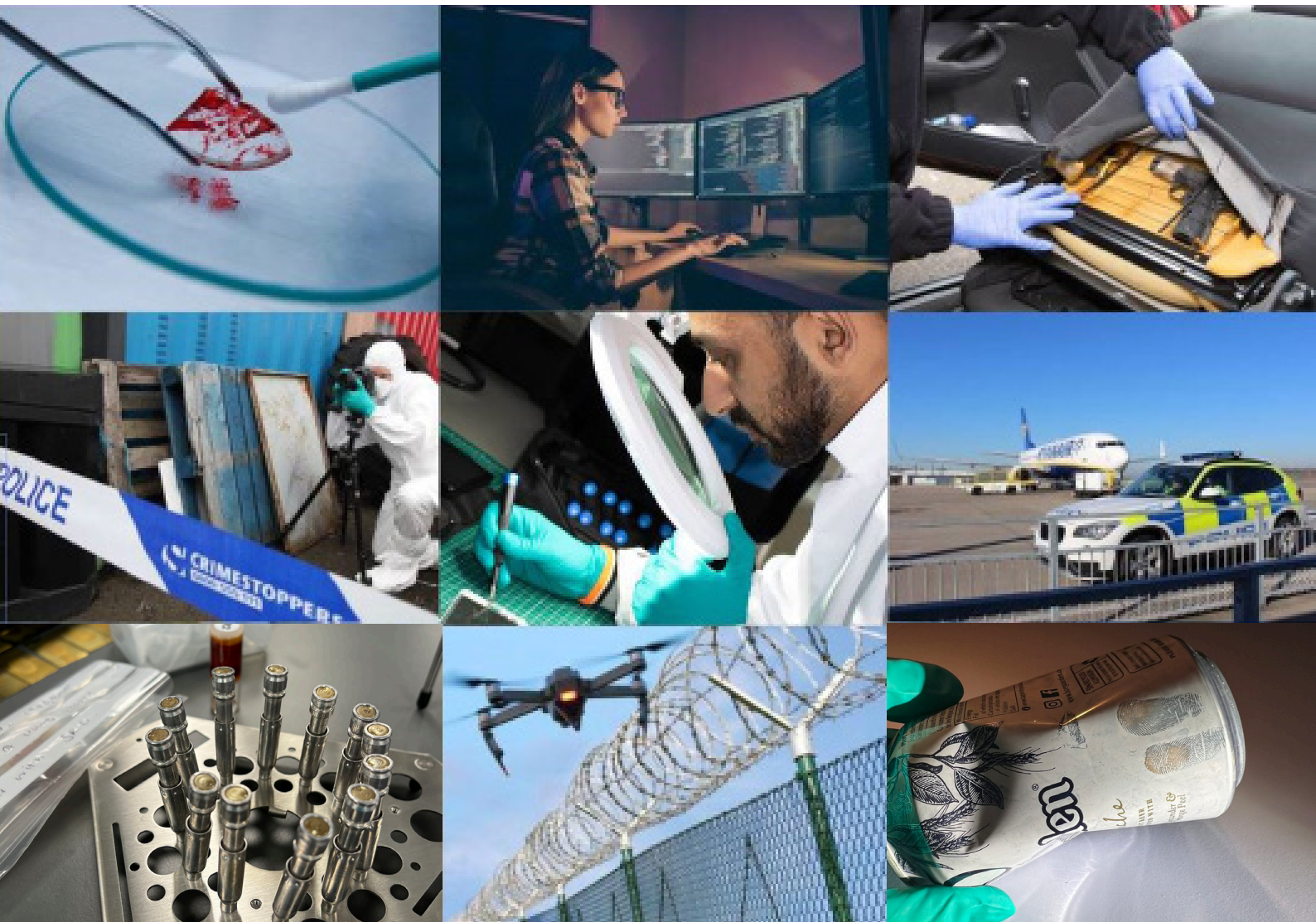


# East Midlands Special Operations Unit



# We are EMSOU

## PCC BRIEFING 2022/23



# About EMSOU

The East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU), utilises specialist skills and capabilities to tackle the most serious, organised and violent crime, including terrorism.

