



Dear Colleague

## INFORMATION SHARING REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN POLICE AND GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (GPs) FOR GRANT/RENEWAL OF FIREARMS/SHOTGUN CERTIFICATES

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this communication is to inform you of new UK arrangements for the sharing of information between GPs and the Police at the time of grant or renewal of firearms and shotgun certificates, for reasons of public safety. ***The new arrangements will start on 1 April 2016.***

2. **The ultimate aim is to protect public safety and ensure that medically unfit people do not have access to firearms.**

3. This letter supersedes the previous CMO letter - SGHD/CMO(2013)1, sent as an interim agreement between the BMAScotland and ACPOS on 4 July 2013. Discussions at that time between BMAScotland and Police had led to the development of a standard letter to GPs requesting health information, when required, at the time of application for a certificate to ensure consistent practice across Scotland.

### Background

4. ***The responsibility for granting/renewing a firearms/shotgun certificate lies with the Police.*** Once a certificate is granted it is usually valid for 5 years and entitles the holder to purchase any number and calibre of shotguns, or, with the agreement of the Police, firearms and ammunition. The process of renewal of a certificate in Scotland starts about 12 weeks prior to the expiry of the previous certificate.

**From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Catherine Calderwood MA  
FRCOG FRCP(Edin)  
and ACC Mark Williams,  
Local Policing West  
Police Scotland**

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#### Enquiries to:

[FirearmsLicensingPolicyUnit@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FirearmsLicensingPolicyUnit@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

29 March 2016

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SGHD/CMO(2016) 7

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#### Addresses

##### For action

NHS Board Medical Directors – to cascade to all doctors, including GPs  
Police Scotland

##### For information

NHS Board Directors of Public Health  
NHS Board and Special Board Chief Executives  
NHS Board and Special Board Chairs  
NHS Board Primary Care Leads  
NHS Board Leads for Forensic Medical Services  
SAS  
NHS24  
British Medical Association  
General Medical Council  
Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland  
Medical Protection Society  
Medical Defence Union  
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland  
COPFS – to cascade to Forensic Pathologists  
Care Inspectorate  
SPA

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#### Further Enquiries

##### For clinical issues

Dr Mini Mishra  
Senior Medical Officer  
St Andrew's House  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG  
[Mini.mishra@gov.scot](mailto:Mini.mishra@gov.scot)

##### For policy issues

Aileen Bearhop  
Principal Policy Officer  
Safer Communities Division  
[Aileen.Bearhop@gov.scot](mailto:Aileen.Bearhop@gov.scot)

5. A GP's personal knowledge of their patient or information from their clinical records can assist the Police in determining whether an individual should be granted a certificate. Health status is one of several criteria investigated prior to a decision being made by the Police.

6. With relevant information from various sources, including from GPs, the Police can revoke certain certificates during the period of their validity, or refuse to grant/renew a certificate where there is justification to do so. One such an important area is where the health and conduct suggests that an individual may be a danger to the public safety, including themselves or to the peace.

7. The updated process for firearms/shotgun licensing has been the responsibility of the Home Office, who considered the concerns raised by BMA UK about gaps in the previous process, as well as a number of firearms licensing issues raised in a critical report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) in August 2015, which included concerns about the sharing of information between GPs and the Police.

8. The new information sharing arrangements have been agreed with the BMA UK, RCGP UK, shooting organisations, Police Scotland, Information Commissioners Office, and others.

### **New Process**

9. The guidance and supporting documents in the **Annexes** set out how the new arrangements will operate and follow extensive consultation and Ministerial approval.

Key points to note are that:

- Police will contact the relevant GPs/GP Practice when an applicant requests a firearms/shotgun certificate or a renewal of the certificate i.e. there will be a pre-grant letter from the Police;
- For the first time, NHS GP patient records will have Clinical Codes and Terms added to indicate that the individual has a firearms/shotgun certificate when the pre-grant letter is sent, so that it is clear to a GP that an individual has a firearms/shotgun certificate;
- The decision whether to grant, renew or revoke a licence remains a matter for the Police;
- If a certificate is not granted, is revoked, cancelled or lapses, the Police will notify the GPs/GP practice so that the clinical record can be updated with the Clinical Codes and Terms to indicate that the individual no longer has a firearms/shotgun certificate;
- Beyond the initial letter, additional costs will be met by the applicant or Police depending on the level of medical information/report required;
- New application forms address the issues of informed consent to enable the GP to share relevant clinical as appropriate, as part of the application process as well as during the duration of the certificates; and
- Electronic transfer of information between Police and GP Practices is being discussed and notification will be provided as soon as it is operational.

