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To Senior Coroner, Mrs Rachael Clare Griffin

Coroner Area of Dorset

By email

2nd September 2025

Dear Mrs Griffin

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths (PFD) dated 10th July 2025, and which was sent to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Secretary of State for Health.

You also sent this to the Chief Executive of the College of Policing and Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) as persons who may find it of interest.

I write today on their behalf and that of Deputy Chief Constable [REDACTED] from Warwickshire Police who leads the NPCC Firearms Licensing Portfolio. I am the NPCC Strategic Coordinator for Firearms Licensing and currently seconded into the College of Policing to deliver the new National Firearms Licensing Training Programme.

This relates to the tragic death of Jairus Joshua Timothy Earl aged 15 years on 15th April 2024. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere condolences to Jarius's family and friends. I am deeply sorry to learn of the circumstances you described, and I appreciate you taking the time to raise these important concerns to us.

I have also engaged with both Dorset Police and the Metropolitan Police Service to learn more about this incident.

Whilst my response will confirm our current position and proposals around the issues that you have raised, I must equally highlight the absolute importance and personal responsibility on licence holders for the security of their firearms especially when there are significant known concerns regarding the mental health and vulnerability of those close to them. There is a specific condition on the licence to ensure that shot guns, must at all times be stored securely so as to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, access to the guns by an unauthorised person.

You have correctly highlighted that there is currently no statutory responsibility on licence holders to inform policing if they store firearms temporarily at second homes. I believe it.

would become too complicated for example if new rules were created for licence holders without second homes to inform policing every time their firearms are temporarily away from home when attending shooting locations. We would not have the capacity to check and authorise such short-term arrangements.

Some forces have sought to implement local measures to deal with secondary storage locations. For this to be consistently applied nationally, there must be clear guidance in place and onus on licence holders to declare their second homes if they propose on storing firearms there. My intentions therefore are to develop this issue with the Home Office Firearms and Weapons Policy Unit to establish if the Firearms Licensing Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers and application forms can be further amended to cover these circumstances.

In addition to the above there is a significant programme of works underway chaired by the NPCC Firearms Licensing Lead and project managed by Police Digital Services (PDS) to develop a brand-new National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS). Of the various aspirations with this new system, it will deliver the much-needed consistency required as all firearms licensing teams, licence holders and applicants will use it. It will align with many systems already used by policing and in relation to this tragic incident there would be opportunities for second homes to subsequently alert local force systems that firearms may be present on those premises.

Finally, on this point our intentions are to review the Firearms Security Handbook (last revised 2020) to ensure that it aligns with the new statutory guidance. We can use this opportunity to further reference second homes within this public document.

Your report references the difference between the Section 1 Firearm and Section 2 Shotgun legislation, highlighting that both are lethal barrelled weapons. The NPCC Firearms Licensing Portfolio acknowledge this and welcome the Government intentions to hold a public consultation later this year to consider the closer alignment of firearm and shotgun legislation. We will respond to this when it occurs and actively engage with all police licensing teams to ensure all opinions are collated and fed back through the Home Office.

The PFD lastly highlights your concerns over the lack of access to medical information of others residing at the address of a licence applicant, especially in relation to mental health. This is a shared concern within police firearms licensing as we should take an active interest in those around the applicant or current licence holder as their behaviour or vulnerability could impact on the statutory test for others to possess firearms i.e not being a danger to public safety or to the peace.

Whilst we are unable to directly access the medical records of those around the applicant, because of this case and similar tragedies we have successfully worked with the Home Office to further strengthen the statutory guidance on this specific point, which now reads:

2.16 Home Visits and Inspections

- The home visit must include an interview to discuss all issues relevant to suitability as set out in this guidance and must include inspection of security arrangements. The police should always interview the applicant's partner and other members of the household during the home visit unless there is a strong reason for not doing so. Where there are considered to be such strong reasons, the position should be agreed with the relevant manager and properly recorded.
- Such interviews are crucial in providing the police with a more comprehensive picture of **both** the applicant **& other householder's domestic and mental wellbeing** circumstance, to assist with their suitability assessment.
- The interview with the applicant's partner and other members of the household must be undertaken separately from the interview with the applicant, and without the applicant being present, and any disclosure which leads to a decision to refuse (or revoke) a certificate should be carefully communicated so as to minimise to the greatest extent possible the risk to the partner or other household member. If there is the possibility or evidence of domestic abuse (see paragraphs 2.57 to 2.64 below) **or other mental wellbeing concerns then** wider enquiries and investigations must take place.

In addition to the Home Office Statutory Guidance, as the professional body for policing in England and Wales, the College of Policing is equally committed to setting high standards across the service. The aim is to support officers and staff in delivering effective, ethical, and evidence-based policing, which meets both current and future challenges. One of the keyways we do this is through the development of Authorised Professional Practice (APP)—the official source of professional guidance for policing in England and Wales. The Firearms Licensing APP was subject of a significant review in 2023 and will encourage to use three overlapping factors that inform professional judgement around risk. These are:

- communication
- curiosity
- clues

These three factors are not hierarchical, and they are potentially self-reinforcing. For example, good communication can reveal more clues, which may identify more avenues for investigation (curiosity). This can lead to more focused communication.

Good **communication** allows staff to address and probe sensitive issues that are relevant to the application such as people's past, health, and vulnerability.

Staff should exercise **professional curiosity** to actively identify and investigate suitability such as asking questions and keeping an open mind.

Staff should be alert to and understand the **clues** that may impact on suitability such as medical conditions or signs of vulnerability

The relationship with Police Firearms Licensing Teams and applicants or current licence holders is built on trust. The expectation being that applicants or licence holders declare relevant medical conditions for themselves or in relation to a family member or associate who lives at the address or has unsupervised access to the address.

These are just a few of the considerations that we discuss with learners who attend the mandatory firearms licensing training programme. As part of this training, in June 2025 we commenced delivery of an additional two-day course for Firearms Licensing Enquiry Officers where we focus on important subject areas relating to domestic abuse, family turmoil together with mental health and wellbeing.

I trust this offers a helpful response to the concerns that you have raised and would thank you once again for bringing this matter to our attention. I would please ask that you pass on my deepest sympathies to Jairus's family and loved ones.

Yours sincerely,



Strategic Coordinator & Policing Standards Manager

Firearms Licensing