



Martin Parker
BASC
(via email)

Your reference:

Our reference: RO-JF091224MP

Please ask for: ACC Richard Ocone

Direct Dialling: 01452 752308

Date: 09 December 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday of last week, it was helpful and I am grateful for some of the suggestions made. I said I would write to you to provide a short synopsis of our position as a constabulary regarding Firearms Licensing.

I have a dedicated, skilled and hardworking team based at our Police Headquarters in Quedgeley. Unfortunately in recent weeks we have had a number of serious and unexpected staffing challenges, I have shared some of these with you but it led to a significant curtailing of our capacity particularly in our Firearms Enquiry Officers. Some of these issues are not short-term and will take some time to resolve. As a consequence I have stood up an internal gold group to personally oversee the work that is needed to support the team, restore our capacity and improve the service to prospective firearms licence holders. Through the gold group I have made a series of decisions to aid and speed up recruitment with the aim of increasing overall staffing. As we discussed this is a specialist area requiring appropriate training and expertise therefore dropping in untrained or inexperienced staff is not an option. In addition we are fully exploring training through the College of Policing, potential options to outsource some of our more routine work to another force and process efficiency.

I would expect there to be a lead time before you see an improvement in the response to the timeliness of new grant applications as we recruit and train new staff most of which will come on line next spring, although there are some shorter term measures in place. Even then they will need time to become fully efficient. As we discussed there is currently no degradation to the service we are providing existing holders on renewal, for transfer or in considering suitability.

To assist us we would please ask you to share with your members that contacting the team directly is unlikely to speed up an application, indeed regular contact from those awaiting their grants to be processed distracts us from actually processing the applications. This is one of the reasons we are keen to re-instate our website. Furthermore we still receive a significant number of initial applications that do not contain all of the information we need to process them which is frustrating for applicants as it will mean we need to return the application to them.

I plan to keep the gold groups running, we are likely to continue to meet fortnightly until progress is seen. I have undertaken to write to you quarterly to provide an update which I am happy to do and will also take the points we discussed back into my gold group.

In the meantime if you have any concerns please reach out and I will do all I can to address your issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Ocone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Ocone
Assistant Chief Constable

CC: Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown