

MAYOR OF LONDON

Steve O'Connell AM
City Hall
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Our ref: MGLA230118-1462

Date: 18 APR 2018

Dear Steve,

Re: Gun crime in London

Thank you for your useful report published on 23 January. It provides a highly useful insight into gun crime and I would like to thank the Police and Crime Committee for their work on this. The increases in recorded levels of gun crime in London are of grave concern to me, but they must also be considered within the broader context of a national increase, with information from police forces suggesting that the majority of areas have seen increases¹.

Your letter asks the question of whether gun crime, in the same way as knife crime, requires a distinct and specific approach to prevention and intervention. During the development of the Knife Crime Strategy, my Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) was asked to consider whether or not guns (and acid) should be included, and the strategy be considered a weapons strategy. Knife crime is significantly higher than gun crime. We will continue to monitor gun crime closely, but I am sure that you and the Assembly will agree that knife crime is both high harm and high volume, and continues to warrant the current focus from both the Commissioner and me.

The Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) operational response to the increase in gun crime has been robust: proactive pursuit of each piece of firearms intelligence in London; Operation Viper; the creation of a series link team; increases in firearms recoveries and work with national partners to restrict availability of weapons.

Hundreds of officers work every day to tackle the threat from gun crime. Trident Gangs Command focus on lethal barrelled gun discharges to a wide range of other MPS units; the Flying Squad respond to armed commercial robberies; and the Murder Squad investigate fatal homicides where a gun is used. Gun enabled acquisitive crime is investigated robustly by CIDs at a borough level and other serious and organised crime units focus on tackling gun supply. While the MPS's Gun Crime Strategy is led by the Trident Gangs Command and managed through Gang Crime Fighters, they support the local response, developing local action plans and coordinating tactical activity across the MPS.

¹ONS statistics: 12 months to September 2017

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2017#offences-involving-weapons-recorded-by-the-police-continue-to-rise>

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MOPAC supports the MPS and boroughs' response to gun crime through continued investment in several programmes that provide specialist support to victims and perpetrators of gun crime, such as youth support in Major Trauma Centres (£1.2 million between 2015-2018), London Gang Exit (£2 million between 2015-2019) and Project Chrysalis (MPS officer resource).

In response to the recommendations made by the Police and Crime Committee:

- MOPAC intend to take forward fully the recommendation to **publish more data in gun crime in London to improve information available to the public and partners.** MOPAC's Evidence and Insight team is working on a new weapon enabled crime dashboard. The dashboard will include gun crime, lethal barrel discharge and gun crime robbery offences (as well as knife crime) on a borough and ward level. It will track change over time and will highlight the most at-risk areas. It will enable those using it to identify areas of repeat knife and gun crime victimisation and monitor the likelihood of young people being the victim of knife crime². The dashboard will also show public perception information to help us track levels of concern around knife and gun crime within the capital. The dashboard will be available to the public on the MOPAC website, and is expected to launch in spring.
- In relation to the report's recommendation to **undertake a piece of research with bodies such as the National Crime Agency, National Ballistics Intelligence Service and Border Force to build a clearer picture of how guns enter London from abroad,** I believe that there are already sufficient structures in place to help us understand this element of the issue.
 - The MPS works closely with Police Forces across the UK, the NCA, Border Force, Military and the National Ballistic Intelligence Service (NABIS) to understand better the threat posed by firearms to the UK. There are various governance strands which look at different aspects in relation to firearms both on a national level and MPS wide. These multi-agency meetings discuss emerging themes such as the type of firearms being used and their origin through supporting the lawful possession of firearms and reducing these coming into criminal hands, through to deterring and disrupting those involved in firearms criminality. To this end, Assistant Chief Constable Helen McMillan chairs the Criminal Use of Firearms meetings, which form part of the national strategic action plan.
 - Within the MPS, the Trident and Area Crime Command Commander chairs quarterly strategic gun crime meetings. Such networks of agencies work together to support firearms surrenders and other activity.
 - NABIS analyses gun crime nationally and produces reports to support key partners. Such reports include details of linked series of firearms use whereby the same firearm has been identified as being used in a number of incidents; this work has resulted in recent convictions at Woolwich Crown Court of individuals whose sentences totalled 39 years.³

² Gang flagged offences will not be included because the flags are often not applied consistently and numbers are low.

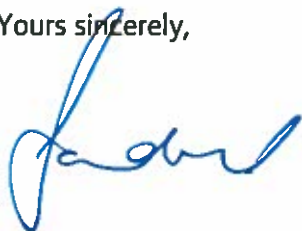
³ <http://news.met.police.uk/news/group-jailed-after-new-firearms-forensics-team-links-them-to-weapon-use-in-multiple-offences-289784>

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- Your letter further recommends that the MPS and MOPAC **examine what more can be done to fully understand theft of legal guns and its impact on the capital and either introduce or lobby for any changes to intelligence gathering.** The number of guns stolen both nationally and within London is monitored by both NABIS and police data and referred to through the governance structures outlined above. This is an area of concern in terms of the potential subsequent use of such firearms in criminality. Firearms thefts within London are investigated by the Specialist Crime Command. The MPS works closely with the lawful firearms community to ensure licensing compliance (including secure storage) and to assist with the destruction of unwanted firearms and ammunition. While there are clear structures in place to address this, we will consider further exploration of the impact of this issue on London. The MPS's Gun Crime strategy – structured under the 4Ps model (prevent, prepare, pursue, protect) – is currently being refreshed, and consideration will be given to the PCC's recommendations.
- The remaining recommendation asks us to **work with offenders and victims of gun crime, including those services that support them, to build up a clearer picture of the drivers of gun use and how their use can be reduced.** I firmly believe that we design better services when we capture the views of those who need to access them. Thorough consultation work was carried out by MOPAC capturing insights to feed into the development of the Knife Crime Strategy from key stakeholders like Trident, and statutory and Voluntary Community Sector organisations (such as Safer London, Redthread and St Giles Trust) who work with young people affected by violence – gun crime as well as knife crime. Whilst we recognise that the needs of victims of different crime types differ, the views of young people affected by gun crime and knife crime have informed the development of the Police and Crime Plan commitment to further invest in a specialist Children and Young People's Victim and Witness service. We will continue to consult with young victims of gun crime and knife crime (and their families) as these services evolve, as well as seeking input through networks such as the London Serious Youth Violence Network and MPS Trident IAG to ensure an effective response to victims and perpetrators of gun crime.

Thank you again for providing the Committee's considered views and insights into how best to reduce gun crime in London.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London