

# Firearms licensing

Authorised professional practice

Consultation

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# 1. Firearms licensing overview

## 1.1. Overview and underpinning aim and objectives

1.1.1. This authorised professional practice (APP) relates to the licensing of firearms and focuses on the:

- strategic issues
- roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in this activity
- licensing process

The term 'firearms' is generally used in this APP to refer to all lethal barrelled weapons. This includes shotguns, unless there needs to be a distinction. For example, distinguishing between issues to do with firearms certificates and shotgun certificates.

1.1.2. Forces should align their activity with both:

- this APP
- existing guidance (statutory and non-statutory) and legislation

Forces that choose not to align their activities with these products should notify the national policing lead for firearms and explosives licensing. They should provide a rationale for their decision.

### Aim and objectives of firearms licensing

1.1.3. The aim of firearms licensing is to ensure public safety by controlling access to firearms. Firearms licensing activity that focuses on meeting the following objectives will help achieve this:

- prevent foreseeable or avoidable harm
- manage risk and act decisively if risk is identified
- be proportionate and timely
- provide a fair, transparent and nationally consistent service to the public

**Effective assessment**, use of professional judgement and **decision making** underpins the aim and objectives.

## Governance

Firearms licensing activity is governed by the [Firearms Act 1968](#) (and its amendments) and other relevant legislation, for example the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).

Firearms licensing enables the lawful granting or renewal of firearms certificates to suitable people. Certificates allow the holder to possess and lawfully use the firearm to which they refer. The term 'certificate' is used interchangeably with 'license' in this guidance.

Some people deal in firearms for business (for example, manufacture, sale, repair, testing). These applicants may be registered as a firearms dealer.

## Assessing suitability

- 1.1.4. Firearms licensing activity includes the refusal or revocation of certificates. Certificates are refused or revoked for individuals who are unsuitable, or become unsuitable, to possess firearms.
- 1.1.5. Chief constables are responsible in law for firearms licensing decisions in their force. They grant and authorise firearm and/or shotgun certificates. Certificates are given to applicants with a valid reason for possessing a firearm or shotgun and who are assessed as suitable.

Suitability criteria is set out in the Home Office's [Statutory guidance for chief officers of police on firearms licensing](#).

The main consideration for suitability should always be whether the applicant can possess a lethal barrelled weapon without danger to either:

- public safety (including themselves)
- the peace

- 1.1.6. The majority of firearm license applicants, license holders and registered firearms dealers can be permitted to possess a lethal barrelled weapon without danger to public safety or to the peace, and comply with the requirements of firearms licensing. Forces should, therefore, consider adopting a risk-based approach to aspects of the licensing process. This can maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

1.1.7. Forces must also deliver a quality service through **public engagement** that complies with the **Human Rights Act 1998** and the **Equality Act 2010**.

Adopting a procedurally just approach can help achieve this, for example:

- making impartial decisions and explaining how they were reached
- showing trustworthiness by being open and honest
- treating people with dignity and respect

1.1.8. A chief constable should establish the governance and infrastructure to support effective firearms licensing in their force. This should be done in line with the **underpinning aim and objectives** set out above.

## Supporting guidance and bodies

1.1.9. Several national products and bodies support firearms licensing activity. This includes the following.

- **Statutory guidance for chief officers of police on firearms licensing** which covers the processes and criteria for assessing suitability to possess firearms and to be a registered firearms dealer (RFD).
- **The Home Office guide on firearms licensing law**.
- **The firearms security handbook** which provides guidance for police and others on securely storing and moving firearms.
- The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) portfolio and Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group (FELWG) which address national issues and act as gatekeepers of organisational learning.
- The Firearms and explosives licensing community on Knowledge Hub, which enables practitioners to discuss ideas, problems, processes and legislation with colleagues from different forces.

## 1.2. Governance

1.2.1. A chief constable is ultimately responsible and accountable to the public for firearms licensing decisions. They should be able to audit and justify decisions concerning refusals, revocations, grants and return of firearms and licenses.

