

Mr Neil Parish MP  
By Email only

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Dear Mr Parish,

We write to you in your capacity as Chair of the EFRA committee to raise the contentious Home Office's proposal to restrict airgun use for teenagers. It is our belief that the Home Office has significantly undervalued the impact that its proposal will have on young airgun users of which our organisations represent.

The Home Office's proposal aims to remove the Firearms Act 1968 exception that allows 14 – 17-year-olds to use airguns unsupervised on private premises. Hundreds of thousands of youngsters have used, and thousands continue to use, this exception. Indeed, the majority of our members were first introduced to shooting through this exception. It allows for a degree of responsibility and is extremely useful on farms and in farmyards across the country.

Enacting the proposal will restrict 14 – 17-year-olds ability to undertake vital pest control on and around farms and farm yards.

As it is illegal to purchase an airgun and ammunition under the age of 18, the unsupervised use of an airgun must be granted by an adult. This in itself is a useful check and balance for deeming a 14 – 17-year-old unsupervised use.

We are unaware of any body of evidence to justify removing this exception. The following written questions by Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP (seen [here](#) and [here](#)) confirms the lack of evidence. Proposals for legislative changes should not be predicated upon supposition but based on fact.

The Home Office impact assessment describes the removal of the exception as an 'inconvenience'. This is a far cry from the truth and will create a legal anomaly in England and Wales where unsupervised use with licenced firearms can take place at 14, licenced shotguns at 15, but not until 18 for unlicenced airguns.

As this proposal will impact the farming and land management sectors, and with no apparent movement from Home Office, we ask that the EFRA committee give the proposal the scrutiny it deserves to ensure young farmers among others are not left disadvantaged.

Yours sincerely,

**Bill Harriman**  
**Director of Firearms**  
**The British Association for Shooting and Conservation**

**Tom Pope**  
**Agriculture and Rural Issues Chairman**  
**National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs**

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