

BRIEFING NOTE

Date: 12 December 2003

Protective Marking	Not Protectively Marked
Publication Scheme Y/N	Yes
Title	Briefing Note on the Instigation and Conduct of Firearms Amnesties
Version	v.1
Summary	Advice and guidance on gun amnesties
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INTRODUCTION

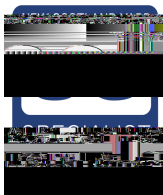
1. At a recent gun crime strategy meeting, the question of undertaking a gun crime amnesty on a borough level was raised. SCD3(1) has been tasked to examine the issue and prepare a briefing note in response. This paper discusses the authority needed for a gun amnesty, and at the process involved in conducting it. Additionally, we have taken the opportunity to review some of the outcomes of the latest national gun amnesty held in April 2003 with the intention of identifying the issues to be taken into account when considering initiation of an amnesty. This briefing note has been prepared by the Specialist Crime Policy Unit following consultation as described in the body of the text.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Although they offer reassurance to the public and do remove potentially lethal weapons from circulation, gun amnesties have little impact on gun crime. Amnesties are not attractive to criminals who use firearms. The MPS at corporate and borough level should consider the relative merits of different approaches to encourage criminals to surrender their firearms, for example an open-ended policy to enable criminals and / or their friends and family to give up weapons. Alternatively, planned pro-active operations that combine robust targeted enforcement with an opportunity to surrender guns might be viable alternatives to

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prohibited weapons, whereas Haringey had above average numbers of prohibited and imitation weapons surrendered. The response in Lambeth can be attributed to collaborative police and community initiatives, along with media interest created by activists keen to rid the streets of guns. However, the number of prohibited weapons surrendered in Lambeth was disproportionately low. The stronger than anticipated response in Haringey can be attributed to a highly



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category, but the realistic average cost is £350 per gun examined. The cost for the 130 guns awaiting examination can therefore be estimated at £45,500.

CONCLUSION

9. Gun amnesties never fail to generate political, public and media interest, both positive and negative, and they do result in the surrender of a great many firearms and large amounts of ammunition. They are relatively easy to instigate, but they need consultation at high level and are subject to the formal agreement of the Attorney General. Experience shows that the most enthusiastic response to gun amnesties is found in relatively law-abiding communities, although there are indications in places like Lambeth that there is an underlying willingness among certain sections of the community to surrender weapons.



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Appendix to SCD3(1) Briefing Note on Gun Amnesties

A brief statistical analysis of firearms surrendered in April 2003 gun amnesty

Throughout the UK (except N Ireland) 43,908 guns were surrendered. Of these 6,529 were prohibited weapons, and 37,379 were non-prohibited weapons, including 9,480 imitation weapons.

In the MPS, 753 prohibited weapons and 2,436 non-prohibited weapons were surrendered, a total of 3,189. This represents 7.25% of the national total. A total of 776 imitation firearms (i.e. Non-firing, blank firing, air soft, and deactivated) were surrendered. The MPS percentage of the

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