They should also ensure that the highest level of scrutiny and investigation is applied should any risks to public safety and/or any breaches of the [Firearms Act 1968](#) be identified, especially those that could have been avoidable or foreseeable.

- 1.2.2. A chief constable should consider appointing a member of the chief officer team to act as senior responsible officer (SRO) and strategic lead with responsibility for governance of firearms licensing in their force. This appointment should be based on appropriate capability, experience and capacity. The strategic lead should help forces to adopt and correctly implement this APP, the [Home Office guidance](#) and nationally agreed policies and procedures.

The role may also include:

- assigning and managing appropriate resources for the department
- [monitoring performance](#)
- financial responsibility
- public engagement

- 1.2.3. This appointment does not remove or reduce the chief constable's ultimate responsibility and accountability for firearms licensing.

- 1.2.4. The chief constable, or strategic lead, should hold regular [governance meetings](#). These should be used to discuss and/or assess the overall performance of the licensing department.

- 1.2.5. A chief constable may delegate some or all of their powers to other staff in accordance with their role and responsibilities. Staff should be carefully selected. Powers should only be delegated to those whose role requires them and where it is necessary for efficient and effective compliance with the administration of the [Firearms Act 1968](#).

- 1.2.6. Authorities should only be delegated to the strategic lead, a senior officer and/or the firearms licensing manager. Other selected staff members may be given partial authorities to grant, renew or vary a certificate.

The chief constable should define, agree and communicate in writing:

- the parameters of delegated authorities
  - what decisions can be made by whom
- 1.2.7. A chief constable may delegate some of their authority to selected staff members (for example, the strategic lead). They must however keep oversight, governance and accountability for all firearms licensing decisions made on their behalf.
- 1.2.8. Staff with delegated authorities should have the experience and capability to ensure that they can audit and account for their decision making. The provision of delegated authority should be available continually (24/7, all year round).
- 1.2.9. Forces should document who can exercise delegated authority against different types of decisions (with a focus on ensuring appropriate experience and capability is aligned to each category). Categories of decision can include:
- granting
  - renewal
  - variations
  - refusal
  - revocation
  - return of firearm (following a suitability review)

### 1.3. Strategic demand assessments

- 1.3.1. Chief constables should consider doing a strategic demand assessment (SDA). This ensures their force has the appropriate capacity and capability to meet firearms licensing related demand. The SDA should be undertaken against the **underpinning aim and objectives**. It should consider:
- identifying the demand for firearms licensing capacity and capability. This would include business as usual (for example, applications), anticipated renewals and ongoing suitability assessments for all certificate holders
  - identifying the way in which this demand will be effectively managed, including the people, places, equipment and training required

- identifying and assessing the risks to capability and capacity
  - outlining the plans to manage those risks
- 1.3.2. The SDA should be reviewed annually. The review should include input from the firearms licensing department. There may also be a need for support from other parts of the organisation (for example, performance analysts). The chief constable should approve the SDA, or sign-off should be delegated by them to a senior member of staff (for example, to the strategic lead for firearms licensing).
- 1.3.3. The national policing lead requests that the results of the SDA should be forwarded to the NPCC Firearms Licensing portfolio. This enables the national policing lead to assess the level of national demand and capacity, as well as having oversight of challenges in the system. The portfolio and supporting working group (FELWG) can advise and facilitate discussion and action for forces who identify problems as a result of the SDA. Early sight of potential or actual issues relating to demand, capacity and capability offer the opportunity for effective mitigating action.

## 2. Responsibilities

### 2.1. Overview

2.1.1. The resourcing of firearms licensing activity must meet both:

- the [underpinning aim and objectives](#)
- legislative requirements, including the [statutory guidance](#)

The strategic demand assessment also influences resourcing. This assessment highlights local factors and considerations.

2.1.2. It is important to configure resources against the responsibilities outlined in this section. This configuration can include police officers and/or police staff (this could include volunteers) and will also need to consider [delegated authority](#).

