

Durham Constabulary

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25 March 2019

Dear Mr Allen,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss, in a little more depth, the possible ways we can learn important lessons from the tragic death of John Hill.

I was grateful for your understanding of the complexities surrounding guidance that can be issued to Firearms Enquiry Officers in terms of the steps they might want to undertake in order to make recommendations to a Chief Constable under Section 27 of the Firearms Act 1968.

That section has a key paragraph that I feel is very relevant to your section 28 notice.

(c) that in all the circumstances the applicant can be permitted to have the firearm or ammunition in his possession without danger to the public safety or to the peace.

In determining what might constitute "all circumstances", I outlined how I expect Firearms Enquiry Officers (FEO) to carry out diligent enquiries with appropriate professional curiosity during their home visits and interactions with applicants for a firearms certificate.

Because of the very diverse nature of applicant situations it is very challenging to give a prescribed series of steps that must be carried out in each case, over and above existing intelligence convictions and medical checks. We discussed how there are situations where this could give a false perception that an applicant could be suitable were further investigations not carried out by the FEO.

As I outlined, I have been informed that the Home Office are preparing to go to public consultation on their guidance to forces on issuing firearms certificates later this year, and I will endeavour to include the lessons learned from Mr Hill's death. In particular, for FEO's to ensure



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that they examine the domestic and family circumstances of an applicant should this appear to be relevant under Section 27 of the Firearms Act 1968.

Thank you again for taking the time to discuss this in more detail, and if you wish to be involved in the future consultation please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. R. L.', written in a cursive style.

[REDACTED]
Assistant Chief Constable

[REDACTED]

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