

## **Candidate enquiry – January 2021**

One of the consequences of leaving the European Union and the Brexit Agreement reached between the UK and the Union is that Avon and Somerset Police (and the Border Agency) no longer have real-time access to the Second Schengen Information System. This means that our police will no longer receive 'red notices' on wanted suspects, terrorists and serious criminals posted on the System by EU nations and will not be able to use the database to make checks on those arriving at Bristol airport.

What representations has the Commissioner (and/or her deputy) made to the Home Secretary about the real dangers these changes pose for the police force and the safety of the people of Avon and Somerset?

What statements have the Commissioner or her deputy made to the public about these important security changes?

## **PCC election board response**

As you are aware, the UK no longer has access to various judicial cooperation instruments as a result of leaving the EU on the 31st December 2020. This has meant changes to the information sharing protocols, identification strategies and apprehension of foreign national offenders. I would like to assure you that the Constabulary have been anticipating these changes for a long time and has been working with the National Police Chiefs Council to ensure minimum disruption and that any potential issues are mitigated or resolved in advance of our departure from the EU.

One of the strategies that has been implemented is an Avon & Somerset International helpdesk, which has been set up in force to deal with any queries and provides a 24 hour national helpline. Some of the international checks and processes remain the same such as eBorders, ACRO and International Letter of Request. The Schengen Alerts/SIS system has been replaced by Interpol notices/diffusions (explained in more detail in the EU Tool Change document attached). The risk associated with these processes is that the timelines are inevitably longer with the UK no longer working within the EU.

I note that you seek steer on any representations that I have made about this. However as this is a national issue, my focus has been to ensure that the Constabulary has been actively preparing for these changes to ensure wherever possible that there is a seamless transition into new practices and that Avon and Somerset can continue to be proactive in the disruption and detention of international criminality.