

 West Mercia POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Firearms Licensing
REFERENCE NUMBER	WMP188
Version	1.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	LOCAL POLICING
BUSINESS AREA	PUBLIC CONTACT

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	March 2022
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	March 2023
RISK RATING	HIGH
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW

West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy.
Please e-mail policiesandprocedures@westmercia.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

This policy explains how West Mercia Police approaches the administration of firearm, shotgun and explosives licensing, whilst balancing the risk of harm to the public with the lawful possession lethal barrelled weapons and explosives.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy ensures the control of firearms and shotguns is administered in accordance with the Firearms Act 1968 (and its amendments), the Approved Professional Practice issued by the College of Policing and Home Office Guidance.

The following points underpin all aspects of firearms licensing:

- protecting public safety by preventing foreseeable or avoidable harm
- delivering an efficient licensing process that is proportionate, rigorous, cost effective, fair and timely
- providing a fair and transparent service to the public.

The majority of certificate holders and registered firearms dealers are law-abiding and fully support the requirements for firearms licensing. West Mercia Police, therefore, has adopted a risk-based approach to aspects of the licensing process to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS of the POLICY

The Firearms licensing Unit operates within the parameters set by:

Firearms Act 1968 (and its amending Acts)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/27/contents>

Explosives Regulations 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1638/contents>

Home Office Guide on Firearms Law (2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearms-law-guidance-to-the-police-2012>

Firearms Licensing: Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers of Police (2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-for-police-on-firearms-licensing/statutory-guidance-for-chief-officers-of-police-on-firearms-licensing-accessible-version-from-1-november-2021>

The Approved Professional Practice: Firearms Licensing

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/firearms-licensing/>

Human Right Act 1998

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

Equalities Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The National Decision Making Model

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s>

Police Code of Ethics

<https://www.college.police.uk/ethics/code-of-ethics>

4.0 PROCEDURE

The Firearms and Explosives Licensing Unit (FLU) will:

1. Grant and authorise firearm and/or shotgun certificates under the Firearms Act 1968.
2. Maintain a register of firearms dealers and support the Home Office in the assessment and their issuing of certificates under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.
3. Support the Home Office in the assessment and licensing of Shooting/ Rifle Clubs and Museums or other appropriate establishments.
4. Issue explosives certificates, explosive storage licences in line with Explosives Regulations 2014 and under agreements with the Health and Safety Executive.
5. Support the Department of Trade in assessment of risk of importation and export of Firearms and Explosives.
6. Continually assess the risks involved throughout the life of any licence or certificate.
7. Ensure the National Decision Making Model and the Police Code of Ethics are at the core of all decisions made.
8. Refuse or revoke certificates or licences in line with National Guidance and Legislation.

5.0 GOVERNANCE

The Chief Constable has delegated a member of the chief officer team with delegated authority, to hold regular governance meetings to discuss and/or assess the overall performance of the Firearms and Explosives Licensing department. These meetings include the following areas:

- performance monitoring regarding the granting of certificates, renewals, refusals and revocations
- the outcome of appeals and any relevant good practice

- timeliness of the department's processes, eg, in relation to applications for granting certificates and renewals
- finance and resourcing
- cases of note which may require further investigation and/or review
- implications of new developments and/or national good practice associated with firearms licensing
- dip sampling of granted/renewed certificates
- monitoring of the force risk matrix
- public engagement strategies/stakeholder meetings
- complaints – their investigation, resolution and any learning from experience.

6.0 DELEGATED AUTHORITIES

The Chief Constable has delegated authority under the Firearms Act 1968 and the Explosives Regulations 2014 to Officers and Staff within the Firearms and Explosives Licensing Department and at levels of the chain of command senior to the Firearms Licensing Manager. This ensures the processes take place with appropriate oversight, where it is necessary or mandated, for efficient and effective compliance with the administration of the processes undertaken by the Department.

7.0 CONSULTATION

<i>Business Lead Consulted</i>	<i>Date Consulted</i>
Supt LP	March 2022

Key stake holders have been identified. Consultation with external stake holders regularly occurs through formal meetings of the West Mercia Firearms Licensing Service User Advisory Group.

Internal stakeholders being the departments where this policy had direct implications have been consulted with broad acceptance.

8.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to policy will be recorded using the below chart:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Date of Approval / Adoption
		Previously approved at JNCC meeting	JNCC 13/09/2016
01/12/2021	R Barker	Review - Changes due to publication of Statutory National Guidance APP 01/11/2021	Mar 2022

9.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The H&S, Risk and Equality Assessment Analysis is available on a separate document.

10.0 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a DPIA required? – No as agreed with Audit, Risk and Compliance on 1st March 2022.

11.0 MONITORING / EVALUATION

Monitoring and review of this policy is the responsibility of the policy owner