard, people do ring the police and it is vigorously investigated. There are nuances in the system around lethal barrelled weapons and non-lethal barrelled weapons, but on the whole, I would say that our data integrity is good around gun crime discharges.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is a point well made because, as you say, we do not have a gun culture in this country, as opposed to other countries, and it is an extraordinary event to hear a discharge of a gun - that is your point - and it will be people's attention. We can move on to the drivers of gun crime.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Good morning, gentlemen. The questions that I have are directed at Jim [Stokley], Kevin [Southworth] and Andy [French].

The opening question is for clarity, really. Can you just tell us? Do guns continue to be used for more serious and organised crime or is this changing? I heard one of you gentlemen say something about guns being used or discharged more against property, and so can you clarify what you mean by that?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I can, indeed. Roughly, just under half of gun crime discharges, we believe, are gang-related. About 46% are gang-related. Of gun crime discharges, we believe that a lot of it is associated with the drugs trade and by that, I mean people dealing drugs at a street level and disagreements between different groups of people in gangs dealing those drugs. As I said before, it is important to remember that the majority of gun crime discharges are at property. It may be that that is associated with the drugs trade - and so it could be that it is some form of intimidation or warning - but we cannot get away from the fact that people do shoot each other and, as I said, nearly half of it is gang-related. I believe the majority of it is related to the drugs industry.

There are other offences that occur - armed robbery and more broader intimidation - but I would say they are in the minority in comparison to those other two drivers.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): It may be worth adding a potentially helpful statistic just to support what Mr Stokley was saying about the connection with drug crime in particular. During our proactive operations to recover firearms from a

Trident perspective, we find that about 70% of times we recover a cache of Class A drugs along with the weapon, which points to the indicator that the gun is very much a tool of the drug dealer in that circumstance to enforce their territory and to enforce their business.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: OK. Then I have a couple of questions about the profile, if you like, of the individuals involved. I understand that about 55% of all gun crime perpetrators - and the victim rate - are younger than 25. Would you support that figure?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. I would probably hand to Mr Griffiths next to me, actually. However, I would just say just from a police perspective that I do note that some of your questions relate to knife crime or the crossover between the two. Those associated with gun crime are slightly older, but that figure is reducing, if that makes sense. That is accurate what you said there, but I will hand over to my colleague next to me.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Martin, have you seen a change in the age profile of victims coming into your services?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): Absolutely. Our data is fairly comprehensive regarding who is admitted under our care with knife and gun injuries. In 2012, we were seeing an average age of around 25, perhaps a little bit older, and now we are seeing that our hotspot is about the mid to late teens and so 19-year-olds and 20-year-olds are being shot. That goes in line with the trend of decreasing youth in terms of knife crime and so both victims and participants are younger. We find that in knife crime our population is now mid-teens and 16- and 17-year-olds are very common in our group, whereas gunshot victims seem to be slightly older.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Then I must ask the question about gender. Have you seen any shift in more young women coming in as victims or is that steady?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): In terms of interpersonal violence, vastly; the majority of them are male. 90% plus are male. Of the female victims of injury, they tend to be victims for particularly different reasons, not necessarily drug-related. Often, they are part of domestic violence, particularly with knife trauma. I have not seen a significant increase in the female victims of gunshot injury.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: I suppose I will come back to the police in terms of ethnicity. I represent one of the boroughs - Hackney - which is in the top four and the others. They, statistically, have large black and minority ethnic (BAME) populations. Is the relationship between the perpetrators and victims proportionate to their presence in the community?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I would say that it is, yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: It is proportionate?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is proportionate.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you. It is just that if you talk about one, then it is good to just have the rest. I will just ask. Does the rise in gun crime have any parallels with the recent rise in knife crime offences?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Sadly, we are seeing across the country a rise in violent crime and by 'violent crime' I mean knife crime and gun crime. They are both rising. Is it related? As we have heard from Martin [Griffiths], we have seen an older cohort that is associated with firearms and a younger with knives. You would attribute that to the fact that the knives are much more accessible than firearms are. As a consequence, it is easier for young people to pick up a knife and carry a knife with them. We have done lots of work around that and I am conscious of not straying beyond the parameters of this particular discussion around gun crime, but we have done a lot around knife crime, which I know you are aware of, with weapon sweeps and so forth. There is a rise in violent crime.

Are the two related? There is less gang-associated knife crime than gun crime. Knife crime linked to gangs is under 20%, which is a figure that is falling, whereas with gun crime it remains roughly half, as I said, 46%. They are separate.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: What percentage did you say of lethal barrelled discharges are flagged as relating to gangs?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): 46%.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: For knife crime, that was only, what, 5%, you said?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No, less than 20% is gang-related.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: What does this mean in terms of the police response to the problem? I am going to go on and ask about the gang matrix in a minute, but I want to --

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): OK. Do you want me to cover the police response now?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Yes.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We have a Gun Crime Strategy that looks at four particular areas, which is pursue, prevent, protect and prepare. Around the pursue side of things, we analyse and pursue every piece of firearms intelligence that there is in London and we target that proactively. We reactively, obviously, investigate shootings as well. We have what we call Viper patrols, which are specific patrols where we conduct intelligence-led stop-and-search of individuals who we believe are carrying firearms. We have created a linked series team within our reactive investigation team to look at linked series of shootings and we have seen our sanction detection rates for shootings rise by 72% for this year. We work nationally with the NCA and we are working very closely with all other agencies throughout London to make sure that we share our intelligence around firearms.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Jim, if I just may? thank you for that. This is really helpful, but we are going to pursue a little bit more deeply about the MPS --

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, I thought that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Yes. In fact, that sets the scene for my next question, Jim, because the Mayor has committed to reviewing the gang matrix as part of a commitment to reducing serious violence. How much will this help in tackling gun crime and what kinds of changes would be helpful to the MPS?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We work very closely with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). They share our Gun Crime Strategy and we have written it in conjunction with them.

With regards to the review of the gangs matrix, that is being conducted by MOPAC, so it is probably unfair for me to comment on that specifically, but I know that we are working closely with them and other partners that share intelligence that feed into that matrix. I know Mr Lammy [David Lammy MP] in his report [*The Lammy Review: An Independent Review into the Treatment of, and Outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System, 2017*] referred to the review of the matrix and we are in full co-operation with that with MOPAC and other partners.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: From your perspective, is it broken? Does it need fixing? Is it wobbly?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No. From my perspective, we have to understand the complexities of gang crime throughout London and so --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Is the matrix helping in that?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. We have in the region of 200 gangs across London and around 3,500 to 3,700 members of those gangs. As I said at the start, roughly half of gun crime is associated with gangs. Therefore, we are striving and working tirelessly to keep London and Londoners safe, as we should do, and by pursuing those involved in gun crime and those involved in gang-related crime, we need to relentlessly pursue them and we will do.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you, but you welcome the review that is taking place by MOPAC?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, definitely.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): I had a bit of detail that might help in this, Assembly Member Arnold, if I may? Mr Stokley mentioned before about the knife crime cohort that was potentially gang-related as being about 20% at the moment. If you go back to the start of my time at Trident, which was three to four years ago, that figure was running at about 44%. About 44% of knife crime was deemed to be gang-related at that time. Now, in that interim period, we have a key measure of our success against gang nominals, which is the number of people we have either in custody or under some form of judicial restriction, which is a very important indicator for us of our attritional impact against the gangs. That used to sit at less than 30%. In other words, less than 30% of people on the matrix were either in custody or subject to a restriction of some type. As that has steadily risen over the last three to four years to what is currently today about 44% of the matrix either in custody or subject to some form of control, the knife crime cohort that is gang-related has dropped in inverse correlation from about 44% to what is now, as Mr Stokley said, about 20%. You can literally see it going like that. As we have achieved enforcement success against the gang matrix cohort, which is at the end of the day a violence matrix as opposed to specifically gang-related, we have been able to prevent more young people coming to harm in the first place as a consequence of knife crime within that cohort. That is perhaps an important indicator.

The gun crime challenge within that is slightly different because, as both my colleagues have alluded to, it is a slightly older cohort of people who tend to be involved in gun crime acquisition and use and, therefore, it is a slightly different type of enforcement approach that we need to look at. I hope that helps.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: That does help. It is well worthwhile the review taking place for us to get an update and understand what is going.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Anything that can improve it, absolutely.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): It is nice to clarify those figures around the usage of guns and gangs because our briefing earlier was that the percentage of gang-involved gun crime was less and it is helpful for you to clarify that it is higher up in the range, although perhaps even then still not as high as some Londoners may think, particularly the reflection around knife crime, which is the low gang usage of 20% to 25%. It was quite an interesting figure.

One point that we wanted to touch upon around women and girls, which Jennette brought out but I want to explore a bit more, is about their involvement in gun crime, not necessarily as victims. Is there any other way that women and girls, particularly with gang affiliations, are involved in gun activities at all?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, there is. You may recall earlier on in the year we did a gun surrender campaign in London and we actually had 93 weapons that were surrendered during that time, which was a week in mid-February, and over 1,700 rounds of ammunition. Part of that campaign that we ran was a social media campaign that highlighted the story of a young woman who had held a gun for her boyfriend. She gave her story and that was part of the social media campaign for the gun surrender. We have seen this happen over a number of years and it has increased over a number of years where people will hold a gun for someone else and that is an issue. It is important for us to raise awareness of that because it is quite clear that if you hold a gun, if you have possession of a gun, you will go to prison for five years. That is quite explicit. Obviously, there will be mitigating circumstances and all sorts of other factors that could be taken into consideration, but the fact is: you have a gun and it is five years in prison. That is the message that we have got across. That social media campaign that highlighted the issue for that particular lady had 500,000 hits and so it was very popular and it was good for us to raise that awareness.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We are going to pick up later little bit about the amnesty as well and about the numbers of guns handed in and about the effectiveness. We are going to return to that in another set of questions.