Established in 2001, the unit is a collaboration of specially trained officers and staff from the police forces of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands.

Our mission is simple:

- To identify, disrupt and prosecute those individuals or groups causing the most harm to our communities.
- By working with other agencies we also seek to prepare the public in the event of a major incident, equip them with the knowledge to protect against crime and prevent people from being drawn into crime.

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## Regional Review Unit

This unit conducts reviews of major inquiries, critical incidents and other identified investigations and themes, such as serious sexual offences and high-risk missing people.

The team can assist Senior Investigating Officers on live cases, as well as identify areas for follow-up, good practise and learning in historical 'cold' cases. They also work closely with forensic experts as technology evolves in revisiting samples from undetected cases.

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## Forensic Services

Within the East Midlands, all forensic work required by each of the five forces is managed by EMSOU-Forensic Services. Our work is completed in partnership with [Cellmark Forensic Services](#).

**Crime Scene Investigation:** EMSOU-FS coordinates all of the Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs), with each force having its own dedicated team. CSIs attend scenes of crime, record and recover evidence and submit it to the relevant units for processing. They also work closely with investigation teams to produce forensic strategies.

**Fingerprints:** The Regional Fingerprint Bureau attempts to identify finger, palm or plantar marks which have been recovered from scenes of crime, or from exhibits that have been chemically treated. These experts can also be required to attend mortuaries to capture the fingerprints of those who have died.

**DNA:** In 2017, we were the first policing collaboration in the country to join forces with the private sector to deliver a DNA service from the same building. Working alongside Cellmark Forensic Services, our highly-trained staff seek to identify criminals (and others) from DNA samples taken from crime scenes and objects, such as weapons, to deliver rapid results from our shared laboratory in the region.

**Exhibit handling:** This team advises on the best way to handle, move and store exhibits for forensic examination and analysis. The team also coordinates reports and statements of analysis carried out by external forensic service providers, and delivering the results to investigating officers.

**Analytical services:** If an exhibit needs chemical development in order to lift a fingerprint or footwear detail, our expert technicians can use specialist processes to do so. They can also attend scenes of crime to assess what type of specialist enhancement and recovery techniques need to be used, before bringing it to the laboratory.

**Drugs:** Our drugs technicians test suspected drugs and unknown substances in an attempt to identify and quantify them. They can also advise on drug-related incidents.

# Counter Terrorism Policing

Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (CTP EM) unites the assets and resources of the East Midlands Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Unit, and the Special Branches of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire forces to create a cohesive unit dedicated to tackling the threat of terrorism in the East Midlands.

The team, working closely with partners, gathers intelligence and conducts investigation into individuals or groups creating a risk of terrorism, this includes at our sea and air borders.

We work closely with partner agencies, such as social care and education, and community organisations in a bid to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and extremism. Visit the Act Early website for more details around the safeguarding work we undertake, and the signs to spot.

We also manage those individuals in our region who have been convicted of terrorism offences, or who pose a terrorist threat, both in prison and on their release back into the community.

Additionally, the unit plays a role in the protection of regional sites, events and prominent individuals, as well as those visiting the area, which may be the potential subject of terrorist or other types of attack.

We operate as part of a wider national [Counter Terrorism Policing network](#).

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## Case Study: Operation Tanitic

A teenager from Derbyshire was jailed for 11-and-a-half years for creating extreme right-wing films which were subsequently cited by a US terror attacker before he killed ten people.

Daniel Harris made and uploaded five videos to an online channel, between February 2021 and March 2022. In the clips, he praised the 2019 terrorist attacks in New Zealand, criticised peaceful protest, produced how-to guides and called for the death of those who work in the criminal justice system.

The 19-year-old's clips were commented on and referenced seven times by the man who murdered ten people in a racially-motivated attack at a supermarket in Buffalo, USA, in May 2022. Further evidence showed another was used on the website of a man accused of killing five people at a gay club in Colorado in November.