The key factors are that:

- staff are confident and competent to assess suitability and make decisions aligned with the legislation, this guidance and the Home Office statutory guidance
- there is sufficient capacity to respond to demand in an efficient and proportionate way

### 2.2. Senior management team

#### Accountability

2.2.1. The chief constable is ultimately responsible and accountable for firearms licensing in their force. They need to be satisfied that clear decision-making processes are in place.

See more information about [decision making](#).

To fulfil this responsibility, the chief constable needs to do the following.

- Consider if and how they will delegate their authority. They need to identify staff to hold delegated authority. They need to document any associated parameters around different levels of authority. (See 3.47 of the Home Office statutory guidance for further information.)

- Appoint an individual to oversee and manage the firearms licensing department.
- Consider appointing a member of the chief officer team to act as SRO and strategic lead in force. The strategic lead can help ensure the infrastructure is in place to support the firearms licensing department and firearms licensing processes in force.

## Governance meetings

2.2.2. The chief constable, or appointed strategic lead, should consider chairing regular governance meetings. These meetings should discuss and assess the overall performance of their force's licensing department. These meetings should cover the following areas.

Performance assessment including:

- performance monitoring regarding the granting of certificates, renewals, refusals, revocations and returns
- timeliness of the department's processes, for example in relation to applications for granting certificates and renewals
- dip sampling of all certificate-related decisions, including return of weapons.

Reviews of processes including:

- the outcome of appeals and any relevant promising practice or learning
- finance and resourcing, especially resulting from the SDA
- cases of note that may need further investigation or review
- implications of new developments, promising practice or learning associated with firearms licensing
- monitoring and management of any identified risks, for example demand exceeding capacity, workforce planning

Engagement including:

- public engagement strategies/stakeholder meetings
- engagement with shooting clubs and organisations (note: this engagement should involve the strategic lead)

- partnership working, for example any strategic challenges or opportunities that impact the firearms licensing process
- complaints, including their investigation, resolution and any learning from experience

## 2.3. Firearms licensing manager

2.3.1. The firearms licensing manager oversees the running of the firearms licensing department. They have an important role in **decision making**.

2.3.2. As well as decision making, firearms licensing managers should do the following.

- Plan and develop the work of the department to ensure it can meet anticipated demand based on the SDA. This should be done in accordance with the **underpinning aim and objectives**.
- Monitor and manage the performance of the department. Firearms licensing related issues should be escalated to the strategic lead and chief constable when necessary.
- Take responsibility for staff development, including recruitment, training and continuing professional development (CPD).
- Manage the welfare and wellbeing of firearms licensing staff. For example, by ensuring workloads are manageable. Or by ensuring that staff are aware of, and can access, local or national wellbeing resources.
- Establish and oversee processes for ensuring staff integrity. For example, by ensuring that staff are vetted in line with force policy. Or by establishing processes and safeguards that promote ethical decision making, and capture/manage potential conflicts of interest.
- Provide leadership and specialist/technical support. For example, in complex, sensitive or contentious cases to the department or wider force.
- Engage in problem solving and innovation to help meet the **aim and objectives** of firearms licensing. For example, by developing dip sampling/quality assurance (QA) mechanisms for decisions. Or by making the most efficient and effective use of IT systems and platforms.

- Engage with internal and external stakeholders through an engagement plan, to build and maintain effective working relationships and partnerships. This can help licensing and decision-making processes. This plan should be agreed with the strategic lead.

2.3.3. Staff may need to support the firearms licensing manager with these responsibilities. For example, by providing supervision and management on different aspects of firearms licensing.

