



Home Office

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP  
Minister of State for Policing and the Fire  
Service  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

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Dear Colleague,

Today I am publishing a consultation about the introduction of statutory guidance to the police for firearms licensing, which also contains proposals for new arrangements for assessing the medical suitability of firearms applicants.

The introduction of statutory guidance for firearms will build in much greater consistency in practice across firearms licensing departments, following a recommendation in 2015 from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services which found that police forces were not always following the Home Office firearms guidance. This will be an important step forward, helping to ensure that the highest standards of public safety are maintained in the firearms licensing process.

I am also seeking views about the medical arrangements for firearms as part of the consultation. The medical arrangements will form part of the statutory guidance along with other aspects of firearms licensing which relate to how the police assess a person's suitability. The consultation sets out revised procedures to help strengthen the licensing system so that police have the medical information they need and can be assured, as far as possible, that a person is medically fit to possess a firearm and would not pose a danger to themselves or others.

Prior to launching the consultation, I have listened and held meetings with a number of representatives of the shooting organisations, police and medical professionals and others. I have also spoken with a number of Parliamentary colleagues about this issue. All these discussions have been helpful in shaping the draft guidance. Although there is much common ground, I know there are also differing views about how the process should operate, which I have sought to balance in the consultation which is being published. I will give further, careful consideration to the responses which are put forward as part of the consultation before issuing the new statutory guidance in due course.

**RT HON NICK HURD MP**  
**Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service**