

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

By email

Dear [name]

**“Offensive Weapons Bill” – Second Reading Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

The target shooting community are being unfairly treated by prohibitions proposed in the above Bill.

Shooting is a major sporting activity in the UK with some 2.25 million rifles and shotguns legally held on certificate. Certificate holders are rigorously assessed by the police and are subjected to medical assessments, references, background checks and ongoing continuous monitoring.

The Bill seeks to prohibit two specific groups (high muzzle energy and “rapid firing”) of rifles; this affects some 1,000 or so firearms out of the 2.25 million held on certificate.

The shooting community views these prohibitions as a gross breach of natural justice as the Home Office has failed to provide any evidence that these rifles pose any risk to public safety. They referred to vague concerns raised by the police and the National Crime Agency (NCA) but have never published details.

To link civilian target shooters to gun crime is grossly misleading; pistols, illegal in the UK since 1997, remain the weapons of choice for the criminal fraternity.

There are three key points to the shooting community’s objections:-

- (1) No legally owned rifle of the types to be prohibited has ever been used in criminal activity despite being used by target shooters for many decades.
- (2) The Home Office have providing misleading references by linking the rifles to be prohibited to shooting events in the USA; they quote the Las Vegas shooting despite the fact that the semi-automatic firearms used there were prohibited in the UK in 1988.
- (3) Current legislation (Section 27 Firearms Act 1968 as amended) requires Chief Officers of police who grant firearms certificates to ensure “the applicant can be permitted to have the firearm or ammunition in his possession without danger to the public safety ...”

We feel the prohibition is a token attempt to distract attention away from the serious matters of illegal firearms, acid and knife crime. To ban certain firearms on the basis of unsubstantiated claims of threats to public safety is unconstitutional and an abuse of process.

The capacity for firearms to cause harm is subjective; almost all modern cars have the capacity to substantially exceed the legal speed limit but the licensed driver is responsible for driving safely.

We urge careful scrutiny of the proposals to prohibit these firearms, interrogating the claimed enhancements to public safety and challenging the risk assessments produced but not published by the NCA.

Further details of our communications with the Home Office can be found [[here](#)]; please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Mercer**

Group Chief Executive & Secretary General