

FIREARMS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2004

S.I. 2004 No. 702 (N.I. 3)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

BACKGROUND

The Order was prepared following a detailed review of Northern Ireland's firearms legislation, principally the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, by the Northern Ireland Office. The review also examined the proposals for the reform of firearms controls in Great Britain contained in Lord Cullen's report of his Inquiry into the fatal shootings at Dunblane Primary School on 13 March 1996.

The Government proposals were subjected to consultation at various stages of the review and drew comment from a wide cross section of interested groups and organisations. A Proposal for a Draft Firearms Order was laid in Parliament on 22 July 2002 and consultation on it continued until 31 December. The Proposal was scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee as part of its Inquiry into Northern Ireland's firearms controls. The Committee published its Report on 4 February 2003 and the Government responded on 4 April. The Draft Order was also examined by the Committee. The Committee raised a small number of issues, mainly of a drafting and technical nature, which the Government addressed. The Committee subsequently confirmed that it was content with the Order.