



# Gun surrender programmes

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## Document information

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This revised advice has been produced and approved by the NABIS and the National Criminal Use of Firearms Group. It has been approved by NCOCC and VPP portfolio lead. The operational implementation of all guidance and strategy will require operational choices to be made at local level in order to achieve the appropriate police response and this document should be used in conjunction with other existing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) produced by the College of Policing. It will be updated and re-published as necessary.

Any queries relating to this document should be directed to either the author detailed above or the Head of Knowledge and Communications at NABIS on 0121 626 7114

## Gun surrender programmes

### Key points

- **Gun surrender programmes give a clear demonstration to communities that police are committed to addressing gun crime.**
- **While gun surrender programmes may not have a direct impact on gun-related criminality, they do lead to the surrender of weapons that might otherwise find their way into criminal hands.**
- **Surrender programmes provide a way for those worried about possessing a firearm but with no criminal intent to surrender them without fear of criminalisation.**

Gun surrender programmes are often used after high-profile gun-related criminality, particularly homicides. There is, however, little research into the effectiveness of such programmes. What is clear is that they are not an effective method of reducing gun crime. Existing research concludes that their effect on decreasing violent crime and reducing firearm-related mortality is unknown (Callahan, Rivara and Koepsell 1994; Phillips, Kim and Sobol 2013).

Notwithstanding the lack of evidence showing their success in reducing violent crime, the programmes demonstrate to communities an authority's commitment to responding to gun crime.

Where a gun surrender programme is being considered, it is important that there is early liaison with the CPS as to the terms and timescale of the surrender. Where a surrender takes place in a given force area, police officers seeking charging advice for possession of an unlawfully held or prohibited weapon should mark the prosecution file accordingly.

The CPS guidance about firearms (see [Amnesties – Surrenders](#)) includes information about surrenders and states: 'Prosecutors can never be seen to give an undertaking not to ever prosecute in these circumstances, but instead, should consider each case on its merits.'

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