

## OFFICIAL

### **NFEL (Scotland) – Coronavirus response**

The current unprecedented circumstances in respect of the Coronavirus has impacted on the ability of Police Scotland to deliver a number of business as usual functions. Our focus has been on having as many officers as possible available to front line operational policing and support our colleagues in the NHS.

On Monday 23<sup>th</sup> March, National Firearms and Explosives Licensing (Scotland) advised that interim processes required to be put in place in respect of a number of our services. Our position is now that we have reviewed our ability and capacity regarding the service we can deliver and will implement the following changes in the timescales indicated:

#### **Variations**

We will accept and process variation applications with immediate effect. Please send the necessary form and fee to your local processing centre.

#### **New Grant Applications**

From Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June we will accept grant applications which we will process to the best of our ability. Please be aware however that there are various stages in the grant process including the following:

- Completion of a GP response form completed by your doctor
- A visit to your home to assess your security arrangements

**Please note that a grant application cannot be assessed or supported without both elements being completed.**

With regard to the information required from your GP, on receipt of your application form you will be sent a letter which you are required to have completed by your GP. We would ask that you send this by post to your GP practice rather than personal attendance. Your GP may wish a face to face consultation prior to completing the form however this is at individual GP's discretion.

At this time, GP's may not consider completion of this form a priority and you should be prepared to accept and understand this.

Visits to your home will only be undertaken by prior arrangement with the attending officer after a risk assessment has been completed. You will be asked a series of questions including if you and any family members who reside at your address are in good health or suffering from any symptoms of Coronavirus. You will also be asked if your family members could isolate themselves in another area of your house whilst the visit takes place to facilitate physical distancing. Officers will endeavour to spend the minimum time necessary in your home.

**If you are not willing or able to allow access to your home, please do not apply until you are in a position to facilitate this.**

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If you are content to adhere the guidelines outlined, send your application form and fee to your local processing centre. Please be prepared to accept that we may not be in a position to process your application within 16 weeks due to circumstances out-with our control.

### **Renewal Applications**

Government advice is to avoid non-essential contact and travel and Police Scotland will continue to adhere to this. As a result, home visits undertaken by Firearms Enquiry Officers remain suspended meantime in respect of renewal applications.

If you are currently in the renewal process and have received and completed your renewal pack, you will shortly be contacted by a member of staff. If you wish to proceed with your renewal, this will be managed in the interim period remotely. You will be asked to return your completed paperwork to a processing centre or police office and we will endeavour to renew your certificate prior to expiry. If this cannot be achieved, legislative contingencies exist in the form of temporary extensions and temporary permits which will allow you to continue to possess and use your firearms. We will aim however to complete your renewal without the need to resort to this.

If your renewal is due between 1 August and 31 December 2020, you will receive your renewal pack as normal in the coming weeks and months. Please refer to this page for guidance and information as we will continue to review this dynamic situation and publish updates in relation to any changes in our process.

### **Change of Address/Transfers In**

If you are an existing firearms or shotgun certificate holder and you require to notify us of a change of address, or are transferring into Scotland from a UK force, this will be processed and you will be communicated with directly.

### **Visitor Permits**

We are now in a position to accept Visitor Permit applications. Please be aware however that travel restrictions currently remain in place throughout Scotland and is limited to essential journeys only. If you are considering applying, please refer to the Scottish Government website and guidance in respect of travel arrangements and social distancing **before** you apply. Please consider your application carefully. Where Visitor Permits have already been granted and you are unable to visit Scotland, you will not be disadvantaged and we will seek to allocate a future date or a refund if this is more preferable to you.

**Please contact NFEL by email/telephone with any queries you may have. Our phone lines will only be open to receive calls between 0900hrs and 1200hrs daily.**

**We would be obliged if you could refrain from personal attendance at police offices meantime.**

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