## 2.4. Firearms enquiry officers (FEOs)

### Role in assessing suitability

- 2.4.1. FEOs have a critical role in ensuring, as far as is possible, that people who may pose a risk of harm through access to firearms are prevented from so doing. To be effective in this role, FEOs, while not necessarily recognised as formal investigators, need to use investigative skills, such as curiosity, to look beyond the obvious, communication to elicit as much information as possible and the identification of clues that might point towards lines of enquiry.
- 2.4.2. After an application has been received and initial checks and enquiries undertaken, the FEOs will conduct further investigative activity to develop recommendations on whether an individual is suitable to acquire, possess and lawfully use firearms. To achieve this, the FEO should:
- visit the applicant or licence holder when establishing suitability
  - discuss any aspects of applicants' or licence holders' physical/mental health and prior experience of **vulnerability** which may impact their suitability
  - interview other individuals who may help inform the suitability assessment, for example partners, family members, referees and, if necessary, former partners
  - generate recommendations about suitability and identified risk
  - prepare reports and manage case files to ensure an audit trail of fair and transparent decisions

They also should:

- develop and maintain specialist knowledge on firearms licensing – including legal requirements, security standards and safe shooting
- share their knowledge with colleagues in policing and the public – for example engaging with local policing teams on firearms licensing issues (such as [short notice voluntary surrender/seizure of firearms](#)) and sharing process/practice with licence holders, shooting organisations and clubs
- assist in the seizing, surrendering or recovery of guns when required – ensuring safe handling and accurate record keeping

## Other responsibilities

2.4.3. FEOs are also involved in other licensing related activity. This includes but is not limited to:

- engagement with stakeholders, such as clubs, clay pigeon shoots and rough shoots
- engagement with registered firearms dealers (for example, carrying out stock checks or audits)
- providing specialist knowledge and advice on firearms licensing matters, for example land surveys and antiques
- the licensing of explosives – some FEOs may also be explosive licensing officers (ELOs). This is a specialist area which is governed by the [Explosives Regulations 2014](#). It requires appropriate training from other agencies (including the Health and Safety Executive)

## 2.5. Firearms licensing administration and casework

2.5.1 Administrative staff have an important role in firearms licensing and are often the first point of contact for enquiries and applications. They also contribute to investigative activity that can help the assessment process.

2.5.2 Although titles and responsibilities may vary across forces, administrative staff should:

- recognise and raise any risk issues that arise when logging and managing enquiries/applications/renewals
- collate information and intelligence around an application – for example, taking general practitioners' (GPs) proforma and initial applications, contacting applicants' GPs for clarifications, checking whether referees are of good character and interrogating intelligence systems
- make decisions at the level which is authorised by their force

## 2.6. Partnership working

2.6.1. Firearms licensing staff should access and assess information from other parts of the force, other forces and external partners to help inform assessments and decisions on suitability of applicants and license holders.

In some circumstances, the information will come directly to staff. For example, medical information from a GP is an important component of the application form (note: an application cannot be considered without this information from a GP).

In other circumstances, firearms licensing staff may need to be proactive. They may need to clarify or pursue information or a line of enquiry with an internal or external partner. For example, following up on vulnerability concerns with a safeguarding team.

**Professional judgement** helps to identify relevant partners and guide any interaction with them. This includes clues, curiosity and communication.

2.6.2. Firearms licensing staff should develop and maintain good working relationships with internal and external stakeholders. This can maximise the benefits of partnership working. Good working relationships can be achieved by, for example:

- being open about the role and remit of firearms licensing
- providing a rationale for any requests for information

2.6.3. There may be occasions when internal or external partners provide information to the firearms licensing department. If regular interaction with a

partner is expected, it may be appropriate to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

An information sharing agreement (ISA) with relevant partners can be useful. This sets out the expectations and process for both the police and partner organisation(s) to communicate issues and concerns relating to suitability and public safety.

Ongoing effective partnership working can help:

- gain a broader perspective on assessing suitability and subsequent decision making
- encourage external partners to make proactive contact when they have information that could affect the suitability of a current licence holder or applicant (this could form part of an MOU)

2.6.4. Firearms licensing staff may also liaise and meet with relevant stakeholders. For example, through an engagement plan that includes gun clubs and shooting organisations. This helps build good relationships and promote the [underpinning aim and objectives](#) around police involvement in firearms licensing activity.

