



8 May 2019

Dear Sir Geoffrey

The Home Secretary has asked me to write to you, and to Jonathan Djanogly MP, to thank you for your joint email of 8 April about the current position in respect of reviewing firearms licensing fees. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

The Home Office is committed to ensuring an efficient and effective firearms licensing system which is fair to applicants and which achieves, as far as is possible, full cost recovery for the police. The current fee levels were set in 2015, and were calculated to enable police forces to move closer to full cost recovery when greater efficiencies were achieved from the online licensing system they were developing at the time. At the same time, Ministers undertook to look at the level of fees annually and undertake a comprehensive review every five years.

In the event, we have not undertaken annual reviews of the level of police fees for firearms licensing because of delays in implementing the intended online licensing system and, more recently, the need to review arrangements for police medical checks with applicants' GPs. The uncertainty around these critical issues has meant it has been difficult to accurately identify police costs. This year's annual review will not take place for the same reasons, also recognising the discussion that you had with Ministers last October.

It is now the case that an online licensing system is being trialled in some police forces and Home Office Ministers have committed to consulting publicly on new arrangements for medical checks, in the context of the intended statutory guidance to the police, before the summer recess. We are, therefore, hopeful that we will have greater clarity on both of these issues in time to take forward a comprehensive review of firearms licensing fees during 2020.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Jonathan Djanogly MP.

Yours sincerely

Nick Hunt
Head of Serious Violence Unit