

[News story: Home Office to review air weapons regulation in England and Wales](#)

The government is to review the regulation of air weapons licensing, following a request from the Suffolk coroner.

Speaking in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

I have recently written to the coroner and confirmed my intention to review the regulation of air weapons in England and Wales. I think that this is an appropriate time to take stock of the regulatory position and assess whether the current controls, which are already strong, continue to be appropriate and effective.

I intend to look carefully at the existing controls on air weapons, including how best to ensure that these weapons are stored safely and securely.

I think that a review of air weapon regulation is important and timely, we will do so against a backdrop of existing controls that are, by all international comparisons, very robust.

The debate was secured by Bristol South MP Karin Smyth after the serious injury in her constituency of 18-month-old Harry Studley in July last year, who was shot with an air rifle by a neighbour.

That incident followed the case of Benjamin Wragge, aged 13 from Suffolk, who died in May 2016 after he was accidentally shot with an air weapon. Her Majesty's Senior Coroner for Suffolk, Dr Peter Dean, wrote to the Home Office requesting a review of legislation covering the use and manufacture of air weapons, with a view to preventing similar tragedies occurring in the future.

During the debate last night, the Minister confirmed he would be meeting Benjamin Wragge's family later this year to listen to their views.

The Home Office will determine the detail and scope of the review and, today (10 October), has published a revised edition of the Home Office [guidance leaflet](#) for air weapons users.

The leaflet will be available online and will also be distributed to readers of Airgun World and Airgunner. It advises on the laws and safety procedures to which all air weapon owners must adhere.

[Press release: Fox/Sky: CMA publishes statement of issues for investigation](#)

The CMA has set out more detail about what it intends to examine in its investigation into the proposed takeover of Sky Plc by 21st Century Fox.

On 20 September, Karen Bradley, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport referred Fox's proposed takeover of Sky to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on public interest grounds.

The CMA will now examine how the deal would impact media plurality and broadcasting standards in the UK.

The [issues statement](#) sets out the proposed approach to assessing the impact of the merger. Anyone wanting to provide submissions is invited to do so based on the areas and questions outlined in the issues statement.

The CMA is required to report to the Secretary of State with its recommendations within 6 months of opening the investigation.

Anne Lambert, Panel Chair, said:

Today we set out the scope of our investigation and the issues on which we will focus.

We now invite submissions on these specific matters so we can thoroughly examine the relevant evidence.

The CMA will use its extensive experience of investigating different issues in a wide range of sectors to thoroughly and impartially investigate the proposed takeover of Sky Plc by 21st Century Fox.

Once the investigation is complete we will report back to Karen Bradley for her to make a final decision.

Notes to editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.

2. The CMA has appointed an investigation group, which is responsible for providing the Culture Secretary with the CMA's final report. This will be chaired by [Anne Lambert](#). The other panel members are [Sarah Chambers](#), [John Krumins](#) and [Tim Tutton](#). All the appointees are chosen from the CMA's expert independent [panel members](#), who come from a variety of backgrounds including public policy, business, economics and law.
3. A [timetable](#) for the 6-month investigation has been published on the merger investigation page. This sets out all steps and provisional deadlines until the final report, including the timeline for submissions from third parties.
4. Submissions referring to competition issues arising from the merger will not be considered as these have already been investigated by the European Commission and cleared.
5. Media queries should be sent to: press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or journalists can call 07774 134814.
6. Anyone wanting to submit evidence is advised to read the [case page](#) and [issues statement](#) and follow the instructions set out on these pages.

[Press release: Prime Minister launches world-leading project on impact of ethnicity on everyday life](#)

The Prime Minister will challenge society to “explain or change” disparities in how people from different backgrounds are treated, as the government publishes the findings of a ground breaking audit of public services.

Launching the new ‘Ethnicity Facts and Figures’ website today (Tuesday 10 October), Theresa May will host a discussion round the Cabinet Table involving key stakeholders at Downing Street.

She will tell them the audit will become an “essential resource in the battle to defeat ethnic injustice” which must be confronted at all levels of society – from central government to local communities.

The new website – a first of its kind in terms of scale, scope and transparency – contains thousands of statistics covering more than 130 topics in areas including health, education, employment and the criminal justice

system.

Key findings include:

- employment rates are higher for white people than for ethnic minorities across the country, with a larger gap in the north than in the south (13.6% compared to 9%)
- education attainment data shows there are disparities in primary school which increase in secondary school, with Chinese and Asian pupils tending to perform well and White and Black pupils doing less well, particularly those eligible for free school meals
- ethnic minorities are under-represented at senior levels across the public sector

The website will be a permanent resource, with new datasets being added over time. A specialist unit, run from the Cabinet Office under the First Secretary of State Damian Green, will consider and co-ordinate the government's work.

