



Deal struck on MIUs to secure UK borders

Counter-terrorism police are to be equipped with mobile identification units (MIUs) as part of a £3 million national framework to strengthen UK borders, *Police Professional* has learnt.

Announced last week, the deal struck with APD Communications will see Special Branch and counter-terror officers throughout the UK equipped with the MIUs, allowing them to check passenger documents such as passports instantly, saving passengers and officers time.

The self-contained portable units can scan the documents, check the information against various databases and display it on the unit's screen in seconds, providing officers with access to 'live time' information while remaining mobile.

The national framework follows a year-long trial by a number of forces in the UK overseen by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Terrorism and Allied Matters (TAM) Police Liaison Team. Funding was secured via the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) under the Mobile Information Programme.

The MIUs replace similar, but more bulky, technology that has been used by officers at the border since 2000. Previous units consisted of three separate elements, including a laptop and a passport reader, which had to be carried in a briefcase.

The technology also has appli-

cations at sporting events, an advantage with the Olympics coming to London in two years time. The MIUs have already been used to great effect during the 2006 Football World Cup operation, assisting officers in their decision-making process leading to more than 100 arrests, one of which was for murder.

A senior officer within ACPO (TAM) Police Liaison Team said: "The trials were very positive. By being able to perform checks quickly, officers can be more productive in the field whilst ensuring that members of the public are not delayed unnecessarily. In fact the new unit will enable officers to speed up their interaction with members of the public and their movement through the border."

Detective Constable Richard Evans, who led the trial, said: "The team has worked with APD for several years in order to mobilise data to improve policing practices. Feedback we have had from officers in the field during the trial process has been excellent, with the unit proving to be both user-friendly and reliable. The mobile nature of the unit, combined with the information we can check against, has already helped officers to make some significant arrests."

ACPO (TAM) is already looking into the possibility of introducing additional functionality such as biometrics, fingerprint scanning and digital camera technology.

