


<b>POLICE USE OF FIREARMS POLICY</b>		
Security Classification	<b>OFFICIAL</b>	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

<b>POLICY</b>	
REFERENCE NUMBER	<b>WMP157</b>
Version	<b>1.0</b>

<b>POLICY OWNERSHIP</b>	
DIRECTORATE	LOCAL POLICING
BUSINESS AREA	OPERATIONS

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	<b>April 2021</b>
LATEST REVIEW DATE	<b>July 2022</b>
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	<b>July 2023</b>
RISK RATING	<b>HIGH</b>
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	<b>LOW</b>

West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy.  
Please e-mail [contactus@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:contactus@westmercia.police.uk)

### Handling Instructions

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## **1.0 POLICY OUTLINE**

- 1.1 This policy explains how West Mercia Police will approach the police use of firearms.
- 1.2 This will apply to any incident, event or operation where officers are required to serve in an armed capacity, whether in the West Mercia Police area or whether assisting officers in another Force area.
- 1.3 This policy is supported by a procedure document, The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Authorised Professional Practice (APP), the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC) and cross border/multi agency operations protocols.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY**

- 2.1 This policy ensures that West Mercia Police maintain an effective resource of appropriately trained and equipped officers and staff to deal with any incident or event where police use of firearms may be necessary.

## **3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 The issue of firearms to officers and deployment of armed officers will be carried out under rigorous national standards of training, supervision and command.
- 3.2 This document should be read in conjunction with The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and The National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC).

### **Legitimate Aim / Human Rights & Race Relations Act Considerations**

- 3.3 Consideration has been given to the compatibility of this policy and related procedures with the Human Rights Act; with particular reference to the legal basis of its precepts; the legitimacy of its aims; the justification and proportionality of the actions intended by it; that it is the least intrusive and damaging option necessary to achieve the aims; and that it defines the need to document the relevant decision making processes and outcomes of action.
- 3.2 This policy is relevant to the obligations placed upon the police service to:
  - ◆ Eliminate unlawful discrimination,
  - ◆ Promote equality of opportunity, and
  - ◆ Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

**Legality**

- 3.3 The legal basis for this policy comes from the common law duty of the police to protect life and property, prevent and detect crime, keep the peace and, in particular, the following statutes: -
1. Criminal Law Act 1967
  2. Equality Act 2010
  3. Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984.
  4. Human Rights Act, 1998.

**Implications Of The Policy**

- 3.4 Armed Response Vehicles (ARV's) containing Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO's) form part of the OPU (Operational Policing Unit). They are geographically sited across the force area. Between these centres they are responsible for providing ARV cover 24 hours a day and provide an immediate spontaneous response to any firearms incident.

**Staffing And Training**

- 3.5 West Mercia Police are committed to providing Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) which are available for deployment at any time. A tactical firearms team (Task Force) is also available at all times and provides additional firearms capacity and capabilities. Task Force should be considered at an early stage of any prolonged or specialist firearms operation. The team are trained to a higher level in various specialist tactics. Details of these are contained within both forces' procedure on Police Use of Firearms document and relevant appendices.
- 3.6 All AFO's will receive the appropriate training in accordance with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC)
- 3.7 The instructional staff at the West Mercia Firearms School will be available to supplement the ARVs on the OPU and the Tactical Team as necessary.
- 3.8 Selection for training within this demanding area of police work will be in line with both Force's current process for acknowledging and progressing career aspiration requests and an appropriate assessment centre in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination.

**Crime and Disorder Act**

- 3.9 Throughout all stages of any incident or operation requiring deployment of armed officers, consultation with partner agencies will

be considered. Such agencies may be numerous and will include fire, ambulance and local authorities.

### **Bureaucracy**

- 3.10 The contents of this policy, subsequent procedures and NPCC, APP and the NPFTC, ensure that the deployment of police staff, their selection, training, equipment provision, and the recording process is effective and efficient.
- 3.11 The Strategic Firearms Commander (Gold) of each designated firearms incident will complete a firearms log, unless, due to its spontaneity, the incident is concluded prior to contact with the Strategic Firearms Commander (Gold).
- 3.12 The Tactical Firearms Commander (Silver) of each designated firearms incident will ensure the incident is recorded on the Chronicle and will complete a firearms log.
- 3.13 It is the responsibility of the Tactical Firearms Commander (Silver) to ensure that any intelligence gained during an operation is effectively captured and recorded. Any information or intelligence not received through an Intelligence Cell or arising from the relevant command and control system log detail will be notified to the relevant Force's Intelligence Unit, either by the 'tagging' process, NIR (National Intelligence Report) or directly.
- 3.15 The Operational Firearms Commander (OFC) (Bronze) should ensure decisions taken are recorded, where possible, to provide a clear audit trail.
- 3.16 A (Silver) firearms log will also be completed if a request to arm is refused. A firearm authority refusal is defined as: -