Opening today's roundtable, the Prime Minister is expected to say:

People who have lived with discrimination don't need a government audit to make them aware of the scale of the challenge.

But this audit means that for society as a whole – for government, for our public services – there is nowhere to hide. These issues are now out in the open. And the message is very simple: if these disparities cannot be explained then they must be changed.

Britain has come a long way in my lifetime in spreading equality and opportunity. But the data we are publishing today will provide the definitive evidence of how far we must still go in order to truly build a country that works for everyone.

The Prime Minister ordered the audit shortly after taking office, as part of the agenda she set out in her first speech on the steps of Downing Street to tackle injustices in society.

This builds on her work as Home Secretary – where her reforms of stop and search have led to continued falls in the unlawful use of the powers. In the year ending March 2016, the number of stops and searches fell by 28 per cent.

Yesterday (Monday 9 October), the Prime Minister visited the Dunraven School in Lambeth, where she met sixth form students who spoke candidly on the issues which had affected them and their hopes for the future.

She told them:

It was really important and helpful to hear your views on your education and the careers you want to follow, as well as the

experiences of your friends and family in a whole range of areas from stop and search to mental health, to how different people are treated at work.

What I hope this audit will bring is a change in attitude so that everyone is treated equally, no matter what their background, and this is never a barrier to getting on in life.

By bringing this information together in one place for the first time it will shine a light on the issues we are facing. We must now work together as a society to find solutions.

The government has worked with hundreds of stakeholders across the country over the last 12 months. Today's roundtable marks the beginning of the second phase of that work once the website is live.

Welcoming publication of the audit, ahead of today's meeting Simon Woolley, director of Operation Black Vote, said:

The findings from the Race Disparity Audit presents us with a real opportunity to make transformative change in tackling persistent race inequality.

Yes, some findings make uncomfortable reading, but unless these things are laid bare we can't begin to resolve them.

Over many years the Prime Minister has shown a real desire to grapple with the scourge of racism including confronting high levels of BAME Stop and Search, BAME deaths in police custody and now this.

Alongside publication of the report, the government launched a programme of work to tackle some of the disparities identified in the audit.

In employment, the Department for Work and Pensions will take action in twenty targeted hotspots. Measures in these areas could include mentoring schemes to help those in ethnic minorities in to work, and traineeships for 16-24 year-olds, offering English, Maths and vocational training alongside work placements.

And in the criminal justice system, the Ministry of Justice will take forward a number of recommendations made in the recent Lammy Review, including:

- developing performance indicators for prisons to assess the equality of outcomes for prisoners of all ethnicities
- adopting an 'explain or change' approach to ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system

- committing to publish all criminal justices datasets held on ethnicity by default
- and working to ensure that our prison workforce is more representative of the country as a whole, holding leaders to account for improving the recruitment, retention and progress of ethnic minority staff

And in schooling, the Department for Education will take forward an external review to improve practice in exclusions. This will share best practice nationwide, and focus on the experiences of those groups who are disproportionately likely to be excluded.

Further announcements on future government work will follow in the coming months.

Speech: Employer Recognition Scheme Awards

I'm delighted to be here and it's a great honour to have Prince Harry joining us fresh from a triumphant Invictus Games and from raising awareness of mental health issues in the Armed Forces earlier today.

We are, Your Royal Highness, incredibly fortunate to have someone with such immense energy and enthusiasm working on our Armed Forces' behalf.

It's also a privilege to meet in this iconic museum, currently celebrating its centenary. If you get the chance, wander the halls.

There you'll find our national story documented in deeds of outstanding courage from Gallipoli and the Battle of Britain, to our exploits in the Atlantic during the Cold War.

Among the modern day exhibits you'll find extraordinarily mementos of sheer courage such as Johnson Beharry's Victoria Cross, the first Victoria Cross awarded in the 21st century, to a soldier who twice survived hits by rocket propelled grenades who despite his own injuries and showing complete disregard for his own safety then saved his comrades from the fire.

Today, as Your Royal Highness knows, our forces are serving on operations in more than 25 countries.

They're helping fragile democracies from Afghanistan to Iraq, supporting peacekeeping in Somalia and South Sudan, and leading in NATO with troops in Estonia and Poland. Our planes protecting the Black Sea Skies, and our ships of the Royal Navy leading NATO's maritime task groups.

No praise can be high enough for them. Nor for those who go out of their way

to support them.

