

FIREARM CERTIFICATE STATISTICS

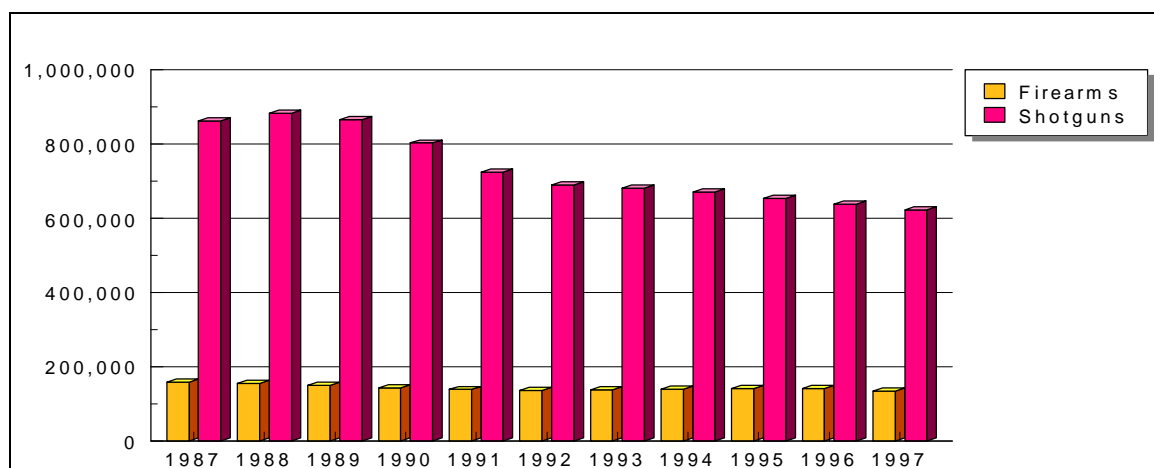
ENGLAND AND WALES, 1997

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MAIN POINTS

- 133,600 firearm certificates were on issue at the end of 1997, a decrease of six per cent on the figure at the end of 1996 (paragraph 3).
- The firearm certificates on issue covered 305,000 firearms, a decrease of 27 per cent on those covered in 1996 (paragraph 3).
- **The reduction in firearms certificates on issue and firearms covered by them are the result of legislation banning certain types of handgun (paragraph 3 and note 12).**
- The number of shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 1997 was 623,100, two per cent fewer than at the end of 1996 (paragraph 8).
- The shotgun certificates on issue covered 1,343,900 shotguns, one per cent more than covered in 1996 (paragraph 8).
- Two per cent of applications for new firearm and shotgun certificates made during 1997 were refused, much the same as in 1996 (paragraphs 4 and 9).
- The percentage of applications for renewal of firearm and shotgun certificates that were refused in 1997 were both less than half of one per cent (paragraphs 5 and 9).
- The number of registered dealers in firearms was 2,400 at the end of 1997, three per cent lower than in 1996 (paragraph 11).

Figure 1 Firearm and shotgun certificates on issue



INTRODUCTION

1. This bulletin presents information on the issue of firearm and shotgun certificates under the Firearms Acts 1968 to 1997. Statistics on persons found guilty or cautioned for offences under these Acts will be included in the firearms chapter of 'Criminal Statistics'. Further details of the Firearms Acts 1968 to 1997 are given in the notes at the end of this bulletin.

2. This bulletin contains the following statistics:

Included within the text:

Table A	Firearm certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December.
Table B	Shotgun certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December.
Table C	Firearms dealers: applications for registration and renewal, granted and refused; dealers registered at 31 December.
Table D	Visitors' permits: applications granted for individuals and groups.

More detailed tables (most by police force area) in the Appendix:

Table 1	Firearm certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December.
Table 2	Firearm certificates: applications for grant, renewal and variation, granted and refused; revocations; certificates on issue at 31 December 1997; firearms covered by certificates in force and average number of firearms per certificate, by police force area.
Table 3	Shotgun certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December.
Table 4	Shotgun certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; revocations; certificates on issue at 31 December 1997; shotguns covered by certificates in force and average number of shotguns per certificate, by police force area.
Table 5	Firearms dealers: applications for registration, granted and refused; removals from register; dealers registered at 31 December 1997, by police force area.
Table 6	Visitors' firearm permits: applications for groups and individuals, persons and weapons covered, by police force area.
Table 7	Visitors' shotgun permits: applications for groups and individuals, persons and weapons covered, by police force area.
Table 8	European firearm passes: applications for grant, renewal and variation; cancellations; passes on issue at 31 December 1997, by police force area.
Table 9	Article 7 authorities: applications for grant, granted and refused; variations; cancellations, by police force area.

FIREARM CERTIFICATES (Table A, Tables 1 and 2)

Number of certificates on issue

3. The number of firearm certificates on issue at the end of 1997 was 133,600, a decrease of six per cent on the 141,900 on issue at the end of 1996. Certificates on issue fell steadily for a number of years from a peak of 216,300 in 1968 down to 136,800 in 1992. From 1993 the number of certificates on issue had been increasing slowly, but has now dropped to an even lower level than 1992. This is a direct result of the recent legislation banning handguns of more than .22 calibre with effect from 1 July 1997. Some smaller calibre guns were also voluntarily surrendered before the end of 1997 in anticipation of further legislation (see note 12 for further details). Figures by police force area are given in Table 2, and illustrated in Figure 2. The certificates on issue at the end of 1997 covered 305,000 firearms, a decrease of 27 per cent on the 418,300 firearms covered in 1996, again reflecting the changes in the law. (The firearms covered by the certificates on issue are not necessarily those actually possessed. For some police forces the figures include firearms authorised for possession. This is particularly so for 1997, as certificate holders switched to alternative legal firearms). Information on the different types of firearm covered by the certificates in force is not presently available.

