

GP FACTUAL REPORT GUIDANCE NOTES:

This form has been designed and agreed jointly by the Firearms Licensing Dept. of Metropolitan Police and Londonwide Local Medical Committees (Londonwide LMCs). The applicant should fill in their personal details and then request their GP complete the rest of the form. **A fee may be charged by the GP prior to completion.** GPs should refer to the guidance of the British Medical Association which can be found at: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/ethics/ethics-a-to-z/firearms>

INTRODUCTION:

Londonwide LMCs and Metropolitan Police have worked together to create this form and a medical process which meets the following criteria:

- Maximises public safety
- Minimises workload upon both the Firearms Licensing Department and GPs
- Provides clarity and consistency to applicants across London

The applicant should ensure this form is completed prior to submitting an application and the completed form should be submitted with the rest of their application documents.

GENERAL GUIDANCE TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS:

The British Medical Association (BMA) advice to GPs regarding shotgun and firearm licensing emphasises GPs must engage with the process of licensing. BMA guidance advises GPs to select one of five possible responses, which are:

1. Refusal due to conscientious objection
2. Refusal due to lack of expertise*
3. Completion of report for a fee
4. Completion of summary for a fee
5. Completion of report/summary for no fee

The purpose of this standardised form is for it to be used where the GP has opted for response 3, 4 or 5. As independent contractors, GPs remain free to select option 1 if they so wish, and remain free to use their own form/letter in place of this one for options 3,4 & 5 where they so wish.

**It should be noted that option 2 should not be used in London, as this applies to police forces which request a GP opinion rather than a factual statement as is the case in London.*

DATA PERIOD:

It has been agreed between Londonwide LMCs and the Police that for new grant certificates, in the interest of public safety, records should be checked as far back as records in the possession of the GP go, with paper records checked where present. GPs should also specify the date of the first entry in the records in the box provided. The increased workload for grant applications attracts a consequent higher fee than for renewals (see below). For renewal applications, Londonwide LMCs and Police have agreed records need only be checked as far back as 10 years before the date the form is signed. GPs are not responsible for any data which is not within their possession, and in such cases, it is up to the Police to decide whether to grant the application.

For renewals, the GP is only required to notify if the patient has been consulted for the condition in question within the 10 year period. The police will have already been made aware of previous diagnoses notified to them from previous applications for the applicant in question.

CONSENT:

As the form is filled in by the GP at the direct request of the patient, and handed to the patient on completion, no written consent is required.

FEES:

BMA guidance makes it clear that providing medical information for shotgun or firearm certificates is not NHS work and falls outside the contractual obligations of GPs. Thus, GPs are entitled to remuneration for this work and may withhold the work until payment is made. **Such a fee must be paid by the applicant.** Londonwide LMCs cannot prescribe a set fee for legal reasons. However, we can advise practices on how to calculate their fee based on the guidance of the Professional Fees Committee (PFC) of the BMA. The BMA PFC is currently finalising definitive guidance on all fees including firearms, and these are due to be updated imminently. In the meantime, pending such guidance, we advise practices to set a fee considering the GP time required, administrative burden to the practice, overheads, indemnity and other such costs.

On average the amount of GP time taken for these reports should be approximately 30 mins for a renewal (subsequent application) and 1 hour for a grant (new application). Some cases may take more or less time than this and practices may adjust their fees accordingly.

Londonwide LMCs reminds practices it is their responsibility to set their own fees and to make patients aware of these fees prior to the work being undertaken.

FURTHER REPORTS:

Occasionally, when required, following the receipt of this form the Police may need to contact other clinicians such as consultants for a specialist opinion. Such reports fall outside the scope of this form and are not the responsibility of the GP to source.

FLAGS:

BMA guidance is currently unclear regarding putting flags on the notes that the shooter holds a Firearm/Shotgun Certificate, but the BMA expresses concerns regarding the imprecise nature of flags, protocols regarding their removal and the ability to monitor diagnoses of concern. Londonwide LMCs is concerned that placing flags on notes may equate to the GP accepting responsibility for active monitoring of the patient, which attracts medico legal risk and excessive workload. Home Office Guidance to the Police (Firearms Licensing) asks GPs to place a firearm reminder code on the patient's record, however, this guidance has no statutory footing. Therefore, Londonwide LMCs recommends that **GPs are neither requested nor required to place such a flag on the patient's record.**

RESPONSIBILITY:

It remains the ultimate responsibility of the Police to decide on the grant/refusal of any shotgun or firearm certificate. The role of the GP is information provision by way of statement of fact only.

AUDIT:

In the interests of public safety, the Police reserve the right to check the accuracy of forms from time to time with the GP who completed it.