One last point from me is around comparisons on knife and gun crime again. You are saying that it is the younger profile knife violence and slightly older for gun crime. Is there a ratcheting-up of violence and a trend around, for instance, retaliation? Is there a feeling that knives are used at one level and then something happens to bring guns into play? Does it work like that at all, particularly around the gang aspect?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is quite hard to say to say that right across London. Every circumstance is different, but there is an element where there would be a natural escalation depending on the type of conflict and type of situation that is going on. It is hard to say generally in every instance, but you would expect that in some circumstances where perhaps you have rivalry or people fighting over a certain drugs trade, for example.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): An escalation situation?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Indeed.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Yes, I have just looked and it is about a figure I want to clarify that we have heard in an answer. It is either Jim [Stokley] or Kevin [Southworth]. I wondered if you could briefly clarify again. It seems like there is a discrepancy between the NCA information, which says that gun crime tends to be committed by urban street gangs, and what you have just said in terms of it being discharges against property. Do you accept this difference between London and the rest of the country?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): For London, it is, as I said, roughly half. It is 46% that is gang-related. When there are gun crime discharges, people are not always injured and so a lot of the discharges can be against property. That is what the NCA document is saying and that is what I agree with. I agree that the majority of gun crime discharges that occur are at property and so it might be at vehicles or it might be at a house or a front door or something like that. It does not necessarily result in an injury to a person.

Len Duvall AM: Sorry, can we just get some clarity here? It is the issue about how there are gangs and gangs. You told us earlier on that most of the discharges are probably relating to drug activity or drug-related activity.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Fifty per cent.

Len Duvall AM: What we are trying to do is get the understanding of the discrepancy between the MPS London-wide figures and the NCA, which are slightly at odds with your issue. It is not about whether it is fired at vehicles because I could be in a gang and fire at vehicles or I could be wanting to settle scores. Either way, we just want to understand what the discrepancy is.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): I might be able to help, if I may? We may be talking slightly at odds in that the gang flag that we apply in the MPS is about the motivation for the crime. That does not preclude it being at property. For instance, we will routinely see gang shootings whereby they will drive by a rival's house and fire up the house. It is still a gang-flagged crime but it is firing at a property. When we talk about property being the main target, that is not the acquisition of property as in a gun-enabled robbery. It is still potentially a gang shooting but at a property as a warning or a territorial issue. Does that help?

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: That makes sense, yes.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Just from an MPS perspective,

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Just from an NCA perspective, we would not break the information down from NABIS into whether it was gang or otherwise. The general comment is around property being the primary discharge area, if you like, rather than victims *per se*.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you, gentlemen. You were saying that the older gang members are the ones likely to have the guns. When you do profiling of gangs, are the older members of gangs normally the ones who are more in control of it?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): In control of the gang, do you mean?

Susan Hall AM: Yes.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. I would agree with that.

Susan Hall AM: Is it almost a status thing when you get to a level that you have a gun? A lot of things within gangs are somewhat status. In the only work I have ever done, they seem to go in ranks.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, it is very hard to generalise.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, of course.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I do not want to get into that in too much detail. It depends on the competition of that gang. We have heard from Martin [Griffiths] that the cohort of individuals who are victims of gun crime are getting younger and so we have heard that. I would say that some of the suspects in that gun crime are getting younger as well. Generally, people [involved in gun crime] are getting younger. It is hard to say specifically that in all gangs it is always the eldest who are in charge, but it would be safe to say in some instances that would be the case.

Susan Hall AM: If you were looking for guns, you would be more inclined to go towards the leaders of the gangs to cut some of the numbers down?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): If you are looking for a gun, you go with the intelligence around where that weapon is. That is what you will go with. You will go with where the evidence takes you and when the intelligence takes you. Inevitably, it probably will be where you said, but you will have to go where the evidence takes you.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): Just answering a question that was asked earlier about guns and knives in response to gun injuries, what we have seen in our practice anecdotally is that when there are a series of gun-related discharges or injuries, we see a change locally in the knives that are used. I suspect that the victim's cohort cannot get access to weapons and so they change to knives and they move from small weapons to choppers to machetes to katanas. We then see a rash of severe torso and neck injuries caused by these bigger weapons. Although they are classified as knife injuries or bladed weapon injuries, they are more severe.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): This is picking up on the earlier point about the potential escalation of - to use a word - the armoury and the degree of violence used. You are seeing at the receiving end sometimes an escalation at that point.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre Barts Health NHS Trust): In these particular intensively local issues, yes. Most knife injuries tend to be injuries that are opportunity or random or reactive offences, whereas with guns it is slightly more likely to be planned or people are slightly more committed towards causing harm one way or another. When these people are injured or they are threatened, they will up their game in terms of changing their choice of weapon and they will move to a bigger knife rather than a gun.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you very much for that, Martin. We are moving on to the supply of guns and we have heard earlier that we live in a highly regulated city and country but people are managing to have access to guns and different types of guns. The Deputy Commissioner [Craig Mackey QPM, MPS] was here a year-and-a-bit ago telling us that the intelligence and the understanding of the landscape of firearms is not clear in London and in the UK. We have some questions from Caroline on that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I will just quickly ask Martin following on from what you were just saying, are you seeing acid being used at all as a weapon as well?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): The figures on acid are very interesting or caustic injuries. The numbers are very low and the injuries sustained are relatively minor. Very few people who receive caustic injuries are admitted to hospital. Most of them are mild to moderate eye injuries or facial injuries.

I feel, looking at our data, that there is a significant increase in the numbers but the numbers pale into insignificance compared to knife and gun crime. Moreover, they tend to apply to a different demographic because a caustic weapon is an easier weapon to get hold of if it is bleach or something. You can pick it up at a shop or from your kitchen and it is deployed in a very different way. When you stab somebody, you have to be right up close to them and it is a visceral, personal interaction. When you discharge a weapon, you have to actually find a weapon and find rounds and shoot it directly. With caustic injuries, you just throw it and run. It is a much easier thing to do as a perpetrator and so it tends to attract younger, more reactive perpetrators rather than people who are more considered.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you. That was helpful. Yes, I wanted to pick up the issue of supply and to start off with Andy [French], Kevin [Southworth] and Jim [Stokley]. It was mentioned right at the beginning that pistols and shotguns tend to be the weapons, but can you just give a bit more detail? What types of guns are most frequently used to commit crime in London?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): In London, as you rightly say, it is handguns and shotguns. We have seized automatic weapons and we have seized semi-automatic weapons, but that is rare. The majority of the guns that we have seized have been handguns and shotguns. We have convicted people of manufacturing weapons. We have convicted people of importing weapons and of reactivating weapons as well. There are different sorts of prosecutions and investigations that we conduct. It is not just simply possession of a firearm. It is probably better for Andy to comment on nationally what that looks like, but certainly in London it is handguns and shotguns.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: By shotguns, do you mean sawn-off ones?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Some are, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Andy, do you have a national perspective?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): That is generally the national picture that we see in terms of those firearms that are either recovered through crime or inferred, ie not recovered but through the forensics and the ballistics work can be identified as a certain type of weapon.

What we are also seeing in terms of automatic and semiautomatic weapons, again, as Jim says, in smaller numbers, but increasing numbers, are weapons that have originated from Eastern European countries, some weapons that start life as - there are a number of titles given to them - acoustic expanding weapons. In very

simplistic terms, they are weapons that look genuine and are easily converted and they are used in things like theatre productions. I guess to us, looking at our legislation, we can find that very strange but in a lot of countries they have been and they can be sold legitimately and they do not meet UK standards around the deactivation. They are illegal and they are prohibited here, but they have found their way here. Of course, there is a vulnerability there. Without too much work, those weapons can be converted to what their original state or what the intention of the manufactures were at that time. That is a concern, that we are starting to see those. We are not seeing those discharged particularly and we are not seeing them used in crime, but we are starting to see law enforcement colleagues recovering those but in smaller numbers. That is an area that we have an element of concern and an element of reaction to, particularly with our international partners.

From an NCA perspective, we work internationally as well as domestically and we work bilaterally as well as multilaterally. We work strongly with Europol members. We work strongly with bilateral relations to have operational activity to look at how we join up the forensic recoveries in the UK with our partners' recoveries and crimes, and how we link investigating officers together. There are recent examples - some of them are *sub judice* and so I cannot go into too much - where we work closely with the MPS and particularly the Trident Team on where they have recovered that type of weapon and where we have seen that around the country or abroad, and bringing that together to co-ordinate what that looks like and the opportunities to reduce the threat and try to achieve some criminal justice outcomes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: If I understand what you are saying, through ballistics and so on you are being able to trace where a weapon has been used for multiple crimes across the UK and internationally?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): That is correct. That is a big part in terms of the discovery about what the threat looks like and what we are facing or what we could face going forward.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What have you noticed in terms of the changing ways people are trying to attempt to supply firearms in this country? Is it increasing? [Sir] Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM [former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] used to talk to us about how the supply is changing and the MPS were working with others to look at that supply route. Apart from the mentioned Eastern European countries - there may have been some coming in from there - have you see a change? What is the situation like?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): The predominant supply still is through ports in the UK, largely the southeastern ports, the ferry ports. Typically, they are in concealments within private and commercial vehicles, some in low numbers, some in slightly higher numbers of weapons which perhaps are less desirable by organised crime but still are viable or lethal barrelled and so that would be a concern. That still remains our principal supply route.