Harris was found guilty of five counts of encouraging terrorism (contrary to Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006) and one count of possession of material for terrorist purposes (contrary to Section 57 of the Terrorism Act 2000) relating to the possession of the 3D printer on which he made attempts to make a gun.

In January, along with the jail term, he was given a further three years on licence and a Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO).

Harris, who claimed he had been groomed, was ultimately deemed to be more the radicaliser, through his films, with the judge commenting that the attacks in the US were 'not only appalling, but no more than what you intended others to do'.

The thorough investigation and analytical work was cited on multiple occasions throughout the trial and left the defence with no choice, but to concede the link to incidents in the US.

# Major Crime

EMSOU Major Crime investigates suspicious deaths, complex cases and other serious crimes taking place across the region's five force areas.

The unit sees officers and staff based within each force area working on inquiries both on their 'patch' and across force boundaries to provide a regional response.

The team works hard not only to bring justice for the victims of terrible violence and their families, but also to support them along the way. We have a cadre of trained Family Liaison Officers who provide support throughout inquiries and beyond and we act as the coordination point for the national Casualty Bureau, which helps manage the large public response around those potentially caught up in major incidents.

See below for a brief overview from each county from the 2022/23 financial year:

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## In Derbyshire



**Operation Malbus** The man responsible for the brutal murders of his pregnant partner, Terri Harris, her children, John Paul and Lacey Bennett, and Lacey's friend, Connie Gent, at a house in Killamarsh in September 2021 pleaded guilty to four counts of murder and a count of rape. Damien Bandall was handed a whole-life term and jailed in December.

**Operation Malmo** Vasile Culea was jailed for 34 years for the murder of 86-year-old Freda Walker and GBH against her husband Kenneth, after an attack in their Langwith Junction home in January 2022. DNA from a hat recovered by a CSI at the scene was key in identifying the suspect in this Category A incident.

**Operation Mooring** In July, Michael Harrison was charged with murdering his step-son Mikey, after the 11-year-old was found injured near a Heanor park. As we moved into 2023/24, the 41-year-old pleaded guilty to murder and was jailed for life, to serve a minimum of 21-and-a-half years.

**Operation Orangepool** Twelve people were arrested following nine firearms discharges in north Derbyshire and into Sheffield in July. The investigation, involving ten incidents in total, has required significant resources and specialist support from the ROCU. A man was charged in relation to the offences, and sentenced to five years in June.

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## In Leicestershire

**Operation Ravel** In November, four men were jailed for the murder of 18-year-old Abdirahim Mohamed, who was stabbed in a planned attack in the city September 2021. Two others were convicted of manslaughter and two more for assisting an offender. ROCU input was, once again, critical to the case.

**Operation Academy** In July, a 38-year-old woman was charged with murdering one-year-old Ruby Thompson in Leicester more than 10 years ago.

**Operation Monument** Ross McCullam was found guilty of murdering his 23-year-old colleague Megan Newborough at his house in Coalville in August 2021. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in December, to serve a minimum of 23 years.

**Operation Yield** The boss of a food waste recycling company was jailed for 13 years in June after being found guilty of gross negligence manslaughter and breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Employees Nathan Walker and Gavin Rawson drowned in December 2016 after falling into a haulage tanker containing semi-liquid pig feed at Greenfeeds Ltd.



## In Lincolnshire



**Operation Lilt** A number of EMSOU units supported this extensive Category A inquiry, after nine-year-old Lilia Valutyte was killed in a Boston street in July. Deividas Skebas was ultimately identified, located and charged with murder. The 22-year-old was deemed unfit to plead/stand trial and a finding of fact hearing took place in July.

**Operation Lobster** In October, Kamil Ranoszek was jailed for life, for a minimum of 22 years, for the murder of his 27-year-old girlfriend Ilona Golabek. The pair also had a young child together. Initially reported as missing from the Boston area in November 2021, her remains were found three months later in a nearby park.

