



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

████████████████████  
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State*

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
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HM Coroner Michael J. Pemberton  
The Manchester West Coroner's Office  
First Floor, Paderborn House  
Howell Croft North  
Bolton, BL1 1QY

7 April 2026

Dear Mr Pemberton,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 10 February 2026 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Samuel John Dickinson. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for data and technology.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Samuel's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to their family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are deeply tragic and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

The report raises concerns over firearms legislation relating to shotgun or firearms licensing (or both) and provisions on certificate holders to self-report any illness or mental health condition that may change the circumstances from the time at which the license was granted. My ministerial colleague in the Home Office will lead the response to this concern. The report also raised concerns around the obligation and provision for a General Practitioner to record the holding of a license within medical records to ensure any relevant issues are flagged, and provision for reporting of these issues, by GPs, to the local police force.

The Department have worked closely with the Home Office and the British Medical Association to ensure there are strong controls in place in relation to an applicant's medical suitability which is an important element of the application process that the police consider when deciding if an applicant can hold a firearms or shotgun certificate.

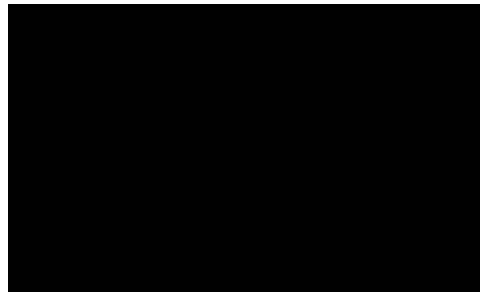
An applicant is required to declare all relevant medical conditions upon applying and they must provide details of their GP, giving approval for their GP to share any concerns with the police for the application and throughout the period of firearms or shotgun licence, if granted. The proforma is then completed by their GP or an independent General Medical Council registered doctor. The doctor completing the proforma checks the GP medical record and must provide details of all relevant medical conditions to the police.

This process has been further strengthened within GP IT systems, where a GP can add a digital marker to the patient record, to note that the patient has a firearms certificate. This was fully rolled out to all GP IT systems in England by May 2023. If the patient begins to experience a relevant medical condition while the certificate is valid, upon discussion with the GP, the GP will see an alert and upon assessment, can ask the patient to contact the police or the GP can flag this to the police directly, with consent for this provided in the initial application. This allows the police to review the person's continued suitability, and if necessary, revoke the certificate. Within the existing system there is also provision to record when contact has been made with the police as a result of a digital marker flag.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the National Police Chiefs Council, the Home Office and the British Medical Association has been in place since 2019. In addition to Home Office 2021 Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers of Police which includes the role of GPs, the British Medical Association issues its own guidance to GPs. We can see from NHS England's annual national data counts of clinical (SNOMED) coding that GPs are placing the markers and police contact is being made as a result. We understand the Home Office will continue to monitor usage as part of continuing to make the firearms licensing system as robust as it can be.

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely,



**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State  
for Health Innovation and Safety**