## 2.7. Assessing suitability and applying professional judgement

2.7.1. All staff involved in firearms licensing contribute to the assessment and decision-making processes regarding suitability and the management of risk. This can range from a case worker making an initial assessment of an application through to a senior member of staff making a decision on an initial grant, refusal, revocation of a license or whether to return a firearm and certificate following their seizure.

This section provides a framework to help all staff contribute to the suitability assessment process. The [statutory guidance](#) covers the key processes and criteria for assessing suitability and should be read in conjunction with this APP. The [national decision model \(NDM\)](#) can also help guide decision making.

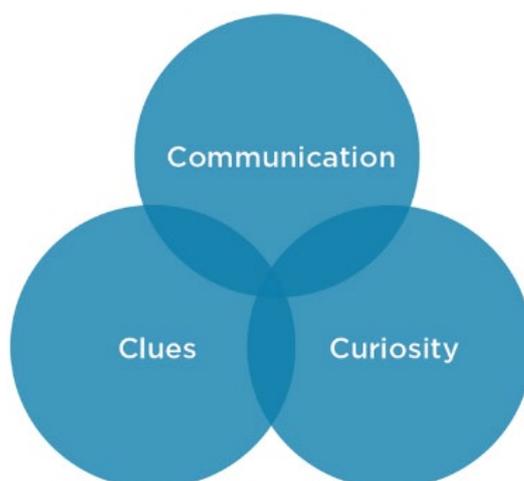
2.7.2. Staff should consider all available information to inform and contribute to the assessment. For example:

- the application form
- referees
- the applicant, via the home/premises visit and interview
- partners/family members
- intelligence systems
- partner agencies
- practitioners including shooting clubs and organisations, for example through club secretaries or club liaison officers
- law and policy, for example firearms legislation and Home Office guidance

These sources of information provide a starting point for assessing an applicant's suitability. Professional judgement, informed by the best available information, is required to build on this initial assessment.

2.7.3. **Evidence-based guidelines** present three overlapping factors that inform professional judgement, which are:

- communication
- curiosity
- clues



These three factors are not hierarchical, and they are potentially self-reinforcing. For example, good communication can reveal more clues, which may identify more avenues for investigation (curiosity). This can lead to more focused communication.

2.7.4. Potentially relevant factors from a firearms licensing perspective include but are not limited to the following.

### **Communication**

Staff should develop and use communication skills to assess suitability, for example:

- building rapport with the applicant
- addressing and probing sensitive issues that are relevant to the application, for example, an individual's past, health and vulnerability
- active listening during the premises visit and interview
- adopting a procedurally just approach, for example, being open, transparent and respectful
- minimising bias and preconceptions

### **Curiosity**

Staff should exercise professional curiosity to actively identify and investigate suitability, for example:

- exploring and understanding the application/recommendations, for example, asking questions and keeping an open mind
- seeking clarifications on any ambiguities during the licensing process
- not accepting things at face value – enquiring deeply and challenging one's own (and others') assumptions

### **Clues**

Staff should be alert to and understand the clues that may impact on suitability, for example:

- previous criminal or alleged criminal behaviour
- associations
- medical suitability

- drug/alcohol use
- evidence of domestic abuse
- open-source social media checks
- credit/financial checks
- signs of vulnerability and/or exploitation
- information from other agencies (for example, multi-agency safeguarding hubs, family courts)

## 3. Firearms licensing processes

### 3.1. Overview

3.1.1 Every grant or renewal application received by a firearms department should be recorded and checked by firearms licensing staff. This process ends in a decision about whether a licence is granted or refused.

3.1.2 The process that leads to this decision presents various opportunities to assess suitability. This section highlights some of these opportunities and processes. (These also apply to decisions on revocations and return of firearms.)

