

SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2017 BYMIKE WELLS GENERAL SECRETARY

NEWS ROUNDUP

Deactivated firearms: The Home Office has been aware of the Council's wish to ensure that weapons deactivated to UK deactivation standards can continue to be sold. There is a provision in the Directive which will allow Member States to apply for national standards in force before 8 April 2016 to be recognized. An application has to be made within 2 months of the Directive coming into force and it is the Home Office's intention to seek such recognition. Jonathan Djanogly has requested a meeting with the Hon Nick Hurd, the new Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, to reinforce this and also to discuss fees and licensing software issues. Nick Hurd succeeded Brandon Lewis who is now Minister of State for Immigration and a member of the Cabinet.

EU Firearms Directive: The Directive came into force on the 13th June. Implementation should be completed by the 13th September. Discussions will continue with the Home Office on various issues including dealers' records, large capacity magazines and deactivated firearms.

Firearms in Scotland: So far c. 8000 Air Weapon Certificates have been issued. The total number of legal owners of air weapons in Scotland will not be known until all current Firearm Certificate and Shotgun Certificate holders have reached renewal i.e. the end of 2021, since current FAC and SGC holders can possess and use air weapons (but not acquire them) without an Air Weapon Certificate.

Home Office legislation: With regard to the Policing and Crime Act, Commencement Order Statutory Instrument No.399 (C.38)/2017 was laid before Parliament on 13 March 2017 to give effect to the following sections of the 2017 Act on 3 April 2017:

s.133 'Guidance to police officers in respect of firearms',

and on 2 May 2017:

s.125 'Firearms Act 1968: meaning of "firearm" etc.' s.127 'Possession of articles for conversion of imitation firearms' s.128 'Controls on defectively deactivated weapons'

s.129 'Controls on ammunition which expands on impact' s.130 'Authorised lending and possession of firearms for hunting etc.'

The remainder of the firearms provisions in the 2017 Act (s.126 'Firearms Act 1968: meaning of an "antique" firearm', s.131 'Limited extension of firearm certificates etc', and s.132 'Applications under the Firearms Acts: fees') will come into effect separately by commencement order(s), details and timings of which are not yet available.

Medical Evidence Working Group (MEWG): The problem with the BMA was discussed with the then Minister for Policing, Brandon Lewis, at a meeting he had called for the 19th April to discuss fees and medical evidence, during which came the news of the calling of the general election. This would again delay progress until the new government is in place. He accepted that the agreement with the BMA was not binding on GPs. He had raised the issue with the Health Minister. He expressed a wish to talk further after the election but, in the mean time, asked for information on police forces where problems were occurring to be forwarded to the Home Office. He would personally intervene with forces. The police were aware of a groundswell of GPs failing to reply. The Minister wished to achieve a safe environment in which the shooting sports could be enjoyed. In addition there has been an exchange of emails with the Home Office about further changes to the medical questions on Form 201, the application form.

Northern Ireland: British Firearm and Shotgun Certificates are now recognized in Northern Ireland.

NPCC (the National Police Chiefs' Council) Criminal Use of Firearms Themed National Independent Advisory Group (TNIAG): A meeting was held on the 12th April. Roy Saatchi was re-elected as Chairman. Among issues discussed were 'Citizen Aid' (a programme of advice to adults and children on how to react to a terrorist incident, with emphasis on appropriate first aid), current legal issues including the Mark Duggan case, the EU Firearms Directive, and further delays to the planned conference on the move of firearms from legal to illegal possession. The next meeting was scheduled for the 4th July.

NPCC Firearms & Explosives Licensing Working Group and the Practitioners' Group: A BSSC Practitioners Group meeting was held on the 5th April. On the agenda were computer issues, the fees consultation, medical evidence and problems relating to continuous monitoring and the introduction of a ten year certificate. A meeting of FELWG took place on the 13th April. The minutes have not yet been made available. The next meeting of the Practitioners Group will take place on the 15th August.

NPCC National Firearms Licensing Management System: The replacement or upgrading of NFLMS is now the responsibility, on the police side, of Sussex Police, who are working with the Home Office. What was the eCommerce project has now become part of the Digital Policing Portfolio, and is named the 'Digital Public Contacts Business

Transformation Programme'. The issue at the moment is finding funds to progress the programme.

Steyr LP50 air pistol: With thanks to the Sportsman's Association and the BSSC On the 26th June it was announced that the Steyr LP50 air pistol is not deemed 'self loading' in terms of Section 57(2A) of the Firearms Act 1968. It is already back on the market and may be acquired and held without any form of certificate or authority. This is excellent news for pistol shooters. This clarification of status also applies to the Steyr Hunting 5 Auto rifle.