



[REDACTED]
Chief Constable

Tuesday 2nd May 2023

Dear Sir,

Re: The return of weapons after review of suitability

I write in response to your report, and subsequent requirement placed upon Sussex Police following the inquest into the deaths of five people shot in Keyham on 12th August 2021. I specifically respond in relation to the fact that we are one of 41 forces who responded with a view that they had no concerns regarding decision making in those cases that were requested to be reviewed following intervention from The Home Secretary in 2021.

Sussex Police currently have a joint team working with Surrey Police in the arena of Firearms and Explosives Licensing who I have asked to carefully reviewed the findings of the inquest leading to the above, and other PFD reports shared with Chief Constables.

It is the belief of the Firearms and Explosives Licencing Unit (FELU) that the process followed prior to return of a certificate is suitably stringent in providing effective scrutiny and oversight in cases where Firearms and/or Shotguns have been seized within our policing area, carrying out appropriate due diligence prior to their return, or formally revoking as appropriate. This is catered for within a force policy specifically dealing with the seizure of legally held firearms and certificates.

This includes a full review overseen by a manager within the department and the Chief Inspector head of FELU. Both serve with delegated authority from the Chief Constable to perform this function alongside the wider experience within Firearms Licensing, prior to return of any certificates. This process is further supported through dip checking by a Superintendent responsible for Firearms Licensing within the force.

Sussex Police follow the national Home Office guidance and legislation in respect of Firearms and Shotgun licencing and work within the regional group of forces around our processes to ensure consistency. Furthermore the Force also plays an active part in the national Firearms and Explosives Licencing working group (FELWG).

Sussex Police FELU have been externally reviewed by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) for the last two years and no recommendations have been raised in response to our processes for suitability reviews or delegated authorities.

In 2021 the review of all certificates that had been seized, refused, revoked or surrendered in the previous twelve months, and subsequently approved by the police, were carried out following concerns raised by the Home Secretary. This review consisted of 95 Certificates and was carried out by managers within the team. At the time no concerns were raised. However, in light of the Coroner's report, we have decided that we will adopt the national guidance from FELWG National lead CC [REDACTED] to provide further reassurance.

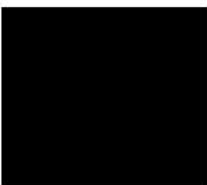
Therefore, I can confirm that Sussex Police will undertake the following approach for a review of firearms and shotgun licensing and prioritise this review as follows in line with the national proposal and this review will cover the last 5 years:

- We will prioritise for review cases where firearms have been seized or surrendered to police pending a review of suitability to have a licence, but then subsequently returned.
- We will review the most recent decisions first, 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.
- We will 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, however these will be completed.
- We will review previous decision-making against the current (February 2023) Home Office Statutory Guidance, in order to promote public safety by today's standards.

Additional resource of a sufficient rank and experience has been allocated to perform this review and has been seconded into the department from 17th April 2023 to expedite this review and provide me with a full report, which will be available by 2nd October 2023.

I am satisfied that based on the information available to me that whilst our processes are sufficient currently, this will provide an additional scrutiny to provide additional reassurance of this.

Yours sincerely,



[REDACTED]
Chief Constable



[REDACTED]
Chief Constable

Tuesday 2nd May 2023

Dear Sir,

Re: Report regarding training of firearms licencing decision makers

I write in response to your report, and subsequent requirement placed upon Sussex Police following the inquest into the deaths of five people shot in Keyham on 12th August 2021.

In the absence of any national training product accredited by the College of Policing, all Sussex Police Firearms Enquiry Officers (FEOs) and supervisors have attended a firearms licensing course that is designed and delivered in Yorkshire. This has only resumed this year due to the impact of Covid and as such some recent joiners into the department have not yet attended. However, we have commissioned a bespoke course with the same provider exclusively for Sussex Police which is scheduled for May 2023. There is currently no nationally available course for office based Firearms Registration Officers (FRO) however this training is internally delivered and managed by the office supervisor.

A schedule of additional training is also being delivered this year to supplement the external training. This will cover issues relating to safeguarding, intelligence gathering, application of the National Decision Making Model and the safe handling of firearms. The work that has been developed has been recognised by an external audit carried out by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) with its final report due to be released imminently. All staff received training on the Statutory Guidance in 2022 by the previous Chief Inspector in charge of the Firearms and Explosives Licensing Unit (FELU). Following the publication of the revised guidance February 2023, this has been updated and refreshed for all FELU staff as part of their continuous professional development. There is a force policy in place (seizure of legally held firearms and certificates) and a standard operating procedure is being developed to ensure clear processes and procedures are applied consistently.

There are seven staff trained across different senior ranks and roles who are authorised to carry out delegated authorities - the review function within the FELU. All have received training and have relevant experience to perform this role within the department. All have delegated authority for the force and complete regular professional development. The Superintendent has delegated authority to enable effective oversight of the Detective Chief Inspector and to provide additional capacity to allow for the return of certificates and weapons following revocation decisions. Quality assurance is carried out for all roles and responsibilities in the department to ensure Statutory Guidance is followed.

Sussex Police have been supporting the national NPCC lead and the College of Policing over the past 12 months in developing a national curriculum and learning outcomes for Firearms Enquiry Officers. The intention is that the training will be delivered this year, which will be aligned with quality assurance and mandatory professional development. Sussex Police FELU will be active participants at the two day CPD event hosted by the College of Policing in May 2023. This will enable critical learning from the detailed de-brief of the lessons from the Keyham Shootings Inquests and the new Home Office Statutory Guidance.

I am satisfied that based on the information available to me, that all staff have received and will be continuing to receive appropriate training, proportionate to their respective roles within the Sussex Police FELU.

Yours sincerely,

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Chief Constable