

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) - Targeting the risk - An inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing in police forces in England and Wales – (Sept 2015).

[The report can be found here](#)

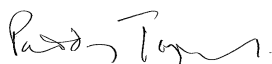
On 15 September 2015, HMIC published the findings of an inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing in police forces in England and Wales. The report sets out HMIC findings from fieldwork in 11 police forces supported by data from all 43 forces in England and Wales. Although fieldwork was not undertaken in Nottinghamshire, HMIC recommendations are still relevant to all police forces throughout England and Wales.

The police are required to undertake their firearms licensing responsibilities in accordance with 34 separate pieces of legislation and guidance from the Home Office and the College of Policing (Authorised Professional Practice - APP).

HMIC found that on too many occasions, the police are not following the Home Office guidance or the Authorised Professional Practice that are in place. And, the guidance and practice in many respects are inadequate, allowing room for interpretation and the creation of inconsistency in the way firearms licensing is undertaken within and between police forces. This creates an environment in which members of the public are let down and their safety compromised.

I agree with HMIC that this is not acceptable and asked the Chief Constable to provide me with written assurance that the 9 HMIC recommendations directed at all Chief Constables are either implemented already or swift action is being taken to do so. In this respect, I am assured that the Force already complies with the statutory requirements. A summary of the Chief Constable's response to the HMIC recommendations is shown at Annex 1 to this letter.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner

ANNEX 1

FORCE RESPONSE TO HMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The standards set by APP include performance monitoring regarding the granting, renewal, refusal and revocations. These issues are discussed at regular line management meetings chaired by the Firearms Licensing Manager. The structure and monitoring that is currently in place meets with requirements set out in APP. Inspection by internal auditors (recently conducted) provides scrutiny and has resulted in a number of recommendations

Recommendation 2

The Force is currently re-writing its firearms licensing procedures so that they reflect the level of risk assessment currently in place. The Review Team inspection meets the requirements of this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

The Force is recently undertaken an assessment of the demand placed on its Firearms Licensing Unit to ensure it has the capacity to meet demand and provide an efficient and effective service at all times. Currently, the department has NO BACKLOGS of current applications. Risks have been identified and are being managed. Areas of responsibility have been adjusted to ensure a more balanced workload across the team. Also, processes are being developed to ensure that the Unit is able to meet demand given anticipated reductions in staff.

Recommendation 8

Nottinghamshire Police has an established licensing process that has been in place for the past two years and there are no 'expired' licensing records.

Recommendation 9

Licensing processes now adopted prevent unlawful possession by expired certificate holders and the need for widespread use of temporary permits. In event that a person fails to submit

an application 6 weeks prior to expiry the force insists they lodge such firearms at a dealer or other certificate holder. This has been cited in this report as best practice. For those applications that are submitted in a reasonable time but due to police delays are not issued in time then the force ensures a temporary certificate is issued and recorded correctly on the National Firearms Database.

Recommendation 10

The Force has an effective monitoring arrangement in place to address police national computer error notifications on the National Firearms Licensing Management System as they occur and there are no outstanding errors at this time.

Recommendation 12

An extensive review of all certificate holders identified through a risk matrix has been completed. This has included development of internal process around the level of vetting that is conducted into all grant/renewal applications. Continuous monitoring is in place around those originally identified as a risk but due to insufficient evidence were not proceeded with.

Recommendation 13

HMIC recommends that systems are designed to identify, prior to police attendance, whether a reported incident involves or is at the address of a firearm certificate holder are in place and are always applied by staff dispatching officers to incident. This is in respect to a gazetteer between the National Firearms Database and the Force Vision database that officers know in advance that firearms are at a given location. Work is currently in the testing phase between the Force and the service provider. This link will be in place by end of January 2016.

Recommendation 16

The Force has a well-established Independent Advisory Group made up of a range of representative groups, dealerships and individual holders. This provides a forum to discuss and develop the service to our communities. The Firearms Licensing Department was also

represented at last year's Robin Hood show at the Newark showground and rural crime meetings are attended by the Firearms Manager with a view to fostering links with interested parties. The force continues to look at other ways of engagement including the force Facebook/twitter account. Positive steps to prosecute those individuals who breach conditions have taken place but in many cases formal cautions have been administered where appropriate.