

Foster Care and Firearms Guidance and Procedures

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About This Document

Title	Foster Care and Firearms Guidance
Purpose	Guidance for fostering services when foster carers or potential foster carers own firearms
Updated by	Corrie Castleman and EFCA Helen Cornwall 2022
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Version Control

Date Issued	Version	Summary of Changes	Created by
September 2015	5.0	Change of extension number for the FSEL Section of the police	Rosemarie Cronin
August 2018	6.0	Reviewed information, added link to website for contact details	Rosemarie Cronin
June 2022	7.0	Reviewed information additional text added in 1.4	Corrie Castleman and Helen Cornwall (EFCA)

Table of Contents

About This Document.....	i
Version Control	ii
Table of Contents	iii
1. Foster Care and Firearms Guidance	1
2. Fostering Procedure to be undertaken if there are firearms in the foster carer or penitential foster carers household.....	2

1. Foster Care and Firearms Guidance

- 1.1** The assessment of foster carers and their homes should include all aspects of safety. This includes safety from firearms within the home.
- 1.2** If any approved or potential foster carer possesses firearms, shotguns, air weapons or small handguns the Gun Questionnaire must be completed.
- 1.3** The legal requirements concerning the licensing of firearms are strict and specific. Anyone who wishes to possess a firearm must apply for and be granted a Firearm or Shotgun certificate. All certificates are subject to statutory security conditions. The Police will not issue a certificate unless they are satisfied with the security arrangements.
- 1.4** Under the Firearms Rules 1998, a prescribed safekeeping condition is attached to all firearm and shotgun certificates. This requires that the firearm(s) and ammunition must be stored securely, to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, unauthorised people taking or using them. It also highly recommended that the key that is used for the box that they are stored in is also contained in a small wall mounted key safe.
- 1.5** The Home Office provides guidance as to the form of safekeeping or security. The police must look at the individual circumstances of each case and at the overall security arrangements which will be in place. Each officer must decide the appropriate level of security and advise the firearm owner according to the merits of each case.
- 1.6** In considering whether to issue a certificate to an individual the Police must be satisfied that the person is fit to be entrusted with a firearm. They will consider whether they are or have been any offences and the type of offences and are also able to consider reports which have not led to formal charge.
- 1.7** Certificates may be revoked if the Chief Officer of Police is satisfied that the holder is unable to possess firearms without danger to public safety or the peace. Again, the same elements are considered as when a certificate is issued.
- 1.8** For carers who hold firearm certificates it is essential that they are aware of the importance of safer care arrangements in relation to the safe storing and use of their firearms. It is important that all potential carers are aware that many young people coming into their home may be fascinated by firearms and will have little or no understanding of the dangers they represent and therefore extra vigilance must be taken in relation to firearm.

2. Fostering Procedure to be undertaken if there are firearms in the foster carer or penitential foster carers household

- 2.1** The Firearms questionnaire/assessment is completed by the Supervising or Assessing Social Worker. If there are any concerns regarding the safety or licensing of the firearms advice should be sought from the Essex Police (see below for contact details).
- 2.2** If there are any changes to the arrangements for firearms within the foster home the foster carer must inform the supervising social worker and a new assessment/questionnaire can be completed if necessary.
- 2.3** The Supervising Social Worker should ensure that they check that the assessment is still correct and see the appropriate certificates annually as part of the health and safety annual check.
- 2.4** Essex police have a Firearms, Shot Gun and Explosives Licensing section in Chelmsford and if any further guidance and advice is required over any firearm the supervising or assessing social worker should contact them direct.

By post

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[You can also contact by email.](#)

[For further contact details please visit the website.](#)