So today whether you hail from the public or private sector whether you're in a business employing fewer than 10 people or more than 500 people, I'd like to thank you all.

First, for supporting our Reserves. For giving those civic minded citizens more than flexibility to train or to go on deployment but for giving them also encouragement and recognition. It is your support has enabled us to increase our Reserve numbers by 1,280 up almost 4 per cent since last year with our total trained and untrained strength now standing at 36,580.

Second, I want to thank you for what you're doing for our veterans. Laing O'Rourke and Build Force are attracting service leavers into the building trade. North West Ambulance Service, one of four blue light organisations to scoop gold, is helping veterans retrain as ambulance drivers.

Transport for London and Airbus are offering placements to wounded, injured and sick soldiers. And Combat pest control a small business that doesn't just free homes from household menaces but provides assistance to children from Afghanistan to Africa is a workforce entirely composed of veterans.

Thirdly, thank you for the help you're giving to our wider Armed Forces families.

Sodexo is actively welcoming military spouses into its workforce, allowing spouses to transfer to different sites when their partners are deployed or posted elsewhere. X-forces are helping veterans and their partners into work. And Manpower are giving free employability sessions to spouses living on Salisbury Plain.

Yet those efforts, for our reserves, our veterans, our families don't account for why the people in this hall now hold gold.

The reason you're listed among our elite 80 employers is because you're also superb advocates leading by example showing that employing Reservists and veterans simply makes business sense.

We have here amongst us Corporal Ian Taylor. A systems integration and test engineer for General Dynamics. His Royal Highness will know him well.

He's just back from the Invictus Games in Toronto, where he not only competed in swimming, powerlifting and rowing, he not only set a personal best, but won silver in the breast stroke.

Who wouldn't want to employ someone with such grit and guts, determination and drive in their company too?

Your collective efforts have encouraged more and more companies to commit to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Today we have more than 1900 companies that have signed up – and we are on track to hit 2000 soon.

Back in 1920 at the official opening of Imperial War Museum its founder Sir Alfred Mond declared the museum would not be a “monument of military glory, but a record of toil and sacrifice” wherein all would find “an example or illustration of the sacrifice he or she made”.

So today, alongside sacrifice we record the service of great employers. As years to come, as the threats against us intensify, we will increasingly look to our wider Armed Forces family to help us manage all those demands and pressures.

But with your example, inspiring the businesses of the future to follow in your footsteps, I am very confident that our Armed Forces family will continue to thrive.

[News story: Defence Secretary and Prince Harry Award Gold to Supportive Employers](#)

The award is the Ministry of Defence’s prestigious badge of honour for organisations who have demonstrated outstanding support for the Armed Forces community. Hosted by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, the award presentation took place on Monday 9 October at the Imperial War Museum.

HRH Prince Harry thanked this year’s winners and heard about successful initiatives providing veterans with a fair chance of starting a second career in diverse industries following military service. Other support measures in the workplace include flexibility for Reservists and mentoring and job opportunities for military spouses.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This year’s Gold award winners should be extremely proud of the work they are doing to live up to the Armed Forces Covenant pledge and to promote the pledge to others.

I’m delighted to recognise employers who make it crystal clear that regardless of size, location, or sector, employing people with military skills is good for business. I hope others follow their example, thereby delivering a better deal for veterans and armed forces families.

Welcoming their Gold Award, Mike Brown MVO, Commissioner Transport for London said:

The technical expertise and skills that ex-service personnel have developed during their military service, such as problem-solving and working under pressure, are ideal for a number of roles within the transport industry and we are proud to count them amongst our employees.

The employers recognised with the ERS Gold distinction in 2017 for going above and beyond their pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant:

Airbus	Inverclyde Council	Shropshire Council
Balfour Beatty	Kuehne + Nagel	Skanska UK Plc
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust	Laing O'Rourke	Sodexo UK & Ireland
Combat Pest Control	Liverpool City Council	South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
DHL	Mabway Ltd	Transport for London
DXC Technology	ManpowerGroup UK	West Midlands Fire Service
ER Systems Global	Metropolitan Police Service	Wiltshire Council
FDM	Morson Group	Wolferstans Solicitors
Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce	Network Rail	X-Forces
General Dynamics UK	NHS Golden Jubilee Foundation	
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	North West Ambulance Service	
Hull City Council	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	

The Employer Recognition Scheme encompasses three award tiers: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Gold Award winning employers have to first make pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant, then demonstrate and advocate their support for the Armed Forces. So far, 79 employers have been recognised with a Gold award.