However, we are seeing more activity through technology, through the dark web, through clear net, in terms of supply and so technology does feature in that. Largely, that is in the space of individuals who order maybe parts of a weapon or indicative parts of a weapon and, through a number of transactions using the mail system and what we call 'fast parcels', try to arrive at a point where they may have a blank firing weapon but, again, with a small amount of effort and sourcing parts within the UK or elsewhere, they can put together a handgun or a pistol that is viable that we would regard as a prohibited weapon here.

Those individuals are not necessarily what we refer to as organised crime. They are often individuals who cannot access gangs and weapons and organised crime. Some have been, but largely they have been individuals who either have an unhealthy interest in firearms or have illegally held firearms, a very small proportion of licence-holders who want to extend their reach with something they cannot access in the UK,

and some we have had with mental health issues, etc, those sorts of types or demographics, if you like. It is something that is emerging. It is not running away, but it is an emerging threat that we are conscious of.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: People are ordering bits that fit together to become something very dangerous?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): That is right. Typically, we have seen a lot of traffic from [the United States of] America, of course, which has a ready market quite legally and a lot of the vendors, a lot of the sellers and a lot of the registered firearms dealers in America and in other countries can legally sell to a UK buyer over the internet, certain parts of a weapon. It becomes an offence when it is actually exported. However, they can do that and that is legal. Illegally, of course, anywhere, anytime, anyplace, if we are in a space where we cannot be detected or the communication is encrypted. There are lots of commodities that are traded like that and it is a challenge for law enforcement to get into that space. There is activity going on that I cannot really go into.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is an area of new technology with the internet and so on but actually there are loopholes being found, almost.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): Yes, technology-enabled is a change for all serious and organised crime and with that you have things like virtual currencies and cryptocurrencies, how things are paid for and traded, which has been for some years now and is an area of concern and an area where law enforcement has an interest in understanding what happens in those marketplaces. They are criminal marketplaces at the end of the day or can be criminal marketplaces.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is a whole new world that is opening up. I am just thinking that I am quite glad I do not really know about this.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): What I would say in terms of the frontier work is that there is a strong effort with a number of partners at Border Force, UK policing and other partners outside our realms where a number of techniques are employed about how detections and how disruptions can take place to minimise that are actually --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Just one thing. You said some items can be legally exported and then illegally imported. Did I catch that? From some countries it can be legally, from the [United] States (US), you said? Could you just clarify? I did not quite get that, please.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): Yes, sure. In some countries, you can buy or sell quite a sinister firearm compared to what we would regard in the UK as something that would be not just illegal but prohibited as well. There are dealers and there are individuals who can offer for supply parts or indeed some full firearms --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): To export?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): -- to export without actually committing an offence by advertising that. When that weapon comes at a point of import to the UK, that is an offence.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): It would be?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, NCA): Absolutely, yes, and that is at the point of inception generally where we work with partners to do that. However, we also what the partners upstream, including some of our European partners, about how this from a UK perspective unacceptable and presents threats to all of us around that. There have been some changes in legislation, changes in European standards and work by the European Union (EU) and other partners to help address those vulnerabilities, but of course they hinge on many years of constitutions and cultures, etc, that have dictated how those countries approach firearms.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Mike, can I bring you in next? What types of guns are typically owned by your members?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): It is across the board. We have shotguns, self-loading, compaction, side-by-side, usually used for clay pigeon shooting, pest control and grouse or pheasant shooting. We have rifles, what they call full-bore and what you would consider a rifle, which is used for target shooting, pest control and deer control. We have miniature rifles, which are very small rifles firing a very small round, used for target shooting, the Olympics and Commonwealth Games. There are some muzzle-loading pistols, which are for target shooting, which are the old type you pour gunpowder down the barrel and ram a lump of lead on top. There are very few pistols proper - you might call them pistols - which are retained for humane despatch of injured animals, deer and the like, and that is the basic set that we have. Sporting equipment, largely, we would call it.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, apart from the shotguns, there are very few pistols and so the pistols that are in circulation are not likely to have been stolen from your members.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I would hope not, no. I wonder if I could just take one second to clarify something?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): You mentioned earlier on that there is an automatic five-year sentence for possession of a firearm. I should just clarify that it is five years for possession of a pistol or a sawn-off shotgun. For certain ones, there is a five-year sentence.

We have found that in some cases, I am afraid, that five-year mandatory prison sentence has been counterproductive. If an elderly lady finds her grandfather's or her father's old .455 Webley from the First World War in the attic, unfortunately, she is subject to a five-year minimum prison sentence. It has frightened an awful lot of people off handing in guns that they would normally do, I am afraid, but that is a side line.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Gosh. Yes, that is an anomaly, as it were, in the legislation. We picked it up at the beginning. Steve [O'Connell AM] picked it up. You do not have any figures or understanding of how many weapons are stolen from your members?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): No, that is the difficulty. Obviously, our members will report them to us, yes. The law obliges them to report almost immediately any theft, loss or destruction of a firearm.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The figures you talked about at the beginning would not give that picture?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): We really would not know how many there are, no. I am afraid not.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In terms of the MPS, it sounds to me but I am going to ask you to what extent legally owned firearms contribute to the supply of firearms used for illegal purposes. It sounds to me like it does not necessarily match up.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): In London, it is quite low. Surprisingly low numbers of firearms have been stolen. We are talking single figures for rifles, pistols and revolvers and low double figures for shotguns. However, as we have discussed before, if weapons are stolen outside of London and then come into London, it is very hard for us to control without specific intelligence relating to such thefts. That is a difficulty for us, particularly as we have seen a rise in shotguns and handguns being used, in particular in shotguns being used.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Andy, maybe you could help with nationally what extent - it is the same question - legally owned or stolen for illegal purposes. Is there some sort of national database of figures of legally owned weapons?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): The figures are, again, the latest figures. They do not have the figures at the moment to give - me, anyway - in terms of what the national lost and stolen [firearms] actually look like. They are also in the same point that Mike [Eveleigh] made, which is that I do not know the reason behind that in terms of why those figures from recorded crime from policing would not be -- as I say, that is something -- that is a question I would probably like to take away. However, generally, in terms of trends, yes, we do see from the police activity and from the NABIS reporting that there are regular thefts of legally held shotguns. Some of those are targeted by crime or organised crime.

In terms of the amount outstanding and in terms of the figures around shotguns in linked series crimes, there is a fluidity of supply. This year, certainly 2016 to 2017, NABIS talks about how in over 90% of discharges, the material that they have taken, ballistic material, etc, does not show previous discharge. That suggests that there is a ready supply or that the weapons that are already here are freshly stolen or have been held and have not been seen before and then are used. The proportion of that is quite interesting and maybe a little bit concerning that the linked series is so small. Shotguns do feature within that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Is there a national database of everyone who is licensed and holds a gun? Yes. Mike is nodding at me.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): The National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS) was implemented as a result of the 1997 Firearms Amendment Act provides that there is a national database of all firearms that are legally held, the people who hold them, where they have been and how they have been disposed of.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is helpful. Just finally to Martin, are the types of guns that are used consistent with the kinds of injuries that you see through your work?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): Obviously, we see only the people who get to us alive and so I cannot be comprehensive regarding the injuries sustained on the streets of London, but we have seen an increase in shotgun injuries and pistol injuries. It is normally pistol ammunition, whatever the device is discharging it.

In terms of where that is patient is struck, because of the nature of head injuries caused by guns, we do not see an awful lot of them that come to us. Often, they are killed at the scene. However, we see a lot of torso injuries, which are very survivable given the advances in trauma care and the organisation of London's trauma system. We also see a lot of limb injuries, which are again also very easy to save lives with but are very disabling for our patients.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely. Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM: I am not really sure which of you is able to answer this question. Perhaps it will be you, Jim. If I were a criminal and I wanted to buy a gun, how much would I have to pay? Let us say a pistol.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is probably not the forum to go into that.

Tony Arbour AM: No, all right, but is it a very large sum of money?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): There are different ways for people. Some people will purchase them. Some people will almost, in effect hire them. It varies on the connections that the individual has. It depends which organisation or which gang you belong to. It depends on so many different determining factors. It would be hard to put a figure on it, to be honest with you.

Tony Arbour AM: I asked the question in relation to what Martin [Griffiths] said. He said, that in response to a shooting crime, he finds that the kind of knife crime increases; they use bigger weapons. The assumption I was making was that that must be because - or perhaps I am wrong - the people who want to seek revenge for a shooting cannot gain access to a gun.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is still hard to gain access to guns in London. There are stringent rules and regulations and legislation that we have heard about and that we know about. We do all we can to stop the supply of firearms in the UK with other colleagues sitting here and another law enforcement across the country. We make it as hard as possible for individuals to buy weapons. You are quite right in what you say. It is difficult still to purchase a weapon.

Tony Arbour AM: All right. We have, however, just heard from Andy [French] about the existence of the dark web and we have heard about Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies and all of that sort of stuff. That suggests that the availability is greater than it has been in the past.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We have other forms of availability, yes, and I am not going to go into the dark net too much for obvious reasons.

Tony Arbour AM: Of course.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): If we look at how many guns we have seized this year, in London alone we have seized 635 weapons since the start of the year. If that continues in the same vein, at the end of the year we will have seized more weapons than ever before any year and that is on top of last year, which was more than the year before. We are seeing more weapons being seized. On the availability, it is still difficult to buy a weapon but it is possible and that is reflected in the fact that we have seized more weapons than ever before.