**Operation Latch** A man was charged with murder and another with offences related to assisting an offender and the disposal of a body after a concern for safety led to the discovery of the body of 26-year-old Holly Bramley in Bassingham in March.

**Operation Lantern** Two men were convicted for their parts in beating their friend in August, before one of them unceremoniously dumped him in the River Witham, leaving him to die. CCTV and DNA evidence was key to linking the pair to 45-year-old Igors Petrovs' death.

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## In Northamptonshire

**Operation Thesis** A murder inquiry was launched in December following the death of Anju Asok and her children Jeeva Saju, aged six, and Janvi Saju, aged four, at a house in Kettering. Post-mortem examinations revealed that all three died from asphyxiation. The children's father was charged with murder.

**Operation Village** A 34-year-old woman was charged with conspiracy to murder in connection with the attempted murder of a 31-year-old man, who was found with a gunshot wound to the head in Northampton in October.



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## In Nottinghamshire



**Operation Haversack** The fatal stabbing of Michael Anton O'Connor in The Meadows in November 2021, saw a ROCU-supported manhunt extend to the Manchester area. In June 2023, nine people were convicted of his murder.

**Operation Halley** John Jessop pleaded guilty to murdering mother-of-three Clair Ablewhite at her home in Colston Bassett, in February 2022. The 26-year-old had cycled miles, to and from the scene, to commit the offence against his ex, who he had met online the previous year. Detailed analytical work was key in this Category A inquiry.

**Operation Holyhead** Four people were charged with the murder of Ricardo Cottler in the city centre in April. The trial was dismissed in November and restarted the following month.

**Operation Hebden** A man was charged with the murders of Fatoumatta Hydera and her children, one-year-old Naeemah Drammeh and Fatimah Drammeh, aged three, following a flat fire in Clifton in November.

# EMSOU ROCU

EMSOU is one of nine ROCUs within the UK and works closely with the National Crime Agency and other partners to provide our five East Midlands forces with a number of specialist capabilities.

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## Intelligence

Our intelligence teams develop a picture of the crime landscape in our region, whether out in the community, in our prisons or online. This includes mapping organised crime groups against those operating across the country. The team works closely with the Senior Investigating Officer during live serious and organised crime and homicide inquiries, to provide research and analytical support as well as help to develop and build evidence packages for the court.

The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), which incorporates the Regional Disruption Team, is a collaboration of law enforcement agencies and others committed to supporting the delivery of the government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy by identifying opportunities for other agencies to work with police to disrupt and reduce the threat and harm serious and organised criminals pose to our communities.

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## Operations

These teams focus on the investigation, disruption and dismantling of organised crime groups. They also support online investigations, as well as dynamic crimes in action such as kidnaps.

We have a team of accredited financial investigators who focus on criminal finances, and utilise legislation to identify and seize assets from criminals.

Our Regional Cyber Crime Unit works proactively and reactively on significant cyber crime investigations, aiming to defend against evolving cyber threats, deter and disrupt hostile action, and identify and utilise expertise to overcome future threats and challenges.

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## Technical Services

Our Digital Forensics team focuses on identifying and capturing the digital footprint left by criminals. We also support operations by deploying and maintaining a wide range of equipment and technologies.

The team actively seeks digital opportunities and explores the potential for technological developments to support law enforcement in tackling constantly evolving threats.

Data, and our effective and efficient use of it in pursuing criminals and protecting communities, is becoming increasingly important. Within EMSOU, this is being driven by our Digital, Data and Technology team.

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## Specialist Units

EMSOU specialises in a number of other capabilities which can be called upon to assist in tackling serious and organised crime within the East Midlands.

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## The EMSOU Vulnerabilities Pod

Our Vulnerabilities team provide key investigators with training in the less traditional crime types of modern slavery and human trafficking, including Organised Immigration Crime and County Lines and will continue to offer these inputs across the collaboration and into the forces.