***“Where a formal request is made to a person entitled to grant authority to arm, and is then refused by that person. This does not include where advice or guidance, regarding a threat assessment, is sought from authorising officers.”***

Responsibility to complete the (Silver) firearms log in these cases lies with the commander making the refusal.

- 3.17 Tactical Advisors will complete a Tactical Advice Log on the Chronicle for every incident or operation where tactical advice is sought. This includes advice on incidents or operations which are not designated firearms incidents. All such incidents or operations should be referred to a Tactical Firearms Commander (Silver) for initial consideration.

### **Internal Policy links**

- 3.18 The following existing internal policies are linked to this policy;

- ◆ Managing Diversity Policy Statement
- ◆ Dog Section Policy: 48-2002 (Reviewed July 2015)

### **Risks**

- 3.19 The success of this policy will require the corporate support of all Local Policing Area's – Response (LPA) staff and members of the forces headquarters department. Additionally individual officers have the professional responsibility of maintaining their individual skills and qualification by seeking training and through active deployment.
- 3.20 Specific risks associated to this policing activity are the subject of Force Risk Assessments These will be applied on all occasions.
- 3.21 The following Force Risk Assessments will apply to this policy,
- 01 Patrol
  - 02 Mobile Patrol
  - 07 Public Order
  - 08 MOE
  - 11 Police Use of Firearms
- 3.22 Supervisors are reminded that the situation remains dynamic and they are required to constantly apply the National Decision Making Model (NDM) and thereby;
- ◆ look for hazards
  - ◆ decide who may be harmed and how
  - ◆ evaluate risks
  - ◆ implement control measures
  - ◆ record findings and review assessment from time to time and revise if necessary

### **Distribution / Publication**

- 3.23 This policy is suitable for public disclosure and forms part of the West Mercia Force Operations Department Policy portfolio published within the publication scheme on the Internet.
- 3.24 Publication to staff will be via the Force Intranet.
- 3.25 Advice on the application of this policy is available from the West Mercia Force Operations Department.

### **Monitoring / Evaluation**

- 3.26 Monitoring and evaluation of this policy is the responsibility of the Superintendent, Force Operations Department, who will review it annually. Its effectiveness will be established through;

- ◆ Regular scheduled meetings with the Joint Force's Firearms Policy Group
- ◆ The extended meeting structure is in the new APSTRA (Armed Policing Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment)
- ◆ Command seminars and training
- ◆ Maintaining contact with practitioners
- ◆ Incident review procedures under the management of Chief Inspector Firearms
- ◆ Consultation with Head of Firearms Training
- ◆ Evaluation of issues raised during incident debriefs
- ◆ On-going review of national guidance and best practice.

#### 4.0 CONSULTATION

<b><i>Business Lead Consulted</i></b>	<b><i>Date Consulted</i></b>
Supt Mel Crowther	April 2021
<b><i>Chief Officer Consulted</i></b>	<b><i>Date Consulted</i></b>

A formal consultation process took place with representatives of Staff Associations, Health and safety and Risk officers, Training School (Learning and Development), Equality and Diversity Officers and Legal Services.

#### 5.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author / Reviewer</b>	<b>Amendment(s) &amp; Rationale</b>	<b>Approval / Adoption</b>
		Previously approved at JNCC meeting	JNCC 18/11/2016
15/01/2021	Insp 3359 Heyes (CFI)	Minor wording changes with regards to the Alliance, reverted to WMP Policy	April 2021
July 2022	Insp 3359 Heyes (CFI)	Document review and remains current	July 2022

#### NB:

This policy is supported by a procedure document, The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC),) Authorised Professional Practice (APP), the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC) and cross border/multi agency operations protocols.

## **6.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS**

The Equality Analysis (EA), Health & Safety Assessment (HAS) and Risk Assessment (RA) associated with this document are available on request.