

ACPO Criminal Use Of Firearms Press Release

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Hand in Olympic .380 BBM firearms before 4 June 2010

Police will hold a targeted amnesty for anyone in possession of an Olympic .380 BBM revolver until 4 June 2010, it was announced today. Following tests, the Olympic .380 BBM has been identified as readily convertible under the provision of the Firearms Act 1982, bringing it within the classification of a prohibited weapon under Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.

This means that anyone who does not hand in their Olympic .380 BBM revolver before 4 June 2010 could be liable to prosecution, for which there is a five year mandatory prison sentence. The period of targeted amnesty will begin today, 16 April and will end on 4 June 2010. It will be for the sole purpose of handing in Olympic .380 BBM revolvers in either their converted or unconverted form.

Assistant Chief Constable Sue Fish OBE, ACPO lead on criminal use of firearms said:

"We are acting today to deal with the threat posed by criminal use of this firearm to communities in the UK. Our action means that any individual in possession of an unconverted or converted Olympic .380 BBM should hand it in now or at their earliest opportunity. This targeted amnesty offers a route to dispose of these firearms before 4 June 2010, without facing prosecution for possession.

"A significant number of converted Olympic .380 BBM's have been recovered by the police having been used in criminal activity. It is essential that the police work together with the public to tackle this threat."

David Penn from the British Shooting Sports Council said:

"We are aware that many of our members may have purchased the Olympic .380 BBM for well established legitimate uses. The actions of a criminal minority have undermined the lawful use of this revolver and we appeal to anyone in possession of an Olympic .380 BBM to hand it in to their nearest police station."

"The British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC), the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Gun Trade Association (GTA) work closely with ACPO. Collectively we are supportive of the work to remove the Olympic .380 BBM from circulation in the UK. ACPO, the BSSC, BASC and GTA will continue to work to ensure our members are not disadvantaged by the criminal minority who convert firearms and use them illegally."

This targeted amnesty applies solely to possession of the Olympic .380 BBM across all police forces in England and Wales. Police forces have been supplied with information about the Olympic .380 BBM and how to manage their handover in terms of safety to the public.

Anyone with information about firearms incidents or information about those who possess or have access to illegal firearms should contact their local police force or call the Crimestoppers Charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Ends

ENDS

Notes for Editors

- The legal basis of the targeted amnesty is an exercise of the operational discretion of the police not to seek authority to charge from the CPS. This applies in cases of simple possession of Olympic BBM firearms during the period of this amnesty.
- It is important to make clear that this targeted amnesty extends to the possession of this particular firearm only and does not create immunity to prosecution for other offences. It does not involve any immunity from prosecution in relation to offences which may have been committed with a firearm that is surrendered. Any other firearms surrendered to the police during this amnesty period will be dealt with on a case by case basis. If someone brings in an illegal firearm they can expect to be subject to the law

and risk being arrested for any offences they may have committed.

- The Olympic .380 BBM revolver is commonly known as a 'blank firer'. It has been identified as being 'readily convertible,' which means it can be converted to be a lethally barrelled weapon. These revolvers are commonly used for the purposes of race starting (starting pistols) or dog training. The BBM could be purchased through Registered Firearms Dealers (RFD's) and other outlets such as hobbyist stores and model shops and previously required no licence. The Olympic .380 BBM was previously sold as an 'imitation firearm'.
- Following an independent test carried out by the Forensic Science Service (FSS) in February 2010 the revolver has been identified as being 'readily convertible' under the provisions of the Firearms Act 1982. The Firearms Act 1982 classifies weapons as 'readily convertible' thus making them subject to Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1982, Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968 and Section 5 of the 1968 Act. This makes them illegal to possess, supply or transfer within the UK.
- The gun now falls under the classification of a prohibited weapon within the provisions of Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968, for which there is a five year mandatory prison sentence.
- Any Olympic .380 BBM recovered by the police will be recorded on the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) database and will be subject to evaluation before destruction.
- NABIS provides the Police forces of England and Wales and other law enforcement agencies with an effective service allowing the submission of ballistic material to one of the NABIS Regional hub facilities. NABIS is then able to link ballistic items to previous crimes and incidents within 48 hours, thus establishing crucial links within the initial 'golden hours' of an investigation. NABIS has three areas of focused delivery, Forensic Services, Intelligence and Knowledge. These three areas come together to ensure a complete and holistic approach to tackling this most harmful of crimes.
- The British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC), the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) working in conjunction with the Gun Trade Association (GTA) have been working with ACPO in supporting a range of activities in order to minimise the threat posed by this particular firearm. It is recognised that members of the BASC may well have purchased these items legitimately and legally. ACPO has received excellent support and cooperation from the trade, its members and current suppliers in recovering these items.
- The ACPO Press Office can be contacted via 020 7084 8946/47/48 (office hours) or via 07803 903686 (out of office hours).
- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is an independent, professionally led strategic body. In the public interest and, in equal and active partnership with Government and the Association of Police Authorities, ACPO leads and co-ordinates the direction and development of the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In times of national need ACPO, on behalf of all chief officers, coordinates the strategic policing response.