Details of the new arrangements are summarised in the Annexes, which can be accessed as relevant:

**Annex 1** – GP and Police Information Sharing Guide

**Annex 2** – GP and Police Information Sharing Process

- Annex 3** – Police Letter to GP – Place firearms/shotgun marker on clinical records  
**Annex 4** – Police Letter to GP – Remove firearms/shotgun marker from clinical records; Application for the grant or renewal of a firearm and/or shotgun certificate; Application to vary a firearm certificate  
**Annex 5** – Firearms Licensing and Medical Evidence Fact Sheet

**Action**

10. I would be grateful if you could ensure that the agreed process is implemented.

Thank you very much for your support in this very important matter of public safety and public interest.

Yours sincerely

*Catherine Calderwood*

*ACC Mark Williams*

**Dr Catherine Calderwood MA FRCOG FRCP(Edin)  
Chief Medical Officer**

**ACC Mark Williams  
Local Policing West**

**FIREARMS LICENSING**

**GP AND POLICE INFORMATION SHARING GUIDE**

**Principles underlying the sharing of data on firearm and shotgun applicants**

1. Information sharing between GPs and Police firearms licensing departments can be necessary in order to reduce the risk to public safety which may occur if a medically unfit person possesses firearms.
2. Information may be shared by GPs with the Police as part of the application process, or if the GP considers that the public could be placed at risk of serious harm if they do not make their concerns about a firearm certificate holder known to the Police. This is on the basis of the GP's duty to protect and promote the health of patients and the public.<sup>1</sup> GPs may disclose information with consent and, if it is in the public interest, without consent to protect individuals or society from risk of serious harm.<sup>2</sup>
3. If an applicant does not have a GP in the UK they do not fulfil the criteria to be issued with a firearm certificate as they cannot complete the application form. Military personnel who are posted abroad and have a MOD GP may still be regarded as resident in the UK for the purposes of the Firearms Act.
4. Medical information provided by the GP to the Police will be copied to the applicant or certificate holder unless there is a strong reason not to do so. Police should be notified by the GP when it is not appropriate to share the information about the applicant and reasons should be provided. If the GP is unclear about the safety of disclosing some information they should have a discussion with the firearms officer by telephone.
5. The sharing of data by public sector bodies must satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality. The GP's authority to provide medical information to the Police is in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998 which stipulates that certain conditions must be met for sensitive personal data to be shared.
6. Due care must be exercised by both the Police and the GP with regard to the security of information held concerning the applicant or certificate holder. The information collected by organisations must comply with the relevant national guidelines and/or legislation for the management of information. For the Police these are outlined in the Management of Police Information (MOPI) 2010, in particular section 7 which relates to the review, retention and disposal of information. For GPs, these are covered by the General Medical Council guidance and the NHSScotland Code of Practice.

**Consent**

7. The applicant gives their consent to sharing of information by their GP when they complete and sign the firearm and shotgun certificate application form. The applicant

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<sup>1</sup> General Medical Council (2013) *Good medical practice*, 'Duties of a doctor registered with the General Medical Council'.

<sup>2</sup> General Medical Council (2009) *Confidentiality*, paragraphs 36 to 56.

consents to the information sharing while the firearm or shotgun certificate remains valid, and not just at the time of application. This will be re-enforced by the Police during their interactions with the applicant.

8. The Police will refuse the application if the consent section of the application form has not been signed. This being the case the GP can assume that consent has been given if an enquiry or notification is received from the Police.<sup>3</sup>

### **Necessity and proportionality**

9. During the application process, the Police may require the applicant to obtain a medical report if they have concerns about the medical fitness of the applicant in relation to their possession of firearms following the declaration of a medical condition. It is not necessary or proportionate for the Police to request a report in all cases where the applicant has declared a medical condition, but only where the circumstances of the condition/s indicate there may be a risk to public safety.

10. GPs will respond to requests from the Police in relation to those applications where the Police consider that a medical report is necessary to assist with their further consideration of the application. GPs will provide factual information based on the applicant's medical records and condition. GPs are not expected or required to make an assessment as to whether the applicant is fit to possess a gun, though it is open to them to do so.