Tony Arbour AM: Is the fact that you are able to seize more guns related to the fact that the pool of guns is greater than it has been before?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We cannot deny that that is one of the factors and so there are more weapons, but, equally, we are using new forensic techniques and new types of investigation around seizing weapons and tracking down every piece of firearms intelligence that is in London. There are a lot of other factors in play around increasing our seizures. It is not just the fact that there are more weapons. However, as we have heard, sadly, throughout the UK, gun crime is on the rise. It is a national issue.

Tony Arbour AM: What I am seeking to probe, really, is the availability of guns. You have told us of the success of your gun amnesty. You have told us about the increasing number of guns you are seizing. The guns which are handed over at a time of amnesty, would it be fair to say that they are not modern guns and that they might be - I do not know - something that Dad brought home from Croatia or something?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is actually a gun surrender and I am not being picky. It is just that there is a difference.

Tony Arbour AM: Forgive me, OK, surrender, not amnesty.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): An amnesty suggests that there will be no prosecution.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes, of course.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): If we found out that that weapon was used in a crime, then there would be a prosecution. It is a gun surrender. Sorry to be picky over the terminology.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes, that is fine.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, it could be that and we have had weapons that have been handed in as a consequence of that. Equally, as Mike suggested, we have had weapons that have been handed in when someone is deceased and relatives are clearing the house and have found a weapon in the attic and that has been handed in as part of the gun surrender. As I said, there were 93 weapons during the week of the surrender in February and there is a national one coming up in November, I believe.

Tony Arbour AM: Again and finally, Chairman, in relation to the pool of guns which are available, it was Andy [French] who said that it is not unusual for the same gun to be used in different offences in different places. Is that right?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I would agree with that, yes.

Tony Arbour AM: That would suggest that, contrary to what I have been exploring about easier availability of guns, it must be that much more difficult, then, if in effect you have to borrow a gun and so I am assuming it is different. You were suggesting there is some kind of wholesaler who rents out guns rather than the same gang operating nationally doing it.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, it is fair to say there are different ways and different methods of operation for criminals throughout London and some might use that tactic. Some might use others entirely. Some may be part of a bigger organisation that has illegally imported them. There could be any number of different nuances around that. I want to be as clear as possible. I do not want to say there is any one cohort that deals with it this way and that is the same for everyone because that is not the case. We are using better recovery techniques around forensication and technology is increasing and improving and so we are seeing and we are identifying linked series better, but it is difficult in some instances to attribute weapons to certain crimes.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): Could I just add something as well that might be helpful? It worth mentioning that there is still much to deter criminals from seeking to acquire a firearm in the first place. Back to your point about why choose a knife over a gun then or vice versa, the point made by the colleague at the end about the mandatory sentence is valid. There will always be anomalies in legislation. However, the five-year mandatory sentence is very much welcomed by us. It was something that precipitated a significant drop-off in gun crime within the city and within the country generally. It is still a fact that if you get caught with a criminal weapon, you will get that five-year sentence unless there is genuine mitigation for doing so. Beyond that as well, the 700-plus weapons seizures that Mr Stokley referred to from last year and the 635 from this year, are record-breaking years for us in terms of firearm seizures, lethal barrelled, and with that comes a commensurate level of conviction as well. At the point of supply and acquisition of a criminal firearm, that is when criminals are at their most vulnerable, and so there is a lot to deter them from thinking about trying to get a hold of a firearm in the first place because that is when they are going to be at their most vulnerable to targeting by us as the police and that is when we are more likely to catch them. Equally, if and when they get caught, the sentence is still quite compelling and so --

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Just a couple of bits of clarification, if that is OK. Can I ask Mike about the age profile of your members? We were talking earlier about how the profile of gun users who are criminals has gone down. Are you seeing any changes, maybe a younger membership?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): It is probably the opposite effect. I would say our demographic is now probably middle-aged men, largely. Women are coming more into the sport, particularly clay pigeon. We are beginning to see a small rise in younger people coming into it but that is more in the air rifle and military rifle areas. I do not really think they match the criminal demographic generally, no.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): That is interesting because, if it was more of a cultural thing where guns were becoming more acceptable or people were getting more used to them, you would think more of them would go into it as a hobby, but they are not and so it is very much a criminal phenomenon.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Believe me. We are not going to be the people who are closest to that gun if somebody gets it illegally. It is almost frightening the way we have to check to make sure that people do not come into our company that we believe to be either criminals or dangerous or violent because we are the people who are closest to the gun.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, you are two very separate groups. If I can ask, Andy? I do not want to go on and on about the internet but you were talking about people putting together more makeshift weapons, maybe getting parts to convert things. Presumably you can tell if one has been used or one has been seized if that is its source. Are you seeing evidence that these are falling into the hands of criminals and being used in crimes, these kinds of new sourced weapons?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes. The point made earlier on was that, largely, those who are using the technology are not your typical organised crime profile --

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): That is my question. Are they using them for crime?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes. Some are holding and, as I said, there is a whole range of situations around those individuals. Some have an unhealthy interest in just holding firearms. There have been some cases where there appears to have been intent to injure or to harm, not necessarily from the organised crime perspective but against the public or protection. It is a very small element of that. There have been cases of individuals who are clearly looking to source those weapons or make those weapons to move them on to whoever the best buyer is and of course there are vulnerabilities in the criminal marketplace and any other areas of society that would wish to source a viable firearm, yes.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. Just one final thing. You may not be able to answer this but the profile that you talked about, someone who is not involved in organised crime, someone who is maybe an individual with an unhealthy interest and potentially mental health problems, that is the kind of vulnerability profile for extremists, people who want to commit terrorist acts from different sides of the spectrum. Is that something you are seeing as well, that people using or sourcing those guns are coming from those backgrounds with those motivations?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): I probably could not go into that. What I can say is that there is clearly a vulnerability within that supply chain and so that is why I would be concerned around that.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): The concern is more or less about the future threats from these kinds of weapons than a phenomenon that is actually on the streets currently.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We have touched upon this subject but we are now going to explore more deeply about tackling gun crime and the MPS's and the other partners' response around that. Andrew, you are leading on this?

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I ask some follow-up questions from the previous section? You said there were 93 firearms surrendered under the gun surrender.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): That is right, yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is right. Mike [Eveleigh] has mentioned this problem of the mandatory sentence for being in possession of a firearm. Do you think that that has had the effect that Mike talks about of people who would otherwise surrender not doing so?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): As has been said, there are always anomalies in legislation. There are mitigating circumstances. With the surrender, we did see a lot of those weapons being handed in at that time and, as I said, there is another one due in November. I would like to think that people will take an opportunity to do those surrenders.

However, there are there are mitigating circumstances. It is the decision for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) around those circumstances if someone is going to be charged with that offence. Really, that kind of issue is for the CPS to look at whether they think there is sufficient grounds to substantiate a charge.

Andrew Dismore AM: Presumably if someone brings a gun in, do you automatically refer it to the CPS or do you have a policy yourself?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No. It depends on the circumstances of it. If it is a surrender, like the one we had in February, there will be those circumstances of them coming in and we understand the position with that individual and so we understand the background of that individual as best we can. If it is a circumstance where someone has cleared a house out or something like that and there is a weapon found there, if it is a relative or something like that who has passed away and then they find a weapon, they are not going to be prosecuted for something along those lines.

Andrew Dismore AM: If somebody wanted to hand in a gun, bearing in mind we are going to see police station closures, they are not going to walk up to the police station with a firearm. If somebody wanted to surrender a gun, in or outside the surrender period, what should they do?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): That can be done. They can call a police officer and then the police officer will go to their house or wherever the weapon is and it will be made safe. Then a decision will be made by the officer at the scene as to what the circumstances are. I would not want people to be dissuaded from doing that at all.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, all right.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is a good point to raise, but I would not want people to be dissuaded at all.

Andrew Dismore AM: The best thing to do if somebody finds their grandfather's firearm from the war in the attic is to phone the police and say, "Come and fetch it"?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, that happens on a number of occasions.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): If I could just add, I was speaking nationally. I am aware that the MPS has a system for this, which every other police force [should] adopt, to be frank about it. There is less fear in coming to the MPS and reporting, I have found, than there might be in other places. Of course, the media do not help us by unfortunately highlighting cases where people have handed a gun in and been arrested and problems have come from that. No, from the MPS perspective, it is actually very good.

Andrew Dismore AM: Did you want to comment on that nationally?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Surrenders are generally not something that the NCA would lead on. We certainly would support that. I do not have any information to give a wider view, but the surrender planned for November we are certainly supportive of and everything that has been said in terms of encouraging members of the public to come forward in those circumstances with firearms and ammunition.

Andrew Dismore AM: How many licensed firearms are there in London, legal ones?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): As in shotgun licences?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I do not have the figures.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): I can give you the national figures, which is what --

Andrew Dismore AM: I am interested in the London ones as well. If you do not have the figures, perhaps you could let us have them?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes, definitely.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is licensed firearms by category, I suppose.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We do a lot of work with registered firearms dealers. We have our firearms inquiry team that does a lot of work with registered firearms dealers, making sure that everything is correct around how they sell their weapons, how they store their weapons, the security in those premises. We have done SmartWater initiatives with individuals who are licence holders around increasing crime prevention around those things. We work with Mike's [Eveleigh] organisation and others. There is an independent Advisory Group that sits that we give regular updates to and briefings to around gun crime in London. We do work closely with the registered firearms dealer industry.