### 3.2. Applications

3.2.1. The Home Office provides [a standard form](#) for this. (Note: forces should ensure that enquiries to the licensing department can be made by telephone, email, post and/or web forms).

Checks for [suitability](#) by firearms licensing staff should begin as soon as an application is submitted.

Systems should be put in place to receive:

- applications (electronic/non-electronic)
- payments
- photos

3.2.2. Enquiries and checks should be sufficiently rigorous to provide FEOs with as much information as possible prior to the home visit of an applicant. These enquiries and checks should be informed by the [statutory guidance](#).

#### Home visits

3.2.3. Home visits may not be required in [certain specific circumstances](#).

Home visits should be conducted by the FEO. During the visit, the FEO should cross check any information on the application form relating to suitability concerns). They should also check the applicant's:

- ID

- **physical security relevant to safe storage of firearms**
- competence around safe handling and usage

The FEO should be inquisitive and apply **professional judgement** to the identification of other sources of information that could be relevant to the application.

3.2.4. As part of the visit, the FEO may identify issues that are wider than firearms licensing. For example they may notice signs of vulnerability or criminality. In these cases the FEO should both:

- assess the impact of these issues on suitability
- be aware of how and where to escalate any wider issues where appropriate

3.2.5. The FEO should record information collected during a visit. Any outstanding issues or actions as a result of the visit should be followed up. This should be done by the FEO or other members of the firearms licensing department in a timely manner.

### 3.3. Decision making

Investigative activity, including checks and in-person visits, should inform the assessment of the applicant or licence holder's suitability. The decision to grant, refuse or renew will then be made by the postholder who has appropriate delegated authority.

If this investigative activity has not returned information that undermines or compromises the applicant's suitability to acquire, possess and lawfully use a firearm, a firearms licence can be granted or renewed.

3.3.1. If investigative activity and assessment of suitability have returned information that puts in question the applicant's suitability to acquire, possess or lawfully use a firearm, the decision may be to refuse the application or revoke the licence.

In cases of refusal or revocation, sufficient rationale should be provided to the applicant. This can help them decide whether to appeal.

- 3.3.2. When considering the assessment on suitability, decision makers should apply professional judgement.

The majority of decisions may be straightforward. But the decision maker should:

- be ready to challenge any discrepancies and seek clarification
- remember all cases are unique and not be complacent in their decision-making

The NDM should help guide the decision-making process.

## QA

- 3.3.3. QA should be led by the strategic lead for firearms licensing or the firearms licensing manager. All aspects of the firearms licensing process should be quality assured. This includes decision making, to ensure that activity results in appropriate decisions. Dip sampling can be used for QA checks.

## 3.4. Decision making – increased complexity or risks to public safety

- 3.4.1. Some cases may have greater complexity and/or potential risks to public safety. (For example, the decision to return weapons after seizure).

In these cases, decision makers should always:

- consider the [underpinning aim and objectives](#) and Code of Ethics
- apply their professional judgement
- be prepared to seek additional information and advice – for example from the force legal team, FELWG or other partners

Peer review/support can also help the decision maker. For example, seeking the view of experienced colleagues with knowledge of firearms licensing and/or decision making in other areas of policing.

## 3.5. Ongoing processes

### Managing risk, monitoring suitability and QA

3.5.1. Licences are issued for five years. But the need to monitor and assess risk is a continuous and ongoing process during this period. This should be achieved in two ways.

- Police systems (for example, Police National Database (PND), Police National Computer) and/or information or intelligence from internal or external partners/stakeholders may flag up issues on current license holders. This may affect their suitability.
- Some license holders may require extra checks during some, or all, of the licensing period. For example, to monitor any issues identified during the application process that could affect ongoing suitability if not reviewed. Forces should factor this checking into their SDA.

Based on risk assessment and their professional judgement, decision-makers (likely to be the firearms licensing manager) will need to take proportionate and appropriate action in response to any information identified during monitoring. However, in any circumstances where it is assessed that there is a risk to public safety, immediate consideration must be given to seizing the firearms, certificates and ammunition.