11. There may be instances when a GP wishes to communicate their concerns about an individual's access to guns, even though the person concerned has not sought treatment for one of the relevant conditions listed on the application form and Police letter. For example, if there are concerns about domestic violence, or if the GP is aware that a person has access to firearms but is not a certificate holder. In these circumstances information may be shared with the Police on the basis that the applicant has given their consent on the application form, or on the basis that it is in the public interest.

12. There may also be instances where the certificate holder contacts the Police in relation to their medical fitness or where a third party contacts the Police with concerns about a certificate holder's suitability to possess firearms. In such cases GPs may share information with the Police on the basis that the applicant has given their consent on the application form, or because it is in the public interest.

13. Information should only be shared where it is strictly necessary to the intended outcome and is proportionate to it. Key to determining the necessity and proportionality of sharing information will be the GP's professional judgement of the risks posed to an individual or the public by the person's possession of a firearm. This is commensurate with the general duty on doctors to protect and promote the health of patients and the public.

### **Responsibility for assessment of firearm and shotgun applications**

14. **The Police are responsible for deciding whether an individual should be permitted to hold a firearm or shotgun certificate**, taking into account the information available to them. This duty lies with the Police on the basis of the provisions in the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended).

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/confidentiality\\_24\\_35\\_disclosing\\_information\\_with\\_consent.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/confidentiality_24_35_disclosing_information_with_consent.asp)

## **GP AND POLICE INFORMATION SHARING: PROCESS**

### **Completion of application form**

1. An applicant is required to declare any relevant medical conditions on the application form for a firearm or shotgun certificate. (This is in relation to the issue of a firearm or shotgun certificate in accordance with sections 1 and 2 of the Firearm Act 1968.) They send the application to the Police.

### **Initial GP checks following receipt of letter from police prior to granting of certificate**

2. Following application for a certificate or renewal (and prior to the granting of a certificate) the Police will contact the applicant's GP/GP Practice to check if they have concerns about the person possessing a firearm certificate or if they have suffered from a relevant medical condition (**over the previous 5 years**) which could affect suitability to safely possess a firearm or shotgun certificate. There is no expectation of a fee being charged for this check.

3. The letter from the police to the GP sets out the following conditions which could affect a person's suitability to possess a firearm or shotgun:

- Acute Stress Reaction or an acute reaction to the stress caused by a trauma
- Suicidal thoughts or self harm
- Depression or anxiety
- Dementia
- Mania, bipolar disorder or a psychotic illness
- A personality disorder
- A neurological condition: for example, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's or Huntington's diseases, or epilepsy
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Any other mental or physical condition which may affect the safe possession of firearms

4. In considering individual cases, GPs may wish to refer to the guidance on medical information (particularly related to "unsound mind" and "assessment of suitability") contained within paragraphs 10 to 12 of the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law (please note that the actual process may differ from that in Scotland) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/firearms-licensing-police-guidance>".

### **GP response to initial police letter**

5. The GP should respond to the Police pre-grant letter by letter or email within **21 days**. They should indicate whether or not they have concerns. In most cases the GP's response will indicate that they have no concerns. If the GP indicates that they have concerns or there are relevant issues, the Police may ask the applicant to request and pay for a medical report.

### **GP failure to respond to police letter**

6. If the GP does not respond to the Police letter, it cannot be assumed that there are no concerns. This may adversely impact on the applicant and could result in further contact by the applicant and/or by the Police firearms licensing departments because the Police will not have the clinical information they require to complete their checks.

7. If the GP feels unable to participate on the basis of a conscientious objection, or for any other reason, they should refer the patient to a colleague or discuss the issue with the firearms officer in the absence of a colleague e.g. single handed GP Practice. If no colleague is willing or available, the GP should inform the Police immediately that they will not be able to complete the form. In the unlikely event that this arises the Police should discuss with the applicant/certificate holder how to obtain adequate medical information. The applicant or certificate holder should not be disadvantaged, nor the application delayed, by a GP's refusal to provide medical information.

### **Encoded reminder on patient records – purpose and use**

8. As part of the application process, the Police in their initial letter to the GP/GP practice will ask for an **encoded reminder** (flag/alert/marker) to be placed on the patient record so that the GP is aware the person is a firearm or shotgun certificate holder. The code indicates that the person concerned *'has a shotgun certificate'* and/or *'has a firearm certificate.'*

9. During the validity of the firearm or shotgun certificate the presence of the encoded reminder will enable the GP to discuss the issue with the patient and notify the Police as soon as possible if a person's health gives rise to concern, or if they begin to be treated for a relevant condition. This might happen, for example, if a certificate holder experiences deterioration in their health due to the onset of depression. Action by the GP will enable the Police to make further enquiries and take a decision on the on-going suitability of the person concerned to possess guns.

