

**Press release 09.00 hrs, Thursday, 28 July 2022**

## **Firearms and Mental Health Awareness and Support – Advice**

A leaflet providing information on mental health support for firearms license holders has been released by the Scottish Firearms Licensing Practitioners Group.

The group is composed of organisations who represent those with shooting interests, the Scottish Government and Police Scotland.

The leaflet aims to highlight the support that is available to certificate holders and encourages people with concerns to come forward and seek help.

The organisations involved will endeavour to support certificate holders and while it may be necessary to remove guns on occasion, the police will work with certificate holders and all options will be considered.

The publication contains practical advice to both certificate holders and their close relatives and friends signposting to where help can be found.

Fraser Lamb of the Scottish Association of Country Sports said

*‘SACS completely supports the advice in this publication. We understand that mental health can, and does, affect a sizeable proportion of the communities in Scotland. It really is OK to tell us you’re not OK. The long-term wellbeing of those involved in country sports is paramount. We understand that guns will be taken on occasions by the police for immediate public safety reasons, but this is not automatically the case and information about what may happen and the contact details of support agencies is so important when people are perhaps not at their best. Additionally, we know that the wider, legitimate firearms owning community in the UK is a law abiding and very responsible community who instinctively do the right thing.’*

Helen Benson of the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust said.

*‘This publication provides important information and guidance for those who are concerned for their mental wellbeing. It is imperative that support can be sought without fear of removal of essential tools of the trade. There is nothing more vital to us all than health and we hope this clear advice will provide reassurance for anyone who seek support. There are sensible options available’.*

Jim Hume of the Rural Mental Health forum said.

*“Everyone can experience poor mental health at some point in their life and it is important that you get support as quickly as possible. This leaflet gives you all the information on where to go to for advice and help. It is okay to not be okay and it is everyone’s business to tackle mental health, so we can all lead our lives to the full and carry on with the activities and work that we love”*

Release date. 09.00 hrs, Thursday, 28 July 2022

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