



Major Crime Collaboration 'Reaping Benefits'



South west collaboration "going smoothly" with greater resilience and specialist skills.

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Courtesy of - [Nic Brunetti - Police Oracle](#)

A major crime team collaboration between two forces has helped secure a total of 508 years imprisonment for dangerous offenders – in less than two years.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Wiltshire Police's 'Brunel' collaboration has led to increased capacity and resilience across the two force areas when it comes to major crime investigation.

The 150 strong team of officers and specialist staff has bases in Bristol and Marlborough (Wiltshire) and cases are led by the team closest to where incidents take place. Further support can then be provided from the other base as required.

The collaboration was only approved in March 2011 and now provides the region with seven-day cover for major crime which can be mobilised immediately. Previously the investigations would stay with the respective force's CID for a longer period of time before being passed over, usually days later.

Det Supt Sue Scott (pictured), head of Brunel, said the consistency of staff dealing with major crime meant there was increased learning and experience - and a clear core of people who could receive further specialist training.

She said: “The benefit of the two teams coming together is they are doing this work continually - their skill sets are increasing all the time.

“We used to extract people from CID offices as and when we needed them and they didn’t always have the particular skills we needed.”

The resilience of the new set-up was demonstrated just four months after it was launched – with the shooting of four men in Bristol following the popular St Paul’s Carnival. One of the men, Rico Gordon, was killed, and officers were faced with tracking down more than 200 witnesses all over the south as part of the complex inquiry. D.Supt Scott said the stronger staff set-up and cover – as well as the closer proximity of Wiltshire officers to London, meant vital evidence could be secured more quickly.

Two men from London were later convicted of Mr Gordon’s murder in August 2012.

D.Supt Scott said: “The greater resilience ensures we can cope with greater demand according to the peaks and troughs and because we cover a bigger area it is not just people waiting for a case to happen.

“It is clear who has responsibility geographically as there is a clear demarcation for that – there is no blurring of accountability concerning chief constables.

“It is about shared ownership around operational delivery and it ensures the public has a consistent level of service and can benefit from a higher level of specialism.”

D.Supt Scott is in constant contact with the forces’ CIDs to ensure that investigations which may come under Brunel’s remit are taken over as swiftly as possible. If cases appear to be in a grey area, support is provided from Brunel until it is determined that major crime assistance is not required. The collaboration also includes the forces’ Special Branches.

The SIOs are assigned from the two bases according to their proximity to incidents and knowledge of the areas.

Additionally, Brunel is answerable to its own board of governance to ensure it is cost effective and delivering on behalf of both forces. D.Supt Scott reports to the board alongside the heads of the forces’ CIDs. The team is overseen by an ACC in each force.