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Plymouth, PL6 5QZ

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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Date: 28 April 2023

Dear Sir,

I am responding on behalf of Gloucestershire Constabulary in respect of the 'Report to Prevention of Future Deaths' under paragraph 7, Schedule 5 Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, issued by you on 8 March 2023.

The matters of concern are outlined in the report:-

Following evidence from Devon and Cornwall Police at the Inquests, the Coroner's recent PFD reports state:

*"I am concerned that the information from those 41 police forces who indicated that they had made no incorrect decisions to return a weapon/certificate **may need to be further tested and explored.***

*I am concerned that the figures provided to the Home Secretary in 2021 may not reflect the accurate position, and that if **sufficiently stringent checks** are performed these may reveal other cases where a firearm or shotgun certificate had been seized, refused, revoked or surrendered but was subsequently issued/returned in circumstances when the certificate should not have been approved. I am concerned that if there are other cases that were not subject to a proper or **thorough review of the risk of returning the weapon** then the person may continue to have a firearms/shotgun certificate and hold weapons in circumstances that place the public and the licence holder themselves at risk.*

*I am concerned that in the light of the lessons learned in the Keyham inquests of the attitude towards risk, a **further review of all certificates seized, refused, revoked or surrendered and then subsequently approved over the past five years** may be required to be assured of public safety."*

Specifically in respect of the 'Actions Should be Taken', I can confirm:-

A review will take place as per the letter dated 24 March 2023 from Chief Constable Debbie Tedds, Warwickshire Police NPCC lead for National Police Firearms Licensing and we will endeavour to achieve such reviews over the next six months **by 2 October 2023.**

The review will take place as follows:

- Prioritise review cases where firearms have been **seized or surrendered** to police pending a review of suitability to have a licence, but then **subsequently returned**.
- Start by reviewing the most recent decisions, as the most recently returned licences arguably pose the biggest risk. They will be closest to the events which justified seizure or surrender in the first place, and there will have been less reassurance in the passing of time without new incidents.
- Review in slower time cases where applications have been refused or licences revoked, but where subsequent applications or appeals by the same licence holder resulted in a grant. If the return or grant has been ordered by the Crown Court this will then be discussed with the Constabulary Head of Legal - what, if anything can be done?.
- If it is not practical for us to review the last five years of decisions, then we will progressively review the last four years. Licence holders in their fourth to fifth year can be managed through the normal five-yearly renewal process against current standards.
- Review all previous decision-making against the **current** (February 2023) Home Office Statutory Guidance, in light of the concerns referred to in the Coroner's PFD reports, in order to promote public safety by today's standards.

In addition to the above I have agreed to the below uplifts within our Firearms Licensing Department to ensure we address other areas highlighted in your reports and to ensure the new Statutory Guidance is followed:

- A temporary 18 month firearms licensing administrator to reduce the grant backlog down to pre Covid-19 levels.
- Introduction of two permanent intelligence development police staff posts to research social media intelligence for grants, renewals and suitability cases.
- Training for firearms licensing administrators, decision makers and further consideration given to re-training firearms licensing officers.
- The Firearms Licensing manager role is reviewed to undertake responsibility for suitability decision making.
- A further permanent Firearms Unit Supervisor be recruited and who is answerable to the Unit Manager.

I hope this information is helpful and welcomed as we are determined to learn and act upon important lessons arising from your inquests. Please do contact me or my Head of Criminal Justice, Superintendent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED].[\[REDACTED\].police.uk](mailto:[REDACTED].police.uk) if you require any further information or update.

Yours sincerely



[REDACTED]
Chief Constable