3.5.2. As a result of monitoring, additional enquiries and investigative activity may be required. Any required investigative activity should involve the most appropriate staff. For example, in some cases there may be a requirement for other departments, such as public protection, to be involved. The progress, quality and outcome of any investigation should be monitored through processes agreed at the [governance meetings](#).

3.5.3. Forces should also consider developing a dip sampling process to select and review current certificate holders. Forces should ensure there is an agreed process for this. This will support QA and could cover:

- decisions made to grant/renew certificates (including temporary permits) and returning firearms
- checking a certificate holder against the PND

- checking local systems, for example intelligence and incidents

## 3.6. Short notice voluntary surrender/seizure of firearms

### Legal advice for officers

3.6.1. Chief constables and/or the strategic lead for firearms licensing should ensure that they provide advice to officers on the processes and legal options available to them when responding to incidents where:

- a firearms certificate holder is involved
- an officer believes the holder should not remain in possession of their firearm(s) and certificate because they may pose a risk to public safety (to others or themselves)

3.6.2. This advice should emphasise the underpinning aim and objectives of firearms licensing and the process officers should follow if there is time and opportunity to seek advice from their force's firearms licensing department. For example, contact details for FEOs, staff with delegated authorities.

### Need for immediate action

3.6.3. There may be circumstances where officers assess the need for immediate action. Relevant examples could include but are not limited to:

- alcohol/drug use
- medical suitability
- domestic abuse incidents
- ongoing and escalating disputes with neighbours
- associations/links to organised crime groups
- involvement in a crime where the conduct of the certificate holder is such that it would be a cause for concern if they were left in possession of their firearm

Note: Force procedures should be followed for the criminal use of firearms or immediate threats to life.

## Seeking voluntary surrender where there is risk to public safety

- 3.6.4. If an officer assesses there is a risk to public safety, they should first seek voluntary surrender of the firearm(s) and certificate. Where possible, this should include engaging, explaining and encouraging. This should take place before pursuing an enforcement option.

### If voluntary surrender is unsuccessful

- 3.6.5. Officers should be made aware of the powers available to them to seize the firearm(s) and certificate in different circumstances. For example, if:

- the firearm(s) has been used or suspected of use in a criminal act ([section 19 of PACE Act 1984](#))
- the possession of the firearm or shotgun is not authorised by a shotgun or firearm certificate or, in the case of an air weapon which, because of its power level, must be held on certificate or with the authority of the Secretary of State ([section 47 of the Firearms Act 1968](#))
- a warrant has been issued by a magistrate ([section 46 of the Firearms Act 1968](#))
- it is required to prevent a breach of the peace (Common Law) – this applies when an act is committed or threatened, which either harms a person or is likely to cause such harm being done

- 3.6.6. Officers also need to be aware of processes associated with the voluntary surrender/seizure of a firearm(s) and certificate. For example:

- obtaining/seizing certificates at the same time as firearm(s) and ammunition – if they have a certificate, the licence holder can purchase more firearms
- recording serial numbers to ensure all firearm(s) associated with the licence holder have been obtained/seized
- issuing of receipts and recording the seizure, for example by using body-worn video or taking photographs

- whether to obtain/seize firearms in person's own gun slip or box, or attempt to break the firearm(s) down and any considerations around this
- considerations around storage of surrendered/seized firearms (for example, registered firearms dealer, police premises or other certificate holder whose suitability has been reassessed in relation to the circumstances)
- ensuring all firearm(s) are made safe by a suitably qualified person

3.6.7. Regardless of voluntary surrender or seizure using statutory powers, a slower time investigation by the firearms licensing department can ensure that any decision to return firearm(s)/certificates or revoke them is informed by the required information.

3.6.8. When firearms are seized or surrendered from certificate holders, receipts must be issued as soon as practicable in accordance with the Home Office [statutory guidance](#).

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## About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

**[college.police.uk](https://college.police.uk)**