Andrew Dismore AM: How many registered dealers are there in London?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I cannot tell you off the top of my head how many there are because it is a separate team from crime, but --

Andrew Dismore AM: If we could have that data, the number of legal firearms and the number of legal firearms holders, which may be different, I suppose.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, it is because you have licence holders and then you have dealers that will have --

Andrew Dismore AM: We will start from the beginning. We have the number of licence holders, the number of guns they hold because they could hold presumably more than one, the different types of guns, and the number of dealers. That will be helpful.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): I can perhaps help on that last one. There are about 145 - I will get the exact statistic for you - registered firearms dealers.

Andrew Dismore AM: Really? That many? It sounds a lot.

Kevin Southworth (Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Trident & Area Command, MPS): They were all very engaged in recent protect activities we have been doing, including the call-in. There was fantastic support from the registered firearms dealer community coming in to work with us about how to make sure their sales are legitimate and the firearms do not make their way into criminal underworld. Of course, the very low numbers of thefts of legally held firearms in the city that Mr Stockley reported on before do point to good responsible ownership of firearms within London --

Andrew Dismore AM: That is the next question. It would be useful to know how many thefts of legal firearms there are in the Greater London area.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): In the last year there have been 14 shotguns, two rifles, one pistol, one revolver and one semi-automatic and so it is low figures. That is what I alluded to before. It is low figures.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes. Next question: I have never seen a firearms licence. What do they look like? Do you have photo ID on them?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I think you are about to see one.

Andrew Dismore AM: We are about to see one.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Can I pass this around? Would it help?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, thank you.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I just happened to have one with me, yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Ask and you are given!

Andrew Dismore AM: If Mike is OK about it, perhaps we can have a photocopy so that we can all see what they look like. I see, it does have your photo on it and everything.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It does have a photo.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): It is me, honestly.

Andrew Dismore AM: It does look like you. I can tell from the moustache. OK. It at least tells what you are licensed to hold. You are licensed to hold three weapons.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): That is right, although there is also a further certificate. There is a shotgun certificate, which is almost identical.

Andrew Dismore AM: Does that have a photo identification as well?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes, it does. It is almost identical and it lists the firearms. The difference with that one is that says I have to have an authority to purchase certain firearms, and I have to have each one authorised and I have to have good reason and provide evidence of it. With shotguns, the good reason is assumed. I can buy as many shotguns as my security can store.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. To buy a shotgun you need a licence first?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: You need a licence first. OK. Next question: any estimate of how many illegal guns there are in circulation in London?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I have given an indication of how many we have seized so far this year, which was 635, but it would be wrong to hazard a guess on that.

Andrew Dismore AM: The next question is along the same lines. We have concentrated very much on the firearms themselves. What about ammunition because a gun is no good if you do not have any bullets to put in it.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We have had prosecutions of individuals who are manufacturing ammunition. Ammunition is part of the gun surrenders that we have had. We have had 1,700 rounds of ammunition that was handed in.

That is another one of the pinch points that Kevin referred to around acquiring the firearm. That is a good time for law enforcement to interdict with that. Equally, acquiring ammunition again is a good time and there are other investigative opportunities from that ammunition, either how that is made, how it is used, anything that may be on it that is good for investigative purposes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Ammunition is manufactured as well as illegally imported or whatever?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. Presumably, it is not just the bullets? It is the propellant inside it and the case and everything else.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Going on to more specific questions, we had a fall in gun crime between 2010 and 2014 and now it is going up again. What is being done differently between 2010 and 2014 and now by the MPS?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I alluded to what we are doing at the start. I think it was Assembly Member Arnold who asked the question around our Gun Crime Strategy. If it is OK, Chairman, to go on to that?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Yes.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): As I said, we started to talk about the pursue element of it, which is our relentless proactivity against individuals who acquire firearms or have firearms and our reactive investigation of those shootings where they occur by our linked series team. As I said, that has led to an increase in sanction detections for this year for gun crime.

Andrew Dismore AM: I thought sanction detections had gone down in last year.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No.

Andrew Dismore AM: The figures that we were given is that sanction detections fell from 29% to 19% as of the last financial --

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): That might be for gun crime offences. I am talking about gun crime discharges, which are what we concentrate on. Then our Viper patrols are specific patrols, which are intelligence-led patrols in certain areas where there have been gun crime discharges and where we do intelligence-led stop-and-search of individuals that we believe are carrying firearms. That is the pursue element of it.

One of the big elements that we do within Trident is our prevent element and this is really important. This is to stop individuals going into that life of crime in the first instance or, if they are in it, supporting them to come out of it. We ran a Divert programme in Brixton last year - that was piloted and that is now at Tower Hamlets - where we engaged with 118 individuals who have engaged with police and third sector providers. Of those, 57 have gone into either full-time employment or into full-time education, which is really positive news. We look to support that with our MOPAC colleagues, working forward around other such programmes around London.

We also look at going into schools. We have a comprehensive schools programme where we go in and raise awareness for secondary school children across London. In fact, since April of this year we have reached over 2,000 children within London around different options, around awareness of gangs/gang culture, around awareness of crime and trying to prevent those individuals in taking that path, because there is an aspect of vulnerability here for a lot of the individuals within gangs and we are looking to help those individuals not choose that life.

In addition, we have Trident officers within our youth prisons, within Feltham and within the Isis prison. We have Trident officers there who look to not only support those individuals that have been convicted but also, if gang-related crime occurs within that prison, we will look to pursue investigations within that. That is our prevent element to it.

Andrew Dismore AM: How different to what you are doing now is it compared to what you were doing in 2010 and 2014?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): The nature has changed. With our Viper patrols, we have armed response vehicles, having armed vehicles with us doing stop-and-search around where there has been gun crime occurring in those areas. That is fundamentally different. The prevent side of things is fundamentally different around what we did before. I do believe that the prevent aspects of policing is huge and working with third-sector partners to look at reasons why individuals go into a life of crime and trying to give them viable alternatives to it, either through education or through employment is the way forward.

One of your colleagues mentioned around mental health and certainly in another particular area I have worked at within policing, when we have worked closely with health colleagues - and we have done this within Trident as well - trying to help individuals get diagnosed at an early stage if they have mental health issues to support them moving forward, so they are not vulnerable to life in a gang.

Andrew Dismore AM: Was there anything you were doing in 2010 to 2014 when crime came down that you are not doing now?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is not specific to gun crime. It is to do with all crime. I do not have all the crime statistics in front of me. Crime fell generally during that time. We are doing more within the Prevent space than we did do before. I do not think there is anything specifically that we were not doing. We have seen changes in legislation. Changes in sentencing, they have increased, particularly for gun crime. We see that as a positive thing and that has deterred people. I do not think there is anything that we are not doing now that we did then that I can think of off the top of my head.

Andrew Dismore AM: You mentioned Operation Viper. How are you going to measure its success?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Viper is a tactic that we use as part of Trident. I do have some figures here. In the last 12 weeks, for example, we made 209 arrests and seized 27 firearms and 33 weapons were seized, knives and suchlike, lots of cash seizures and stop-and-search and drugs recovered, and that is just in a 12-week period. The success of Viper coupled with the diversionary tactics with prevent helped to try and support individuals who are vulnerable to turning to a life of crime within a gang, targeting those individuals. Then those that are hardened criminals, who are not looking at moving away from that, who are looking at causing harm to others, they will be targeted by Trident and they will be arrested and prosecuted. That is what Viper is doing, so that is how we measure our success.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. The measure of success is not just fewer firearms offences. It is broader than that?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. Success would be - no one being injured with gun crime discharge and there being no gun crime discharge. That would be success, but we look at different measures for that. We want to reduce gun crime as much as possible. London is still a very safe city. It is still one of the safest capital cities in the world and it is very important to remember that fact. We look to gun crime seizures as one measure and so, yes, if we can get more guns seized so there are less guns in circulation, whether it is through surrender, whether it is through proactive operations. If we look to target those individuals that are persistent in using guns and shooting people, they will be targeted and prosecuted, quite rightly. There is any number of measures. There is not one thing nor is there one solution.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. If I can move to Andy now and talk about tackling supply of firearms and ammunition, you have touched on some of those issues already. Can you say how you go around trying to stop firearms coming into the UK?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): In general terms, in terms of the upstream, I mentioned a couple of those areas where we work with our international partners around areas of interest in supply. That can cover typical areas of mutual operations, targeting those individuals that are concerned in supply. That is using other diplomatic and engagement channels to look at legislation changes, to look at areas again which suggest a threat, whether it is the country we are dealing with or the wider regions, so through the EU framework. We also do that multilaterally with all of the EU member states with quite a comprehensive action plan that the UK are action leaders to in a large area of, and again it covers a whole spectrum - as Jim [Stokley] has talked about - around the prevent, pursue, prepare and protect space, largely with the NCA. That is in the pursue space because we are talking around trying to get operational activity and effect that operational activity, but there are other partners in the UK that are involved in that and mirror some of the prevent and education work.

In terms of the frontier work: again, that is working with our partners to look at how we can help share intelligence or collect intelligence around those individuals that may operate at the frontier, at borders. From a domestic position: in terms of firearms that may already be in the UK that are supplied internally within the UK.

Again, it is a similar model so it is mutual, joint operational activity for which MPS and the NCA have a joint capability to do that.