10. The GP should notify the certificate holder to make a disclosure to the Police unless there is a compelling reason for not doing so, for example, because it could increase the risk of harm to the certificate holder or others. If the certificate holder objects to the information being shared with the Police, the GP may disclose information if it is in the public interest, to protect individuals or society from risk of serious harm.

### **Requirement for further medical reports**

11. If the applicant has declared a relevant medical condition (see list of relevant medical conditions above) the Police may ask the applicant to obtain and pay for a medical report to assist with their consideration of medical suitability. Similarly, if the Police have concerns about a person's medical condition as a result of the GP's response to their initial standard letter, the applicant may be asked to seek a report from the GP/GP Practice. The medical report should be provided by GPs to Police normally within **30 days** of their request. This will be paid for by the applicant.

12. The Police may require a further medical report from a GP or a specialist to enable them to make their decision about the granting, renewal or revocation of a certificate. Sometimes, this might be as a result of issues raised during the term of a certificate. This medical report should be provided to the Police within **30 days**. It will be paid for by the Police.

### **Police make decision on application**

13. Having carried out the necessary checks which will in some cases include visiting and interviewing the applicant, the Police decide whether to approve or refuse the firearm or shotgun application. In coming to their decision they take into account all the facts of the case and the evidence before them, including medical information.

## **Police advise GP if licence expires or is revoked**

14. If the certificate holder ceases to have a firearm certificate, whether as result of expiry or because the certificate has been revoked or cancelled, the Police will inform the GP/GP Practice within **30 days**, and the GP/GP Practice will then add a new code for Code for “does not have licence” in the clinical records . The “does not have licence” code will remain in the clinical records until the destruction of the notes in accordance with the NHSScotland Code of Practice.

## **Summary of medical fees**

### During the application process

- Initial check of the patient record in response to the standard police letter – there is no expectation of a fee.
- Where a medical report is required due to the applicant declaring a medical condition – the applicant will pay the fee.
- If a further medical report is required – the police will pay the fee.

### During the validity of a firearm or shotgun certificate

- Where a medical report is required due to the GP raising concerns or because the police require sight of a medical report for another reason – the police will pay the fee.

## **Firearms Licensing: Medical Information Flow Charts**



**POLICE LETTER TO GP – PLACE MARKER “FIREARMS/SHOTGUN” ON CLINICAL RECORDS**

Pre-grant automated letter to: GP/GP Practice Manager

*[Firearms Licensing Dept. address, phone number and email to be populated from NFLMS]*

*[GP Practice name and address]*

**Firearm / shotgun certificate holder**

*[Certificate holder’s name, date of birth and address]*

The patient named above has applied for a firearm and/or shotgun certificate and on the application form supplied your name as their GP or your GP Practice details. We are writing to you to seek factual information about any relevant medical issues relating to this person.

**What action is requested from the GPs/GP Practice?**

- Respond to the questions in the attached form (on page 4) within **21** days indicating if you have any concerns about your patient being issued with a firearm certificate. (Please note that we do not require a medical report at this stage)
- Add a firearm and/or shotgun Read code to the patient’s record
- Contact Police if the patient begins to suffer from a relevant medical condition

**Relevant medical conditions**

A relevant medical condition may affect a person’s ability to safely possess and use a firearm or shotgun. Relevant medical conditions include, for example:

- Acute Stress Reaction or an acute reaction to the stress caused by a trauma
- Suicidal thoughts or self harm
- Depression or anxiety
- Dementia
- Mania, bipolar disorder or a psychotic illness
- A personality disorder
- A neurological condition: for example, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s or Huntington’s diseases, or epilepsy
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Any other mental or physical condition which you think may be relevant.

**Response from the GP**

It is important that Police receive a response indicating whether there are medical issues relating to the certificate holder. Please note that if you do not respond to this letter within 21 days it cannot be assumed that you have no concerns in relation to your patient holding a firearm certificate. If you need more time to respond or have any other issues or questions, please let us know.

Please note that at a later stage a medical report may be required because the GP has indicated that there are relevant medical conditions or concerns. In these circumstances we will ask the applicant to request and pay for a medical report so we can make an informed decision on their suitability to possess a firearm.

