



REGULATION 28: REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS (1)

*NOTE: This form is to be used **after** an inquest.*

	<p>REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS</p> <p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Home Secretary, Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF2. Mr James Vaughan, Chief Constable of Dorset Police, Force Headquarters, Winfrith, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8DZ
1	<p>CORONER</p> <p>I am Rachael Clare Griffin, Senior Coroner, for the Coroner Area of Dorset</p>
2	<p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</p> <p>I make this report under paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.</p>
3	<p>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</p> <p>On the 9th June 2017, an investigation was commenced into the death of John Edward Hill, born on the 22nd January 1940.</p> <p>The investigation concluded at the end of the Inquest on the 22nd June 2018.</p> <p>The Medical Cause of Death was:</p> <p>1a Head Injury due to skull penetrated by rifle bullet</p> <p>The conclusion of the Inquest was Suicide.</p>
4	<p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p> <p>On the 26th May 2017, the deceased was found in a collapsed and unresponsive condition in the living room at his home address with a .22 calibre long barrelled rifle in his hands and a bullet wound to his forehead.</p>
5	<p><u>CORONER'S CONCERNS</u></p> <p>During the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances it is my statutory duty to report to you. The MATTERS OF CONCERN are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. During the inquest evidence was heard that:

- i. Mr Hill was granted a firearms certificate to acquire a firearm on the 13th April 2017 by the Firearms Unit at Dorset Police following an application received from him dated the 4th November 2016. Following receipt of that certificate Mr Hill acquired a .22 calibre long barrelled rifle which he used to end his life 6 weeks later on the 26th May 2017.
- ii. Mr Hill's son had no knowledge of the application his father had made until after it was granted. He and his sister had concerns with their father having access to a firearm, as Mr Hill had told them that when the time came he would end his life by shooting himself with a rifle.
- iii. At the time of Mr Hill's application, enquiries were made by Dorset Police which did not include any enquiries with the family of Mr Hill or his wife with whom he was living, although the Firearms Enquiry Officer did see Mrs Hill when she went to interview Mr Hill on the 20th March.
- iv. There is national guidance from the Home Office called "Guide on Firearms Licensing Law" which was issued in April 2016. Chapter 12 is entitled Assessing Suitability and paragraphs 12.35 to 12.42 deal with applications and background checks to be undertaken. At paragraph 12.35 the Guidance states that *"in circumstances where there is information indicating domestic violence or abuse wider interviews or enquiries should be considered with a range of family, friends or associates"* prior to the issue of the certificate. There is no further reference to speaking to family members, friends or associates under any other circumstances.
- v. Evidence was further given that in the Dorset Police policy entitled 'Firearms and Explosive Licensing Risk Management Procedure' dated the 8th May 2015 there is no reference to such contact with family members, friends or associates and that family members or those living at the same address of the applicant, will not be contacted as standard practice. They may, as above, be contacted where there is evidence of domestic abuse.
- vi. Evidence was given that it would be beneficial for the Firearms Unit at Dorset Police to write to those living with the applicant to invite them to raise any concerns they wish to in relation to the application. Although this may not be responded to, at least it gives those close to the applicant an opportunity to raise their concerns. There may be for example domestic violence ongoing at the address that has not been brought to the Police Force's attention due to lack of reporting. This would be key to the firearm application.

2. I have concerns with regard to the following:

	<p>i. When the Police consider a firearm application, there may be valuable information that those close to the applicant may have, in circumstances where there is no domestic abuse or violence. Those living with the applicant may have vital information, which could impact upon the grant of a firearms certificate. This information may therefore be key to preventing a future death.</p> <p>ii. In view of this I would request that consideration is given to reviewing the national and local guidance in relation to the assessment criteria and enquiries to be considered regarding applications for firearm certificates, and for consideration to be given that those enquiries involve the applicant's family members, or the at the very least those living with the applicant.</p>				
6	<p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion urgent action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe you and/or your organisation have the power to take such action.</p>				
7	<p>YOUR RESPONSE</p> <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, 20th August 2018. I, the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>				
8	<p>COPIES and PUBLICATION</p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the following Interested Persons:</p> <p>(1) [REDACTED] Mr Hill's wife on behalf of the family</p> <p>(2) [REDACTED] Lead Investigator for the Independent Office for Police Conduct</p> <p>I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p>				
9	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Dated</td> <td>Signed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25th June 2018</td> <td>Rachael C Griffin </td> </tr> </table>	Dated	Signed	25 th June 2018	Rachael C Griffin 
Dated	Signed				
25 th June 2018	Rachael C Griffin 