Again, in terms of the national or strategic framework in the UK, firearms are now one of the top priorities whereas several years ago it was not. That naturally dictates a series of response actions through policing and through the NCA about an effective response to that. The NCA chairs that strategic group around that, so there is a mixture of activity both internationally and domestically around that.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is primarily intelligence-led. What would you say?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): A large part of it is, yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. Bearing in mind what you have just said, I also have to ask the Brexit question. Is that going to make things a bit harder, bearing in mind all the references you made to our EU partners?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): I would like to think not. At the moment, the messaging is that the UK is, in terms of security, law enforcement, etc, very close partners with Europe and institutions like Europol and Eurojust and bilaterally. Again, while I am certainly not privy to that information and would not be able to go into it in this forum, from an NCA perspective, working upstream and with international partners and from the Home Office perspective, it is absolutely vital. Regardless of the landscape around that, there are many good options that will exist and continue doing that, absolutely.

Andrew Dismore AM: Then the Trump question. You mentioned it is legal for an American firearms dealer to export but not legal for someone here to import.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Is there anything that could be done with the US? Presumably there may be other countries the same. I know that South Africa has quite a gun culture.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Therefore, where people can export, to stop that export in the first place?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes. Again, there has been a lot of work ongoing through a number of UK agencies overseas around that typical scenario. There have been some successes, certainly with the US around the fact that, OK, the legislation allows that but, from their domestic position, is it a vulnerability for others to acquire firearms? Of course, that is quite a compelling area to point out to our partners and they have responded very well. They have supported activity to work with registered firearms dealers, to work with customs and border patrols around detection, profiling, those sorts of things. That is mirrored again with the partners within Europe so, yes --

Andrew Dismore AM: That is an attempt to disrupt export but not make it illegal?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes, again, I cannot go into some of the legal and constitutional discussions.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is law. You are not able to.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Yes, that is right.

Andrew Dismore AM: Let him answer the question. You were saying?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): No, I cannot go into the question but, absolutely, in terms of influencing the UK, and the NCA certainly, in terms of priorities that is an area that we are focused on and not just the NCA but other agencies we see that as a priority.

Andrew Dismore AM: Well, you are wrong because the American constitution allows people to bear arms. It does not say anything about exporting them and so the question stands. The Americans have not taken any steps to prevent the export of firearms?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): I would not say that, no. I would say that they have been, engaged and willing partners around the UK's position.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Have we explored that enough? Of course, there is legal importing and exporting. Where does one get the letters from for the legal shooting trade? There must be a legal aspect to import. Mike?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I am afraid that is not my area of expertise. I do apologise for that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I see. I am just trying to understand and not to conflate the legal ownership of guns in this country, which we are going to explore in a minute, around safety and licensing.

Joanne McCartney AM: If I could come back to Jim, if I can, about Operation Viper? I understand around my area of North London you have been doing and continue to do some Radium operations. I am told that they are intelligence-led patrols supported by clearly marked uniformed armed police officers. Is that part of Operation Viper?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is, yes. It is exactly that. It is part of it, yes. It is a tactic that we use, yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: I remember two or three years ago, particularly around Tottenham, some of estates there where it was very highly visible and it did cause quite a lot of community alarm. What are you doing on the back of these patrols to ensure that there is reassurance given?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We have had a series of meetings. We have our own independent Advisory Group, as you know, within Trident. They are fully aware of Viper as a tactic of Radium as you have alluded to. We work very closely with the borough as well, so with the Borough Commander there, [Detective Chief Superintendent] Helen Millichap, equally with the Members of Parliament (MPs) there as well, with Mr [David] Lammy [MP]. I forget the name of the other MP but I had a series of meetings with both of them over the last year and, if there are local tensions in the area, we are very alive to that as well. It is important that we protect the people of London as well, and so there is always a balance to be struck which I understand.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Can I ask on that: you said you have notified local councils and the MPs. You have not said local Assembly Members. Could I ask you to include the constituency Assembly Members in future if you are undertaking these operations?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Of course, yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: That would be helpful. Thank you.

Susan Hall AM: Ever so quickly, gentlemen, you mentioned talking to youngsters about the problems with gun crime and knife crime. Do you ever show them ghastly, gory pictures that I am sure Martin [Griffiths] could produce? The whole gore and the ghastliness of it work on the 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' videos that are shown to kids. I am sure some youngsters do not realise how horrific it is until they have seen it.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): There is an element of that. It is true that people do not realise it until they have seen it but, obviously, it is within a school environment, a safe environment within the school, so we have to take the lead from the teachers within the school so that it is approved by the school and there is a balance to be struck there.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): An additional answer to that question. I do some work with gangs call-in looking at prevention targeting at-risk youth in certain boroughs - Enfield and I am doing one in Barnet later on this month. In that presentation, I do show some quite gory images.

In a targeted environment and targeted audience that can be of use but the widespread use of imaging can dilute from the message. Such a striking image that then the rest of the communication is lost because the young people are being struck by that and they cannot absorb the rest of the information.

When you talk to young people about knife and gun injury, they either think they are going to be alive and fine or dead, but they are very concerned about cosmetic injuries, about colostomy bags, about smelling bad, about being disfigured and being disabled. Those are much more horrific to them than actually being alive or dead. That is where the real leverage comes when we are talking about gun injury.

Susan Hall AM: Yes. Pictures along those lines to targeted audiences is what you are saying would work best.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): Meeting a gun victim who has been disabled is much more of a powerful stimulus to change than seeing a picture of it. Remember how visual young people are now. On social media you can see gory images at the drop of a hat and they are much more gory than perhaps you might think. People disassociate an image from actual activity, but meeting an individual who either interacts with victims of trauma or a victim of trauma themselves or a parent is a much more stimulus to change.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Thank you.

Joanne McCartney AM: The gang call-ins in relation particularly to knife crime are particularly about those that are either identified as being in a gang or at risk. I have attended some of those in my area. You can see the young people often coming with their parents and being visibly shocked by the trauma surgeon and the mother of a deceased young person that gives evidence. There is some evidence that that does work with knife crime. Is that something that you are thinking of doing with those potential gun crimes, or is there a danger of sensationalising it that you do not want to go down or is that --

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I completely agree with what Martin said and there is stuff that we are looking at around developing that schools' programme, but we will have to be mindful of the environment that it is set in.

Joanne McCartney AM: No, I am talking about separately. I am not talking about in schools. I am talking the specific knife call-ins you had or gun call-ins, which were particularly about those that were on your matrix or at risk of entering a gang, that would attend those often with family members, whether gun injuries could be addressed in those sorts of settings.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. I do not see why not at all. That is a very good suggestion.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: I just want to follow on from Joanne and say that over the years in a borough that I represent, Hackney, working with the local hospital, the trauma surgeons there have regularly come out and spoken to young people and used images, used that experience, and the feedback has been really good from schools. When the young people go back they say, "I did not know that. I am much more informed". The trauma surgeon's view seemed to be independent of, "Well, the police would say that, wouldn't they? Our parents would say that", but a trauma surgeon was held in higher regard, really.

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): No pressure there! As a clinician, we work for the health authority on health and healthcare. It is about recovering from injuries and about preventing retaliation. From my perspective, yes, it is great to have an opportunity to have that teachable and reachable movement with the individual. It is about ongoing care and it is about understanding that these young people need to think for themselves about motivation and use of weapons. It is all very well to do a simple intervention. It is about ongoing care and about intervention being part of an ongoing piece of work done in schools and environments to maintain that pressure on thinking about injury, thinking about violence, protection, citizenship, etc.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Definitely, yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I am conscious of time so we do need to pick up gear slightly. We will move into the next section of questions which we touched upon to a degree but we want to explore licensing and safety. As we said, the UK is a strongly regulated country compared with others. As someone who has worked with that process some years ago, I know that it is a tough regime including writing for a reference for your doctor, a General Practitioner (GP), which is a good thing, and so some questions around that.

Susan Hall AM: OK. I will be quick. Mike, what sort of things do you do with your members to promote responsible ownership of firearms?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): The actual question itself, the promotion of responsible firearms ownership is exactly what we are about. That is what we exist for. How do we do it? Codes of practice: that is how you should conduct yourself with shooting. For example, target shooting clubs have a probationary membership. You can only join a target shooting club after you have had a three-month probationary period and during that period there will be a course of safe handling. The cultivating of an ethos of safety of gun handling, and I would add to that that where young people come in it demystifies the firearm. It is no longer something magical that they have seen on television. It is something that is just a tool. It is a dangerous tool but it is a tool nonetheless. Young people coming in is quite important because we perhaps drive them away from the very thought that they might want to take up gun crime.

Security advice probably tacks on a little bit later as well but we are always banging on about security of your firearms, "Comply with conditions 4(a) and 4(b) on your certificate. You must always make sure your guns are secure". Again, the business of security is very important because we do not want our guns to fall into criminal hands, absolutely, but there is another point. If you had a very valuable set of golf clubs you would be very worried if you lost it. You actually want to keep a firm weather eye on it and so there is that as well.

I could probably go on for quite a long time but we are probably a bit limited for time at the moment, but those are some of the things that we do.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Do you do any work with the MPS to make sure that the guns are not at risk of --

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes, particularly. The MPS independent Advisory Group was formed about two years ago and, yes, we speak regularly every six months or so where we are given guidance on what is happening in the MPS and we can tell them as well what the members and the MPS are thinking. Dare I say this, trying to bring the police and the shooting community more together than they have been? I will say that in the past there has been a lot of distrust of the firearms and licensing regime in the MPS. It is great to report that that has gone now. There is a completely different regime but there is still some distrust in some areas but we work to try and prevent that.