During February's [County Lines Intensification Week](#), the region saw a record number of referrals made in relation to suspected human trafficking, safeguarding provisions put in place, and a large number of arrests made.

Almost £50,000 in cash was seized, more than 56 guns and other weapons, and 11 deal lines were closed.

This coordinated approach was once again tested in June, when the region undertook nearly 100 warrants relating to a broad national operation tackling OCG-run cannabis farms.

While focus will be on dismantling these highly organised and lucrative enterprises and, often violent, gangs, emphasis will also be on identifying any organised immigration and safeguarding victims of modern slavery.

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## The power of TOEX

The Tackling Organised Exploitation programme celebrated its first anniversary.

In collaboration with Justice and Care, we have benefitted from the assistance of two Victim Navigators, whose role is to support investigations where organised exploitation features. The pair are dedicated to facilitating victim care in a bid to ensure the appropriate safeguarding measures are implemented, for the sake of the victim and in support of the investigative objectives.

Find out more about the national program [here](#).



## The launch of PECT

A significant development for the Criminal Finances Team this year has been the establishment of a new Proactive Economic Crime Team (PECT).

The team focuses on high-risk crime types, such as courier fraud and romance fraud, combating scams and targeting those who legitimise gun, drug or human trafficking, as well as those laundering money through property and business. They promise quicker hits than the traditional fraud investigation, along with effective disruption through criminal and civil powers to deny assets and progress confiscation orders against OCGs operating regionally, and also nationally alongside other PECTs.

The Protect team have safeguarded several vulnerable adults, including a woman who had sold her house and given the proceeds to fraudsters as part of a romance fraud.

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## A look into the world of Cyber

The Regional Cyber Crime Unit has continued to provide technical assistance and advice to our forces in their response to a variety of attacks on businesses.

The Cyber Protect team returned to university freshers fairs in the autumn, incentivising hundreds more traditionally hard-to-reach young people to access advice and support at the [EM Cyber Secure website](#).

They also continued to offer free online cyber safety webinars to businesses and the public, both on an ad hoc basis and linked to awareness campaigns such as Safer Internet Day. These prove most popular when timed right – themed to a current crime trend or targeted to a particular audience.

The growth of the East Midlands Cyber Resilience Centre has enabled more support to regional businesses around cyber crime prevention. A number of community ambassadors with large networks have also joined the cause and the Derbyshire PCC has joined the board. Community outreach events are planned in all five force areas over the coming 12 months.

In the spring, the Cyber Prevent team supported the launch of NCA's ['Cyber Choices'](#) across the region.



## In Derbyshire



**Operation Rolling** Thirteen people were charged on suspicion of a Class A conspiracy with the West Midlands after just under 20kgs of cocaine and two guns were seized.

**Operation Jango** Nine people were arrested in July on this money laundering case spanning the country. Hundreds of thousands in cash, as well as valuable artwork, was also seized.

**Operation Hornet** Just under £800k in cash, 13kg of cocaine, cannabis, a handgun and ammunition were seized during enforcement on this operation this year. Ten people were also arrested and one man convicted of dangerous driving when fleeing police.

**Operation Flash** This operation saw 22 people sentenced for regularly dealing wholesale US-imported cannabis, and cocaine.

**Operation Beorma** In May, GAIN and the Disruption Team supported in an arrest and the seizure of £1m-worth of counterfeit clothing at the suspected manufacture site for a gang involved in the importation, manufacture, wholesale and supply of counterfeit goods.

**Operation Lecco** A HMP Stocken kitchen worker was ordered to repay £30k made from cannabis dealing.

**Operation Twine** Four people were safeguarded and a County Line shut down thanks to intelligence from TOEX.

**Operation Carter** Twenty-two men were jailed for more than 200 years after using an encrypted platform to arrange the supply of industrial amounts of cocaine and heroin in Leicestershire and across the UK.

