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INQUEST FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF SAMUEL JOHN DICKINSON

REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS UNDER REGULATIONS 28 AND 29 OF THE CORONERS (INVESTIGATIONS) REGULATIONS 2013

I am writing to thank you for your Regulation 28 report of 10 February following the inquest into the death of Samuel John Dickinson. I would like to pass on my condolences to Samuel's family and friends about this tragic loss of life.

In your report you highlighted two specific concerns relating to perceived gaps in firearms legislation and controls. The first relates to the absence of a specific requirement for a firearms or shotgun licence holder to report the onset of any illness or mental health condition which amounts to a change in circumstances from when the licence was issued.

We recognise this as a potential area for strengthening. We are therefore shortly bringing forward a new Statutory Instrument to add a new condition to firearms and shotgun licences to require the holder to inform the police if they begin to suffer from a new relevant medical condition, or if an existing condition significantly worsens, during the lifetime of the licence. This will enable the police to assess whether the change affects the person's suitability to continue to possess the firearm or shotgun. At the same time, we will also be introducing a new licensing condition to require the licence holder to inform the police if they consult a third-party medical practitioner who is not their GP, to ensure that the police have a full picture of the licence holder's health.

Your second concern is that there is no obligation on GPs to record the holding of a firearms or shotgun licence on the holder's medical records when advised that such a licence has been granted, or on them to report any relevant medical issues to the police.

It is mandatory for all firearm and shotgun licence applicants to provide information from their doctor about whether they have experienced any relevant medical conditions, including mental health conditions and drug and alcohol abuse, at the time of application. This requirement was introduced in the Statutory Guidance to Chief Officers of Police on firearms licensing, which was first issued by the Home Office in November 2021. GPs are also asked to put a firearms marker on the GP patient record when the

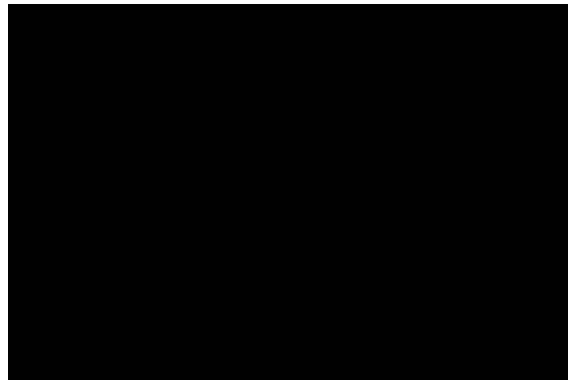
person is granted a firearm or shotgun certificate, and this remains on the system for the five years' duration of the licence. If a certificate holder sees their GP regarding a relevant medical condition during this period, the doctor can advise the police of this, enabling the police to carry out a review as to whether the person remains suitable to have a licence.

A new digital version of the firearms marker was introduced to all GP surgeries in England in May 2023. The digital firearms marker automatically alerts the doctor if a patient is seen regarding a relevant medical condition and reminds the GP to advise the police. This improves the safety of the system and helps to ensure that the firearms marker is not missed by GPs. The data we have on the use of the digital marker shows that it is now being applied by GPs. In 2024-25, over 98,000 digital markers were applied by GPs to the medical record of those granted or renewed a firearm or shotgun certificate and there were over 1,100 cases in which the GP notified the police of a medical concern about a licence holder, following a review prompted by the digital firearms marker. We are however actively reviewing whether and how the digital firearms marker should be mandated in the future so that we can ensure that we build on the very encouraging use of the digital marker so far by GPs.

We are also intending to consult on strengthening shotgun controls in due course. The Government response to the 2023 consultation on firearms licensing, published in February 2025, included a commitment to consult on improving and aligning the controls on shotguns with other firearms.

Thank you again for your report.

Very best wishes,



Minister of State for Policing and Crime