Susan Hall AM: OK. You have comfort in the fact that your members, if they were concerned about anybody they knew with a licence, would let you know or the MPS know?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes. We also, not necessarily the MPS but any part of the country, encourage -- sometimes they are people who are a little bit afraid of going to the police in case they get involved in something and sometimes we will act as a sort of cut out. I perhaps should explain that myself and four of my colleagues are all ex-police officers in firearms team of the BASC.

Susan Hall AM: OK, that is fine. If we then go on to actual licensing. I noted when I read yours that it has a five-year term on it. Is there anything that is within that that, if you became ill that you would have to surrender it or were involved in anything? What checks are within that?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): OK. The NFLM computer system - most forces in the MPS are linked in with the operational computers. Therefore, if Mr Smith is arrested it and it comes out that he is a firearms certificate holder the licensing department know that immediately and action can be taken. If a police officer is to go to a particular premise it will flag up that there is a firearm on that premises and the person is a certificate hold, so there is that.

The latest part of the Home Office forms committee - for my sins - were recently going to change the forms again. That will include not a legal obligation, I grant you, but an obligation to notify the police firearms and licensing department if they begin to suffer from anything that might make them a danger. I will say, unfortunately at the moment, that the British Medical Association has not been desperately helpful in this, but that is a matter of negotiation which we are carrying on now.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Is there anything that you would like to see changed within the licensing structure to make things better for the MPS, easier, and to make restrictions easier to impose?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Yes. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has looked at it. The Law Commission has looked at it. There are 37 different laws impinging on firearms control. They do need to be simplified. It was the HMIC who about three inspectors ago said that if a police officer cannot understand the law, how on earth can the certificate holder? It is very, very complicated and very easy to fall foul of. For example, if I were to sign that certificate you saw with a pencil, I commit a criminal offence. It really does need looking at, but I am afraid the Law Commission's verdict was, "This is too complicated. We will tinker at the edges. That is it".

Susan Hall AM: Your plea would be to make it far simpler?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): It would be, yes. We can think of a couple of ways of doing it, which we have suggested, but I think they are probably politically not acceptable. There is a shotgun certificate which works very well indeed. The firearms certificate is complicated and time consuming for the police. We would recommend that they all line up with the shotgun certificate but I do not think that would be politically acceptable.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Thank you very much.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Why would that be? I do not want to go into great detail but you have the shotgun certificate for those clays, etc. There are two separate certificates, basically.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I believe it would be seen as slackening the laws.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Weakening; because it is more stringent or sounds more stringent on the firearm on that aspect and so any conflating them there might be a sense of weakening, potentially, the protection that we have been talking about for two hours?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): It could be seen that way, yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I understand that

Joanne McCartney AM: I wondered what the MPS thought of that.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We have a bespoke Firearms Enquiry Team which is separate from Trident. They do a series of inspection and stuff with registered firearms dealers that I have alluded to before. There are some complexities in the legislation that we would like to see if possible, with consultation with the relevant parties, ironed out to make it slightly easier because it is quite complex. There have been numerous changes over the years that has made things --

Joanne McCartney AM: When you say "easier", you do not mean easier to get a gun?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No, easier to understand and interpret, both for law enforcement and also for legal gun owners. If that could be changed or made slightly easier, that would be helpful.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Chair, I recall from the previous work I have done that the cost you get from licence holders does not cover the cost to the MPS of doing all the investigations and that needs to be increased to realistically cover your costs.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes, indeed. Because we have a good relationship with the registered firearms dealers and with organisations such as Mike's, it makes things slightly easier but, you are right, it would certainly assist.

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I would add that we would say - and we would say this would we not? If the system was efficient and effective we would be very happy to pay for it. As it stands, to be asked to pay for an inefficient and ineffective system, as sadly it is on occasions, we do object to that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is interesting.

Andrew Dismore AM: How much does a certificate cost?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): You would ask me that question. It has just changed recently. It is £90. We have suggested that another way would be for a 10-year certificate because there is now constant monitoring through GPs, through the computer systems, which would reduce the workload very considerably for the police. Again, I do not know if that would be politically acceptable.

Andrew Dismore AM: Just a quick one also just to fill out the answer that Mr Stokley was giving about Viper. We have seen recently quite heavy demands on the MPS to move officers off the Grenfell [Tower] Inquiry and the terrorism stuff. How many officers have you got on Operation Viper?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is actually a blend, so it is an amalgamation. It is not just Trident officers. We have local officers as well and we have officers from armed response teams and from our task force, and so it is a combination of things. You were alluding to the sad events at Grenfell, a lot of the officers that have gone to that are just detectives. They have gone there in order to conduct that investigation. Viper is a combination of officers from different parts of the MPS, so it is a collaboration effort and it is actually a tactic. There is a core element to the team but then there are officers that come from different areas of the MPS, as it were. It is not necessarily susceptible to incidents like Grenfell.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. Is the core element fully staffed?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: How many officers are in that?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is 50 overall.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. Have you had any problems trying to call in all these other aspects of the MPS when you need them?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No. It is recognised that it is a tactic that works. It is a tactic that the boroughs like and welcome. To be honest with you, to suppress gun crime is a positive thing that we can do and all the feedback that we have had from boroughs, except in what some Assembly Members have said, generally if we can reduce gun crime then that is a positive thing.

Andrew Dismore AM: OK. All these additional demands we have seen over the summer they have not had an impact on your work?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): No, despite everything that has gone in London and the threat levels in London, Trident has continually delivered. As we have seen, we have had the record number of seizures and stuff. It is a challenge but we have, through the collaboration, been able to continue with the work that we are doing.

Len Duvall AM: The mission of Trident from when it was formally established, I mean dealing with high end serious crime gangs but with the violence, the gun suppression issues that you said, and of course in the last three years you have also had the relationship of supporting the boroughs on gang issues when the MPS finally realised there was a gang problem in London. That is true.

With the rise of gun discharge and the nature of the crimes involved in association with those discharges, do you not think we probably need to review the mission of Trident again and maybe relieve you of some of those other responsibilities or do you still see that as being the same, that you handle that probably along with some other things as well? What is the thinking around that, and should you not go back to what was the central thrust, albeit it moved and changed, the nature of - if I call it - black on black, gun crime, Jamaican yardies, that is where your heritage was when it was formed, was it not? It has moved and changed?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. To answer your question, I was on it when it started. I was on there as a detective constable when it first started.

Len Duvall AM: You have seen the changes then.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): I have not been there the whole time. I am not saying that, but I was there at the start, so I am aware of how over time, the complexities of crime have changed in London, as we all know and as a consequence, our response to that crime has changed.

To answer your question around: should it go back to how it was? When it was first set up it exclusively just dealt with murders. That is all it dealt with. Then over time that changed to shooting and murders and so on and so forth. We do not investigate murders now; the homicide command exclusively investigates murders. We work closely with them when it is gang related. I would say that in the last few years, with the onset of knife crime, as Kevin alluded to, which was very much gang-related initially, that is starting to change now. The type and complexity of knife crime is changing, moving away from gangs. Probably over time we would lose knife crime as a Trident issue to investigate. To answer your question, yes, it will. The remit will change slightly over time.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you very much. Moving on to the last set of questions. We have talked about prevent and prevention is always the best way to handle these serious issues. That has been talked about earlier and so we have a set of questions about preventing crime.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. If I could start, though, I know we have heard a lot of numbers today orally. Quite a few of them do not match the figures that we have in our brief, I am afraid.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Yes. That is why we gave you some yesterday.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): The police sent us a submission which said, for example, for lethal discharges only 20% were gang flagged, but you have now said 46%. Also, things like the updates to the sanction detection rate, or is that just because it is a subset of the questions? Rather than go into it now because we do not have time, can I ask for the MPS to give us a new briefing with the up-to-date statistics in a very clear format, breaking down each of the crimes by the types of crimes, so that we can see whether it refers to gun crime overall or just lethal discharges?

Can I ask for us also to have information on what is gang flagged but also what is associated with drugs? I was very struck earlier on when you said that 70% of the time that you seize guns you also seize class A drugs. It would be very useful to also see what is associated with the drugs, and gangs that are involved in drugs and the sanction rates for each type of crime, so basically a big table of everything so that we can really see what is going on. That would be very useful.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I know you noted that of course but we will drop you a line as well just to confirm.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): That would be helpful. Thank you.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): That is excellent. Following on from that, I want to ask the NCA that question about drugs because, clearly, if it is class A drugs, that is basically serious organised crime. It seems to be a high proportion of the gang-related and the drug-related offences.

To what extent do the different organisations work together? The NCA is in charge of serious organised crime and we have Trident. We have the Gangs Unit within London. I am a little bit confused about how you all work together and whether you are focused on the young people who are at the front-line or the more in charge people at the heart of what might be an organised crime gang that is doing serious drugs across a wider area.

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): I mentioned earlier about the strategic threat assessment which is broken down to a number of commodities: drugs and firearms obviously being there as specific threats. The response to that is shared amongst law enforcement. The NCA typically will look at what we call the 'upstream' or the 'international' element of that activity, about the supply, how it gets here, the intelligence around that and how we work with our partners to effect the right level of response.

In the case of MPS, for example, that activity work that we have we share in a number of different ways to allow the MPS to make a decision against their priorities of how they may use that. Equally, our policing partners also have capability to develop their own intelligence and their own operational activity, which they do to very good effect in the MPS. Then that feeds the other way back to us in terms of, "This is what we are looking at in relation to the priorities. This is the decision making within a certain area of the country", and then we take that information and, again, we look at whether that changes the threat or whether that is part of a national issue that we can help and connect those partners together.

