

## Firearms

# New renewal application forms

NGO Firearms adviser, George Wallace, explains how to deal with them.

FROM 1 JANUARY 2014 AN APPLICATION FOR the grant, renewal or variation of firearm and shotgun certificates must be made on one of the new forms (pictured).

It has taken eight years to agree them and, although they are generally easier to understand, the improvement doesn't seem much return for the thousands of man-hours expended in the process. There is also a load of rubbish at the end which asks questions about disability, gender, ethnic origin (18 choices here!) age (apparently they can't work it out from your date of birth), etc. It has no bearing whatever on your fitness to possess firearms and has presumably been added by some bunch of politically-correct fruitcakes.

However, each of those sections has a box you can tick, entitled, "Prefer not to say". Take my advice and tick them all!

Other than that, the forms are an improvement and the questions are easier to understand. Applications for firearm and shotgun certificates are both on the same form, so you have to take care to complete the right bits. Applications for the variation of a firearm certificate are now made on a different form.

The old business of referees having to send in a form to the police has been abandoned and it has returned to the referee just signing a box to confirm that he or she has known you for umpteen years and knows no reason why you should not be permitted to possess guns: one referee for shotguns and two for firearms.

Many Forces are now sending out a reminder letter only, by post, leaving the applicant to download the form from the internet. This is supposed to save money – but not for the applicant who must print off 11 pages of the application form and two of guidance notes at a cost of between 3p and 10p per page. And if you don't have access to a computer you are, to coin a phrase, "stuffed". Also, of course, our printer paper is usually heavier than the official stuff, so it will need a Large Letter stamp, currently 90p, if you want the Post

Office to handle it. Get the postage right because the police will not – and cannot be expected to – go round to the Sorting Office to pay £1 plus the extra postage to collect your application.

Application forms are still available from certain police stations, but why the heck the Home Office can't get them printed in bulk and the police then send them out with the renewal reminder, is a mystery. I really do sometimes wonder if they could organise one in a brewery.

And then there are unauthorised, ie. unlawful, extra forms. The Firearms Act 1968 is absolutely clear at Section 26, which says: "An application for the grant of a certificate shall be made in the prescribed form." That "prescribed form" is now Firearms Form 201 for both firearm and shotgun. **Do not complete any extra forms** – they are not authorised either by legislation or by the Home Office.

You may have read (see page 6) that some police licensing departments have been demanding that applicants ask for – and pay for – a report from their Doctor. Durham and West Mercia/Warwickshire are two of the villains in this case. **Do not comply with this!** The police have to deal with the legislation as it is, not how they would like it to be, and item 14B on the application form includes the following: "I give the police permission to contact my general practitioner and/or specialist to obtain factual details of any medical history in respect of this application." Read that carefully. It authorises the police themselves to contact your Doctor for a medical report; it does not give them licence to demand that you do so.

**Do not do it!**

If you have any problems or concerns, don't just knuckle under; please ask for help and advice. That's why we are here – and it's one of the reasons you joined the NGO.



### APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OR RENEWAL OF A FIREARM AND/OR SHOTGUN CERTIFICATE

FORM 201

PLEASE READ THE NOTES THAT ACCOMPANY THIS FORM CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

Please use black ink and write in **BLOCK CAPITALS** throughout, except when signing. (Applicants must print their name, sign and date each page). If you wish to provide any further information to that mentioned in this form, you must also sign and date that information.

#### For what are you applying?

1. I am applying for (tick each box which applies)
- Firearm certificate  Grant  Renewal
- Shotgun certificate  Grant  Renewal

8. Previous home address(es) from the past five years

If not applicable write N/A here (please use a new line for each address).

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