### **Information sharing between GPs and Police firearms licensing departments**

Arrangements between GP and Police representatives in England, Wales and Scotland have provided for information sharing to protect public safety.

### **Consent**

By submitting the firearm or shotgun application your patient has given consent for Police to contact their GP in order to obtain factual details of their medical history, and for the GP to provide this information to the Police. This consent is valid during the application process and through the duration of the firearm or shotgun certificate. The guidance on confidentiality issued by the General Medical Council states: *'You may accept an assurance from an officer of a government department or agency or a registered health professional acting on their behalf that the patient or a person properly authorised to act on their behalf has consented.'*

The GMC guidance on confidentiality also states: *'Disclosure may be necessary in the public interest, where a failure to disclose information may expose a patient, or others, to risk of death or serious harm. In such circumstances you should disclose information promptly to an appropriate person or authority.'*

### **Police are responsible for the decision on a person's suitability**

You are not being asked for an opinion as to whether your patient should be permitted to possess a firearm or shotgun certificate as that responsibility rests entirely with the Police.

### **Firearm reminder code**

Please place a firearm and/or shotgun code on the patient's record indicating that they are a certificate holder. Practice will likely wish to put an alert/flag/marker on the records (to open every time the patient file is opened) as a reminder. If the patient begins to suffer from a relevant medical condition which could affect their suitability to possess a firearm or if there are any other factors that give rise to concern, please contact the Police immediately so that we can review the person's continued suitability.

Please use the following firearm and shotgun codes which can be used with the four main IT systems used in GP Practices in England, Wales and Scotland. The Read code should remain on the patient record while the firearm or shotgun certificate is valid, which is usually for a period of five years. We will inform you if the certificate is not granted or it is revoked, cancelled or expires, whereupon you should add the negation Read code to the clinical record to indicate that the patient no longer holds a firearm or shotgun certificate.

### **Further information**

If you need further information about any aspect of the process or your involvement, please telephone or email the firearms licensing department.

From: Firearms Licensing Manager

## Firearm and shotgun Read codes for the encoded reminder

<b>Read Codes</b>	For clinical systems using Read v2: EMIS, INPS Vision, MICROTEST Evolution  [Note that the stops are important parts of the code and must be included]	For clinical systems using CTV3: TPP SystemOne	SNOMED CT
Has shotgun certificate	9DP0	XaYbK	812091000000109
Has firearm certificate	9DP..	XaYbL	812101000000101
No longer has shotgun certificate	9DV..	XaeXu	1033741000000102
No longer has firearm certificate	9DT..	XaeXt	1033721000000109

**Firearm/shotgun certificate holder: GP response form**

*[Certificate holder's name, date of birth and address to be populated from NFLMS]*

**Please respond to these questions by letter or email to the Firearms Licensing Department within 21 days. If using email please scan or attach an electronic version of this form.**

*[Firearms Licensing Dept. address, phone number and email]*

		Yes	No
1	Do you have concerns about your patient being issued with a firearm or shotgun certificate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Has your patient suffered from any relevant medical conditions listed below during the previous five years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute Stress Reaction or an acute reaction to the stress caused by a trauma</li> <li>• Suicidal thoughts or self harm</li> <li>• Depression or anxiety</li> <li>• Dementia</li> <li>• Mania, bipolar disorder or a psychotic illness</li> <li>• A personality disorder</li> <li>• A neurological condition: for example, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's or Huntington's diseases, or epilepsy</li> <li>• Alcohol or drug related abuse</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Have you placed a firearm or shotgun reminder code on the patient record?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GP Name ..... GMC number .....

*[GP Practice name and address]*

Contact telephone number / email.....

Practice stamp

Signature .....Date .....

**POLICE LETTER TO GP/GP PRACTICE- REMOVE “FIREARMS/SHOTGUN” MARKER  
FROM CLINICAL RECORDS**



Doc 6 - Police letter  
to GP - Remove mark

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



6-1558-Form\_201-A  
pplication\_for\_the\_gr

**APPLICATION TO VARY A FIREARM CERTIFICATE**



6-1558-Form\_201(V)  
-Application\_to\_vary\_

## **FIREARMS LICENSING AND MEDICAL EVIDENCE: FACTSHEET FOR SCOTLAND**

### **New referral system of medical suitability of gun owners**

A safer system for firearms licensing is being introduced in April to improve information sharing between GPs and Police and reduce the risk that a medically unfit person may be able to possess a firearm or shotgun.