We aspire to have an overseeing role in terms of understanding the activity and collection, and we also have a role of listening to our partners about what is important, when they may need assistance, where we may need to alter or recommend change to the national threat assessment around how the country as a whole looks at crime threats.

Your second point about drugs and firearms. We echo that. It is a high figure. I do not have a figure, but I would suggest that that figure is replicated around the country in terms of where we see outcomes against organised crime. With firearms, drugs are very prevalent within that, either seized at the time or as a precursor or as a factor within that crime group's operating model.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): We have been talking about gun crime as if it is like the weather or a cultural phenomenon, but there must be economics behind it. Are there any kinds of gangs that are not involved in the illegal drug trade? Are there other economic motivations for the gang formation?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): Within London it may be helpful. In my current role in charge of Trident, but also the serious and organised crime and so there is this big unit that deals with serious and organised crime within the MPS, which is separate from Trident. We have talked today about Trident and gun crime discharges in predominantly what we would recognise as street gangs that utilise guns and would sell drugs and the conflicts that occur between them lead to the gun crime discharges that we have discussed today. Serious and organised crime is at a slightly higher level, as Andy has alluded to, within the national context but above the street level. They may be and in some instances are - and we are targeting them - importing guns and drugs on a large scale into the country, and that is being looked at in a proactive way by the MPS's Serious and Organised Crime [unit].

It has other elements to it as well, whether it be modern slavery or cybercrime, lots of different aspects to it. I did not want you to think there was just Trident dealing with that and nothing else and then the NCA. That is definitely not the case at all. There are different levels that are dealt with by different groups within the MPS.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): My question about are there street gangs that are not involved in the illegal drugs trade? Are there different reasons for them to --

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): There will be some, but the point that we are making and what the evidence is showing, is that the majority of the violence that is associated with the gangs - and in this instance with gun crime - is linked to the drugs trade, but it will be at a street-dealer level.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): That is really useful. I should be asking about prevention, and obviously preventing the causes of the motivations is part of it too. Does that form part of the education that you do in schools? Obviously, my questions were about that and we have already covered a lot of it, but does the economic motivation, the alternative career paths that people might choose rather than get involved in drugs trafficking?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It does. We have done a lot of work around identifying vulnerable individuals. A separate topic but one that is worth just touching on now is the concept of county lines, which I am sure Assembly Members are aware of. We are doing a lot of work around that, around identifying vulnerable individuals that are then susceptible to incurring a debt, through any number of measures, and then end up almost being forced into this area and look at trafficking drugs throughout the UK to separate parts outside of London. It obviously leads to violence within London and it is those vulnerable individuals that are exploited by those gangs, so we look at trying to support those

individuals. We have worked closely with the CPS around that, where those individuals are vulnerable, and there is evidence to suggest that there is that vulnerability, we would look at alternatives to prosecution around those individuals. We are very conscious and very alive to the vulnerable in society that are exploited for criminal purposes.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. I want to follow up asking Martin Griffiths. I know you do a lot of work within the communities of the people that you treat in your hospital. Do you think that the police are the right people to be delivering anti-gun messages and how effective is the focus on guns? How effective is what the police are doing now?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): The police have to have a voice, in terms of how we look at gun crime, because they police London and they work with us and our patients to protect a wonderful city.

How we convey the message about getting into gangs and how you respond to conflict by using violence is a multiagency challenge. It is about education. It is about social care. It is about health. All have different agendas. It is about citizenship as well. Rather than us talking about being divisive about saying the police should or should not do things, we should probably try and work together to have a coherent pathway and a long-term view on how to change attitudes towards violence, not just guns but knives and fists as well.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Is there anything you think is missing from current prevention work that you would like to ask for?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): The recognition that violence itself is a public health issue and that we can look at data, protective and instructive factors, and the fact of entering into education at a much younger level, looking at citizenship and communication, education at primary school rather than worrying about criminality within secondary schools, talking to children and listening to children and parents in communities and empowering them to help police their own communities, rather than talking about us imposing views on how things should not be.

We have to recognise that we are not the people who live in these communities. We do not have an understanding of how those lives are lived and, for us to influence positively these lives, we have to try and want to understand what their lives are like, what their pressures are like and how to move forward.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. That is really helpful. I want to ask also the treatment of victims as well. You mentioned treating gun crime as a public health issue and violence in general as a public health issue. Whole communities seem to suffer from trauma when crime takes place. Is there more work that can be done within communities to deal with that?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): In order to help a community you have to understand and support it and empower it. That is down to education. It is also about trying to make sure that the victims of crime and their families are supported back into the communities and allowed to return to their area feeling safe and supported. That means that they get good health care. They get good support back into the community. The perpetrators are punished and seen to be punished, and the people who give evidence and live in those communities are supported and not punitively acted upon.

If we do that we return a segment of the population back to their community. They work with us, healthcare, law enforcement, etc, and they seed good into that community and they become robust members of it.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. We are running out of time now I am afraid, but can I ask the police officers as well about the support you are able to give to victims and particularly witnesses? I have had constituents get in touch saying, "A crime that has happened to my family is not being cleared up because, although everybody knows there are witnesses, they are not coming forward", and that is about winning trust from communities as well. Is this work you have been doing? Is this why your sanction detection rates are going up?

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): It is something that we are alive to. We look at alternative ways of if people do not want to come forward to give statements and assist - and I would always encourage them to do so - we have lots of mechanisms in place to protect people if they want to come forward. In some instances, we have seen individuals that do not want to come forward and support a prosecution. If it is a violent crime, we will look to prosecute that individual with or without a victim if we can, because it is really important that the perpetrator is brought to justice for the crime that they have committed. It is about responding to that crime, responding to the fear of crime and supporting the communities in going about their daily business without having to live in that fear of crime.

I would encourage people to come forward. We have experts in protection. I am not going to go into too much detail now. It is not appropriate in a public forum but we do have mechanisms in place to support people should they wish to come forward, and I would encourage people to do so.

Sian Berry AM (Deputy Chair): OK. Just finally to Martin, is there any other good practice in cities or countries elsewhere that you would want to highlight to us?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): All the hard data on good practice in terms of gun crime comes from the United States (US), but it is not really about intervention and law enforcement. It is mainly about social care in very early life. It is about investing in youth in terms of support and understanding, and that starts at birth: parenting skills. It continues into primary education with lifestyle skills and it is about providing support to people within the community so that they can be part of an active community, and it is about providing the diversions and positive features of a community, places to play, places to be, activities to do and also seeing a potential horizon. If you cannot see a way out of your community through education or employment, where are you going to turn? For us, as Londoners we need to work as a community to support our community and it starts at birth.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you. On that theme - this is our last question - is what more can colleagues suggest or recommend that the Mayor do to address or to support the MPS? It is difficult sometimes for officers to come out with these things but this is your opportunity. What more could the Mayor do to address gun crime and the issues around that in London that we have not covered already? It is just an opportunity for any other suggestions from colleagues. Mike?

Mike Eveleigh (Senior Firearms Officer, British Association of Shooting and Conservation): I have to recommend to you the Association of Chief Police Officers - as was - Strategic Criminal Use of Firearms Group. It is what one of my colleagues has described as a 'sweetie box of ideas'. It is out of date in many respects but it has lots of good ideas and I would like to leave that with you. It might be of some use to you. If not, you can - like a chocolate box - throw it away.

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): It will be of immense value. Thank you for that.

Jim Stokley (Temporary Commander, Gangs & Organised Crime, MPS): We work very closely with MOPAC, as we said. We work very closely with the Mayor’s Office around our Gun Crime Strategy, which is something we have shared with them.

One of the things that was helpful and impactful for us, which we have not actually touched on today, we call it Optimum aim within Trident, but it is looking at where gangs put videos on social media. The Mayor has supported us in speaking directly in a public forum to the large internet companies to say, “Look, can you support the police in trying to take these videos down”, because they do lead to reprisals. They lead to all sorts of repercussions as a consequence of these gang videos. That is something that the Mayor has done and hopefully will continue to do, because that is very supportive of us. That is something we have not touched on today. I am conscious of time but it is something that is relevant that all Members of the Assembly will recognise.

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): Is there anything that you think from a national context that the Mayor could legislate on or pressurise, shall we say, lobby for?

Andy French (Firearms Threat Lead, National Crime Agency): Most of it has been covered. All I would say is that the impact of the firearms. It only takes one event, while cybercrimes, as impactful as they can be, sometimes do not have the depth of consequence. The whole resources and machinery around how gun crime is tackled within the London area is absolutely priority and certainly the NCA supports that.

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): Martin, do you have anything to add to what you said earlier?

Martin Griffiths (Consultant Vascular/Trauma Surgeon, Royal London Hospital and Major Trauma Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust): If you have three hours, everything! I talked about the public health aspects of violence and how that needs to be invested in on a national level. The victims of violence often want to retaliate and we need to invest in supporting families, cohorts into educating those to try and prevent them wanting to retaliate because they are the most vulnerable group who are most likely to act violently. If we look at that population and we support that by funding proper initiatives which are evidence-based and well supported and deliver into the community – deliver into the community – deliver into the community - we will have success. But, it is long-term planning and long-term delivery. It is about having a coherent plan from birth through to death and helping to support and build our communities. It is not about sticking plasters. Not about sewing up patients. About preventing injuries, understanding communities, supporting communities and investing in youth.

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): That is very strongly put. We have that and we can return to that probably at another time. First of all, thank you all for this morning’s contribution.