

***“Confidently gather more facts faster with a proven repeatable method, reducing overhead and expensive antiquated note taking methods”***

# NOTE TAKER

1 day course

## COURSE OVERVIEW

During the course of any 'investigative interview' the interviewer is expected to gather detail.

Defining detail has relied on the experience and knowledge of the individual interviewer. Where audio and/or visual recording of interviews are not considered a viable option, Notetaker has been developed to provide a more consistent approach to the gathering of that detail.

Using the system may assist interviewers in assessing and identifying the information categories of detail differentiating between information, evidential and investigative detail (Achieving Best Evidence, 2011).

When note taking during interviews, interviewers (investigators) face the formidable task of having to actively listen, formulate questions, and take notes simultaneously.

In the absence of a structure to taking their notes, investigators may be inclined to try and make a contemporaneous written record of the information provided by the interviewee.

In these circumstances, the demands on the interviewer's information processing systems are likely to be overloaded.

The consequences of this are that:

- 1 The interviewer might miss pieces of information, giving rise to the additional problem of the interviewer making sense of what he or she has heard by inadvertently filling any gaps in the interviewee's account with material from their own memory. Elements from such a reconstruction might then be introduced into the interview and give rise to a situation in which the interviewer inadvertently contaminates the interviewee's memory of the event or a client agrees to it because it suits their purpose. In either event, this might well have serious consequences for the progress of the investigation, particularly damaging when considered in the context of confirmation bias.
- 2 The interviewer might interfere with the spontaneity of the information flow by either explicitly asking the interviewee to slow down or implicitly conveying such a message. This might have adverse consequences for the quality of the information obtained during the interview.

It is necessary to make use of an effective system for taking notes in order to avoid these potential consequences.

The use of such a system is likely to give the interviewer the opportunity to assimilate the quality and quantity of the information provided and should provide a firm basis for the questions that are to be asked to clarify or challenge the interviewee's account.

Notetaker can be used as the basis for such a system. Using the notetaker system can assist in structuring note taking, analysis of the detail and briefing and debriefing of interviewers and other personnel involved in the investigation.

*"Quite simply the most valuable and informative training I have ever received; delivered by a passionate and committed trainer who was clearly subject matter expert with many years of experience and currency, wish I'd had it years ago!"*

*(Law Enforcement Investigator)*

One of the key aims of investigative interviews is to obtain as much information as possible from the interviewee about the event in question.

A Notetaker system has been developed, to improve the quality of the gathering of information and subsequent analysis by providing a system to help investigators, plan and prepare for interviews and gathering information; differentiate between evidential and investigative detail; take notes during interviews; summarise the information from interviews and other sources; and evaluate the quality of the interviews and sources of information (Marlow, 2002).

'Notetaker' is a system that has been developed, after extensive and on-going research, by FIS® Associate Kerry Marlow to improve the quality of interviews with clients by providing a system to help interviewers:

- plan and prepare for interviews
- take notes during interviews
- summarise the information from interviews
- evaluate the quality of their interviews

## BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Interviews that are professionally undertaken with effective note taking and quality assured can have several advantages for your business.

They are:

- Direct an investigation
- Support the prosecution case, which saves time, money and resources
- Increases public confidence in your business
- Reduces reputational risk
- Delivering high quality training to nationally recognised occupational standards will enhance the reputation of your organisation

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Session 1:

Detail in a fact-finding (investigative) interview.

Notetaker divides information into four categories of information.

The categories are:

- People
- Location
- Action
- Time

These are then subdivided for to obtain fine grain detail. This system can be applied to any chronological account.

### Session 2:

Analysis of the detail. Evaluation is the key to all investigations.

Using Notetaker will assist in identifying any gaps, jumps in information and anomalies of detail that require further examination.

### Session 3:

Using 'Notetaker' as an active analysis tool during an investigative interview. Notetaker has been designed to assist interviewers to make notes during the interview.

The system allows immediate analysis of the detail to enhance the quality of the detail gathered.

### Session 4:

Producing a structured report using Notetaker subsequent to any interview or investigation a statement or report may need to be constructed.

The structure of these reports is essential to any investigation. The Notetaker structure assists in the production of these reports.

### Session 5:

Notetaker as a planning tool conducting investigations involves two aspects.

- The evidential detail is required for any Court or Tribunal.
- The investigative information is to assist the investigator in conducting a thorough investigation.

Using Notetaker assists in separating the evidential detail from the investigative information.

## COURSE FACILITATOR



**Kerry Marlow** retired with exemplary conduct as a Detective Inspector in South Wales Police after 34 years service, 29 of which had been in various CID roles.

He was the Force Interview Adviser for the last 4 years and on an ad hoc basis since 1995. His portfolios included, ACPO Regional Interview Co-ordinator

for Wales, ACPO Investigative Interview Strategy lead on Tier 5 (Interview Advisers), Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and the use of intermediaries in interviews.

He was the Chair of the ACPO Interview Practitioners Forum. The forum is responsible for the production of guidance on prepared statements, aide memoir for officers involved in firearms incidents.

South Wales Police were a 'Professionalising the Investigation Process' (P.I.P) pathfinder force and he was integral to the baseline assessments and development of policies and procedures.

He is the Author of Structured Summary System and Notetaker a systematic system of notetaking and interview analysis.

He obtained a Bramshill Fellowship in 2002 and his research was on establishing a holistic model for investigators involved in the investigation of child abuse offences.

His research interests are on the interviewing of children and vulnerable adults. He has been a contributor to Achieving Best Evidence (2007). He has been an Adviser to the Welsh Assembly for the North Wales Child Abuse Enquiry.

He is currently a part time lecturer in Child Protection for the University of Wales, Newport and Swansea. Part time lecturer in the Protection of Vulnerable Adults at Merthyr College.

He has travelled extensively abroad providing advice and guidance to police forces and investigating agencies.

He is currently researching with the School of Forensic Linguistics, Cardiff University the involvement of interpreters in major crime interviews.

Within Investigative Interviewing Kerry is the Chair of the ACPO Investigative Interviewing practitioners forum – development of practical issues i.e. firearms procedures, vulnerable person suspect interviews, dealing with DNA in interviews, Dealing with prepared statements.

Kerry has also presented seminars nationally and internationally to professionals involved in or researching and evaluation of investigative interviewing.