

# Locating incidents and responding to 999 calls

**The National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)** is the authoritative, national address service owned and created by local government. It provides unique identification of land and property across England and Wales and conforms to BS 7666:2006 parts 0,1 and 2. The NLPG is updated on a continual basis by every local authority in England and Wales – the bodies with statutory responsibility for street naming and numbering, with updates available every working day.

The British Transport Police (BTP) is the first police force to use the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) on a national (England and Wales) basis operationally as well as for internal data management. Michael Wallace, Geographic Information Manager at BTP discusses the importance of managing addresses.

## 1. Why are addresses so important to BTP? And why did you decide to adopt the NLPG?

Addresses are crucial in policing – we always need to know where something has happened or is happening. When someone dials 999 the first thing we need to know is where we need to allocate a resource to. A crime always has a location, so quality addressing is of paramount importance to us.



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BTP, like every other force and many organisations, has a requirement to improve the availability of addresses into many systems across our force. We need a base dataset to populate all our systems with addresses. The NLPG will meet this requirement. The quality of the addressing has improved markedly in recent years, and BTP is keen to be at the forefront of reusing government data. Our only issue is around business names/addresses but we are seeking ways around that problem until NLPG meets that requirement also.

The frequency of updates is a key selling point for us.

## 2. How has a standardised corporate address infrastructure connecting Command & Control, Crime Recording and Crime Intelligence improved the efficiency of BTP in policing?

BTP is only just starting on the road of standardising the corporate address infrastructure, but the implications for this project are huge. So many systems had been built independently in the past. Linking address data in systems makes huge improvements to the quality of each system and the inter-functionality between them.

Standardising locations in Crime, FIS (Force Intelligence System) the BTP Gazetteer and even the HR address gazetteer offer crucial ways of seamlessly linking locations of incidents and resources. It means that a station location in the gazetteer is exactly the same as the station in the crime system, or the FIS system – there's no need to do extra work to ensure they all match. The names, eastings and northings etc are identical are simply stored through the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) to identify each location from the NLPG.



## 3. Stop Search needs a location that can be addressed even to the extent of a non-postally addressable location. Is this sort of intelligence now linked effectively into the recording of information for analysis through Crime Intelligence and onwards into analysis for Crime Recording of Incidents?

Officers are now able to stop and check suspects and clarify addresses/locations on a PDA device while out in the field, searching addresses/locations in the NLPG. Although this is still in test phase. The potential for linking the stop/searches to matched address in Crime/FIS offers BTP a huge leap forward in on-the-ground intelligence. Now we can link between stop and search locations on the ground and our own Force Intelligence. Updating FIS or trawling existing information becomes a simpler task with integrated locational data systems.

## 4. How does the NLPG support the Management of Police Information and support the sharing of information with partners such as the other emergency services and local authorities?

NLPG is at the forefront of BTP's MoPI compliance. In the ways I outlined previously, we are able to vastly improve the quality of our addressing data by matching locations against the NLPG. We can match and clean all our MoPI data against the de facto standard of the NLPG. Because of the new confidence this gives us in our data, and because it obeys the national

standard of the NLPG, this improves our ability to share data with other forces. Equally, the fact that NLPG is a national standard means that other forces have greater interoperability with our data.

I would be the first to admit we are only just beginning our journey of standardising our addressing data. However, the NLPG offers us a fantastic way to use and re-use data, as well as sharing our own data back into the national hub. Although the BTP gazetteer generally comprises of location data that is fairly specific to BTP, we should not assume that we are the only Emergency service who will find it of interest. A national hub enhances everyone's address data.

At a recent meeting of NLPG stakeholders, a colleague from a Fire Authority asked if we would be inputting our gazetteer data back into the NLPG hub when it has been converted to be NLPG based - as he put it "if it's of interest to you then it's of interest to us". This is a big advantage NLPG gives emergency services.

## Connecting databases using a unique identifier

The NLPG provides connectivity through the use of an unchanging, centrally managed, Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) linked to the address. Each property in the NLPG has a UPRN that identifies a basic land and property unit (BLPU). The BLPU defines an object that is of interest, e.g. a property or building including geographical grid coordinates to identify its precise location enabling the data to be used in conjunction with a map or aerial photo.

Each property or building also has at least one land and property identifier (LPI), which is the address of the location in a standard format, name/number, road/street etc. However, there are many instances where BLPU's have more than one LPI, for example if 15 Acacia Avenue is also Dunroamin Acacia Avenue or Flat 1 is the same as Ground Floor Flat – all of these will be referenced to the same UPRN. The street will also be described in the National Street Gazetteer, maintained by the local highway authorities.

The UPRN is nationally unique and persistent. Even if a property is demolished, the UPRN can never be reused. By referencing all application data to a core set of identifiers in this way the sharing of information becomes a much more straightforward process.



For more information on using the NLPG within your police authority, contact **Richard Duffield, Tel: 020 7747 3500**

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