KEY EVENTS

On November 14, 2023, Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman presented *National Police Databases and Their Increasing Importance in 21st Century Policing* for this year's West Coast Security Conference. The key points discussed were the creation, functions, and use cases of the Police National Database (PND).

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

The presentation by Chief Constable Blakeman was centered around the creation and importance of the Police National Database (PND), emphasizing collaborative intelligence sharing among UK police forces. Given the structural features of the PND, Chief Constable Blakeman highlighted the functionalities that enable varied search methods and how it demonstrated effectiveness in law enforcement. Real-world impacts were also highlighted through examples, such as the resolution of a theft incident and the success of Operation Blue Breeze, underscoring the database's contribution to public safety and the need for time-efficient investigative practices.

BACKGROUND

Chief Constable Blakeman began by explaining the creation of the PND and the need for all UK police forces to share intelligence pertaining to observations, reports, and suspicions which were all originally held only on systems of their locality. She recounted the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman that occurred in 2002 by their school caretaker Ian Huntley. Chief Constable Blakeman asserted that had the PND been in place, Huntley's potential threat to children could have been identified much earlier. Notably, she explained that

creation of the PND stemmed from the public inquiry for Huntely, by a recommendation made by Lord Michael Bichard.

Chief Constable Blakeman went on to provide the structural aspects of the PND, stating that the database has daily automatic data updates from 55 agencies and 250 source systems encompassing data related to crime, custody, intelligence, child abuse, and domestic abuse. With six billion searchable records, Chief Constable Blakeman highlighted the PND's capacity to match and index individuals, criminal entities and organizations with objects, locations, and events. The system facilitates risk assessments, interview preparations, information and intelligence sharing, and diverse search methods, including 'mode of operating', organized crime group and modern slavery and human trafficking, nicknames, descriptions and tattoos. Chief Constable Blakeman elaborated on the Scheduled searching and Triggered searching functionality of the PND. Scheduled searching is an automated search within the PND that allows the user to ask the system to re-run saved searches over a specified period, aiding risk management for individuals. Meanwhile, Triggered searching empowers users to rerun a search daily, identifying new data matching the criteria. The system promptly returns any new results to the user.

Chief Constable Blakeman provided an example of a theft incident that was resolved within less than four hours, noting that the use of PND information enabled identification of vehicles and faces through images and descriptions of the suspects. In another case, she explained the arrest and subsequent imprisonment of Wayne Phillipson on February 9th, 2023, a man charged with 18 offenses in relation to Operation Blue Breeze, a child sexual exploitation investigation. The success of Operation Blue Breeze was attributed to the PND, revealing intelligence/crime records across 15 UK forces.

Chief Constable Blakeman concluded her presentation by highlighting the need to reduce investigative hours, allowing more effective management of threats and risks to prevent harm using PND. She affirmed that this approach enhances service delivery, bringing offenders to justice, and maximizes policing resources to improve trust and confidence within the community for enhanced public safety.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The creation of the Police National Database (PND) emphasized the purpose and need for collaboration among all UK police forces to share intelligence, specifically observations, reports, and suspicions.

- The PND has daily automatic data updates from numerous agencies and source systems. The database has the capability to match and index various entities, facilitating diverse search methods on six billion searchable records.

- Essential functionalities of the PND, including Scheduled searching and Triggered searching. Scheduled searching allows for automated searches over a specified period, aiding risk management. Triggered searching enables users to rerun searches daily, promptly identifying new data matching specified criteria.

- Operation Blue Breeze emphasized the PND's contribution to the successful outcome by revealing intelligence and crime records spanning 15 UK forces.

- Time is critical, thus, reducing investigative hours are necessary to better manage threats and risks, ultimately preventing harm. The overall goal is to enhance service delivery, bring offenders to justice, and maximize policing resources to build trust and confidence within the community for improved public safety.