



Mr Ian Arrow
HM Senior Coroner
1 Derriford Park
Derriford Business Park
Plymouth
PL6 5QZ



Essex Police Headquarters,
PO BOX 2,
Springfield,
Chelmsford,
Essex

██████████
1st May 2023

Dear Mr Arrow,

I write in response to your prevention of future deaths report, made under Regulation 28 of the Coroners (Investigation) Regulations 2013, relating to the tragic deaths in Keyham on 12th August 2021. I set out below the action Essex Police has taken in relation to the two matters you have required all Chief Constables to respond to, and our progress towards completion.

Review of all certificates seized, refused, revoked or surrendered and then subsequently approved over the past five years

I have directed that Essex Police will review all decisions to return firearms over a five year period. The prioritisation is in line with that outlined by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for National Police Firearms licensing:

- We are prioritising review cases where firearms have been seized or surrendered to police pending a review of suitability to have a certificate, but then subsequently returned. There are circa 900 incidents in Essex where certificate holders have come to the adverse attention of police. A detailed screening of these incidents is underway to identify how many involved a return of certificate and guns decision.
- We will review the most recent decisions first, as the most recently returned licences potentially pose the greatest risk.
- We will review all cases where applications have been refused or licences revoked, but where an application or appeal by the licence holder resulted in the grant of a certificate.
- All these cases whereby a certificate was granted following appeal or further application (circa 200) will have previous decision making reviewed utilising the current Home Office Statutory Guidance (February 2023)
- The review will be completed by October 2023

In the absence of nationally accredited training, the steps being taken to ensure local training is of a satisfactory standard for all staff and supervisors involved in firearms licensing, and that decision making authority is delegated only to persons who have undergone adequate training in firearms licencing and in applying that guidance.

Essex Police are engaged with the NPCC Lead, Chief Constable [REDACTED] and College of Policing in the development of the national training package. We have delivered local training to ensure continuous professional development, including an input on the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law in November 2022 and the updated Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers of Police on Firearms Law in February 2023, as well as risk matrix development, National Decision Making model, Keyham Inquiry recommendations and impact, 'Managing Risk and Firearms Licensing', Domestic Abuse and Stalking inputs and Welfare and Counselling Support guidance.

Local development events in the form of classroom days are regular, varied, and relevant to the role. All new team members are given bespoke inhouse training delivered and monitored by their supervisor and with the exception of two new members of staff my team have all attended the training course in West Yorkshire. Essex and Kent Police have a collaborated Learning and Development Command, who are developing a lesson plan to further enhance professional development and ensure currency of knowledge. I anticipate this will be in place by the end of August 2023.

I am satisfied that, in the absence of a national accredited training product that a local training programme is in place to ensure all member of staff and supervisors to whom decision making authority is delegated have received, and will continue to receive, adequate local training. Since September 2021, all decisions to return certificates following a suitability review are made by the Superintendent for Armed Policing.

As part of our joint force audit process, external auditors will be commencing a review of our Firearms Shotgun and Explosive Licencing team commissioned by me and the Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner to provide independent reassurance regarding our compliance with national and local policy and ability to respond to changes in legislation and other recommendations. We will also continue to work with the NPCC lead to ensure our processes in Essex are focused on keeping people safe and working in accordance with statutory guidance and recommendations.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chief Constable