**Operation Troilus** A HMP Stocken Prison Officer, who conducted an illicit relationship with a prisoner, was jailed.

**Operation Riddle** A gang of 16 men, who sold cocaine via text message, were jailed for more than 86 years.

**Operation Edgar** The last of 14 men convicted of a £2million cannabis conspiracy were jailed taking the final tally to more than 75 years. Around 160kgs cannabis was seized during the 2020 operation.

**Operation Money Penny** There were 24 arrests made during co-ordinated enforcement in seven forces in November, relating to more than 40 ATM breaks across the UK. Suspected stolen vehicles, imitation firearms, motorhomes, designer clothing and cash was seized in respect to this case, which also involves nominals from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

## In Leicestershire



## In Lincolnshire



**Operation Forge** Ten people were jailed for more than 30 years in April and May for crack cocaine and cannabis dealing in Gainsborough.

**Operation Waterloo** Nine arrests throughout the year, along with the seizure of multiple kilos of cocaine, heroin and ketamine, just under £100k in cash, gold bullion and designer clothes, set the wheels in motion for three phases of coordinated enforcement within the region and beyond.

**Operation Purley** A HMP Lincoln Prison Officer was jailed for 14 months in October for misconduct.

**Operation Farrier** A raft of guilty pleas on this drugs conspiracy – in which methamphetamine was hidden in board games and mailed between Holland, the UK and the Antipodeans.

**Operation Purley** December saw the culmination of an investigation which led to the dismantling ‘from top to bottom’ of a number of County Lines gang members jailed for 58 years between them.

**Operation Ravensbourne** This case, supported by TOEX, saw a man, whose phone contained evidence of cocaine and cannabis deals, jailed for four years.

## In Northamptonshire

**Operation Rowan** The former governor of HMP Onley was jailed in a regional first in April, for messaging an inmate on her phone. The prisoner received a further two years.

**Operation Booker** The first TOEX-assisted enforcement in the region in April led to 25 warrants, seven arrests and 27 people safeguarded from exploitation.

**Operation Dakota** An inmate was further sentenced to life imprisonment in September after attempting to slash the throat of a HMP Onley prison officer. He must serve a minimum of 19 years.

**Operation Bala** Two men were jailed for five years each for buying guns. Five firearms and Class A and B drugs were seized during this investigation into the conversion of blank firing weapons into live guns. A third man, responsible for the purchase, modification and arming of them, will be sentenced at a later date.

**Operation Exploit/Musketeer** A GAIN and Disruption Team referral from 2018 resulted in two people being jailed for nine years each in January for modern slavery offences.



## In Nottinghamshire



**Operation Marble** Two men were jailed for 20 years between them for the transfer of a gun in Bestwood.

**Operation Vesper** Three men, arrested in May, were jailed after admitting their involvement in the movement of two converted guns and ammunition. A fourth is still awaiting his fate.

**Operation Snapper** A number of violent gang members, responsible for a series of firearms incidents in Radford in 2018 and 2019, were jailed for just under 130 years. Meanwhile, two brothers, who had been sentenced for money laundering, were ordered to forfeit £50k found in a safe in a child's bedroom.

**Operations Loxbear and Pincherry** A gang leader ran a drug-dealing enterprise from prison after manipulating a string of people to do his bidding. The man used 30 hidden burner phones and the gang trafficked a number of vulnerable people between Oxfordshire and Nottinghamshire. Eighteen from the OCG were jailed for 36 years between them.

**Operation Boodles** Two drug gangs who flooded the streets with heroin and cocaine in 2020 were jailed for 150 years between them.

**Operation Tequila** Eleven people faced trial in June following enforcement throughout the year resulting in the seizure of a significant quantity of Class A drugs, a gun and ammunition.

**Operation Promont** A gang of ten, who converted replica pistols into lethal firearms and then arranged their onward movement and supply across the county and into London, were jailed for nearly 80 years between them.



East Midlands Special Operations Unit





We are EMSOU: Five forces, one team innovating together to protect East Midlands communities from harm.

Find out more about us and our recent successes [on our website.](#)