#### **From 1 April 2016:**

- **On application for grant or renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate Police will ask every applicant's GP if the patient suffers from specific health issues (see below).**
- **GPs will be asked to place a firearm reminder code (flag/alert/marker) on the patient's clinical record.** This means the GP will know the person is a gun owner, and they can inform the Police licensing department if the patient's health deteriorates after the certificate is granted.
- **New guidance will be published to help GPs and Police operate the new system, and to inform certificate holders and applicants.** Responsibility for deciding if a person is suitable to hold a firearm or shotgun certificate remains with the Police.

#### **Why is the system changing?**

The new system has been developed following recommendations for change from coroners and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), and after the British Medical Association voiced concerns about weaknesses in the current process. It has been developed by the Police and GP representatives, in conjunction with shooting organisations and the Information Commissioners Office.

#### **What types of application will the new system apply to?**

The new system will apply to every application for the grant or renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate on or after 1 April 2016.

#### **Will these changes be introduced across the UK?**

The new system will be introduced in England, Scotland and Wales on 1 April 2016. Automated electronic procedures for contact between the Police and GPs/GP Practices will follow in Summer 2016. The new system does not apply to Northern Ireland which has separate firearms legislation and processes.

#### **What fee will the GP charge for the report if one is needed?**

The level of any fee charged will depend on factors including the reasonable amount of time spent by the GP in compiling the report.

## **If a medical report is needed, who will pay?**

### During the application process

- Initial GP check of the patient record in response to the standard Police letter – there is no expectation of a fee.
- Where a medical report is needed because the applicant has declared a medical condition on the application form – the applicant will pay the fee.
- If a further medical report is required by the Police – the Police will pay the fee.

### During the validity of a firearm or shotgun certificate

- Where a medical report is needed because the GP has raised concerns or because the Police require sight of a medical report for another reason – the Police will pay the fee.

## **Will applicants still need to declare on the application form if they are suffering from a medical condition which could affect their ability to possess a gun safely?**

Yes, applicants will still need to declare relevant medical conditions (and these are listed in the Notes to Form 201 and below).

## **What medical conditions must be declared?**

Relevant medical conditions include:

- Acute Stress Reaction or an acute reaction to the stress caused by trauma
- Suicidal thoughts or self harm
- Depression or anxiety
- Dementia
- Mania, bipolar disorder or a psychotic illness
- A personality disorder
- A neurological condition: for example, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's or Huntington's diseases, or epilepsy
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Any other mental or physical condition which might affect your safe possession of firearms or shotguns

## **How will introduction of the GP firearms code make the process safer?**

At present there is no system in place to remind the GP that their patient is a gun owner. A person could be medically fit when they are granted a certificate (which lasts for five years), but their health could deteriorate later on. The reminder code enables the GP to discuss the issue with the patient and if necessary inform the Police, who can then review the person's suitability.

## **How long will the firearms code stay on the patient record?**

The 'live' firearm code will remain on the patient record while the firearm or shotgun certificate is valid. Police will inform GPs/GP Practice when certificates are revoked, cancelled or expire so that GPs can inactivate the firearm code. The code and any

information related to it will remain indefinitely on the patient record but in an 'inactivated' state.

### **Why have the firearm and shotgun application forms been amended?**

The forms have been amended to reflect the new process and so that applicants understand how their medical information may be shared between GPs and Police. The new firearm and shotgun application form is Form 201, and this also contains the Notes which will assist with completing the application. The new firearm variation form is Form 201(V).

### **Will Police still accept applications made on the old application form?**

Applications may be submitted to Police on the old application forms provided that they are received by the Police before **1 June 2016**. After this transitional period the new application forms must be used. The new forms can be downloaded from Police websites and may be typed or handwritten.

### **What happens if my GP does not want to operate the new system?**

Another GP in the practice with access to the clinical records can provide the information. If this is not possible, you should discuss this with the Police firearms licensing department. Applicants and certificate holders should not be disadvantaged if their GP does not provide the information needed.

### **Will this mean the grant/renewal process will take longer than it does now?**

No. From 1 April each certificate holder's GPs/GP Practice will be contacted by Police following an application for a certificate or its renewal, as happens currently in many cases.

### **How will I know that information about guns in my house will not fall into the wrong hands?**

Due care will be exercised by GP Practices in relation to information about firearms in the same way that sensitive medical information is handled.

### **Where can I obtain more detailed information about the new system?**

Guidance documents setting out how the new process works are available on Gov.UK as part of the Home Office Firearms Guide.