

GISTED RISK ASSESSMENT

N58 Gisted Risk Assessment

1. This is an open version of a risk assessment completed by MPS for N58. The purpose of the risk assessment is to provide an objective assessment of the creation of or increase in the risk of harm to N58 if information is disclosed by the Inquiry which directly or indirectly leads to the identification of N58.
2. In summary, the risk to N58 of physical harm is assessed as **low**; the risk of psychological/emotional harm is assessed as **medium**; the risk of action directed against N58 likely to interfere with private and family life in the event of identification through information disclosed by the Inquiry is **high**.
3. The risk assessment is prepared by an assessor with relevant experience, and on the basis of a debrief, consideration of a number of documents including N58's previous risk assessment, personal file, minutes of a meeting with Operation Herne and an Operation Herne witness statement.
4. N58 is a former SDS officer. The risk assessment provides an overview of N58's career, current level of exposure and an objective assessment of the impact on N58 and others close to N58 in the event of exposure. The objective assessment includes an examination of the group or groups infiltrated and the threat that they currently pose to N58.
5. An established part of the recruitment process from the outset of the SDS was a visit by SDS management to the home address of the prospective SDS UCO, to check that the officer and their partner were prepared for what a typical SDS posting entailed, and to make assurances regarding the following points:
 - The officer's identity would never be revealed to anyone outside of Special Branch.
 - The officer had an ongoing duty not to reveal their activities or status to anyone.
 - After the operation was concluded they would be given fair treatment in terms of career development and postings.
6. The preservation of an officer's anonymity and the protection of their identity were fundamental concepts that underpinned the whole SDS operation. SDS officers functioned in the absolute belief that their identities would never be disclosed under any circumstances. This was emphasised by the fact that SDS deployments were for intelligence purposes only and officers were therefore never expected to give evidence or reveal their true identities at court. The preservation of anonymity was also managed by the assimilation of an officer back into Special Branch at the end of their deployment and ensuring, at least up until the closure of the SDS, that they were not posted to a uniform role which could expose them to former associates and therefore compromise their security and the integrity of the SDS operation. N58 received and relied on such assurances.
7. When asked, N58 stated that the posting was stressful with a constant fear of compromise.

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8. The risk assessor identified the following risk factors from identification in N58's case:
 - Being targeted by groups infiltrated. The risk of physical harm is assessed as **low**.
 - Being targeted by individuals within the groups. The risk of physical harm is assessed as **low**.
 - Being targeted by anti-UCO campaigners or others hostile to UCOs. The risk of interference with N58's family and private life were his/her identity to be disclosed directly or indirectly by the Inquiry is assessed as **high**.
 - Being targeted by the media. No specific level is recorded.
 - The psychological effects of fear of identification and/or its potential ramifications. The risk is assessed as **medium**.
9. The risk of physical harm, media intrusion, psychological/emotional harm and interference with private and family life takes account of several factors specific to N58 and include the public perception of the SDS as a rogue unit, the growing number of anti-UCO campaigners seeking to expose and confront former UCOs, and the risk to police officers generally. As to the latter, the current risk of terrorist action against police officers has been, since January 2015, rated 'severe' (an attack is highly likely).
10. There is a risk-specific package of measures in place to manage the existing risk to N58. The risk assessment lists further measures which could be considered in the event of disclosure of N58's identity, but observes that none of the available measures would be able to reduce the impact on psychological emotional wellbeing should disclosure take place.