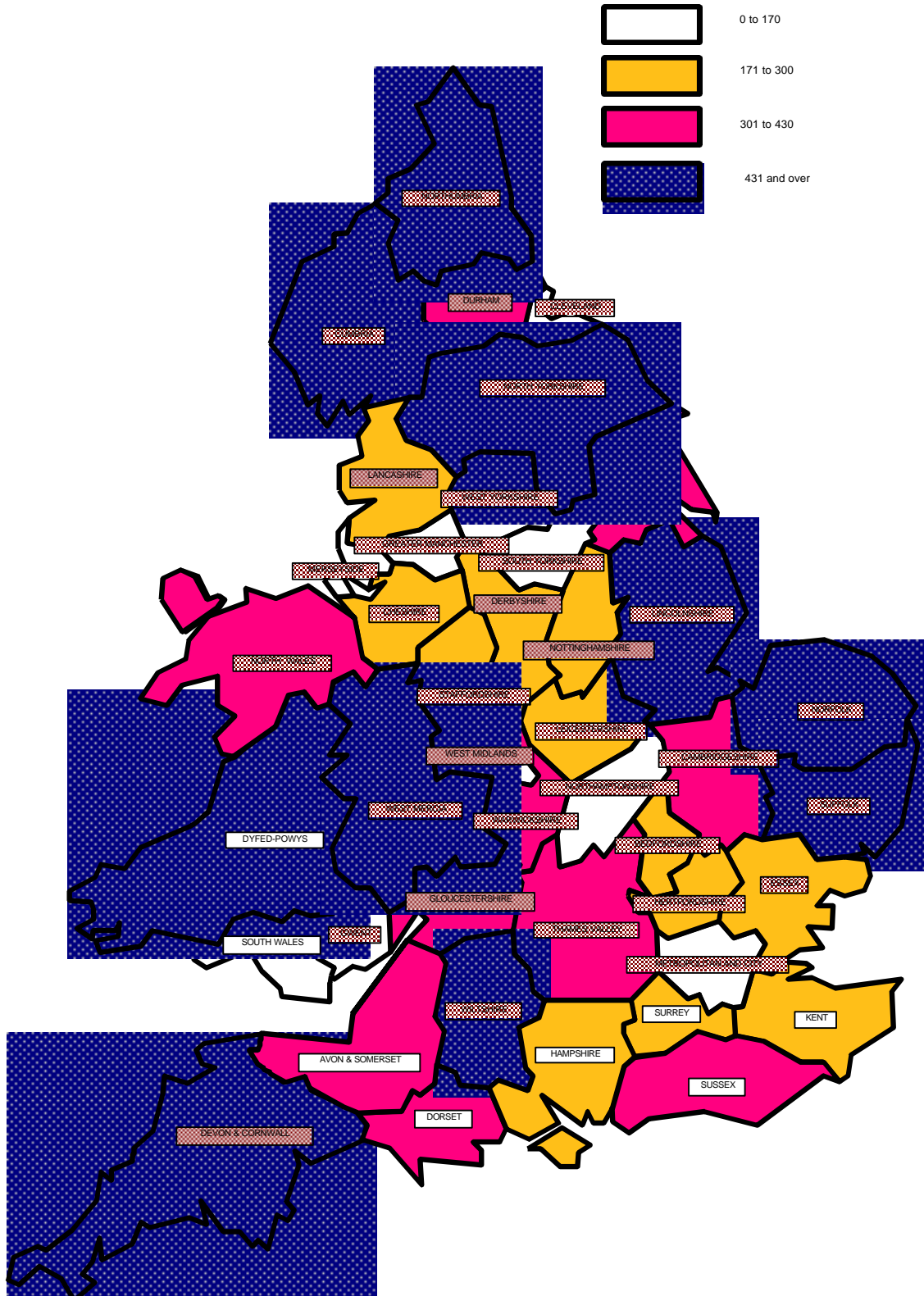
Table A Firearm Certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December

England and Wales		Numbers				Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December	Number of firearms covered by certificates on issue at 31 December (2)
Year	Applications(1)						
	Grant of new firearm certificates		Renewal of firearm certificate				
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused			
1968	..	..	..	..	216,300	..
1990	11,200	230	38,700	240	142,500	..	
1991	10,100	180	38,400	170	138,600	..	
1992	10,600	160	38,500	120	136,800	..	
1993	10,900	120	37,300	170	138,400	..	
1994	11,700	120	37,900	130	140,200	..	
1995	10,900	110	38,500	110	141,700	413,600	
1996	10,200	160	38,100	120	141,900	418,300	
1997	6,800	120	32,800	80	133,600	305,000	

(1) Information is provided in Table 2 on applications for variation of a firearm certificate.

(2) Full returns for all police forces available only from 1995 (but see comment in parenthesis at end of paragraph 3 above).

Figure 2 Firearm certificates per 100,000 population by police force area at 31 December 1997

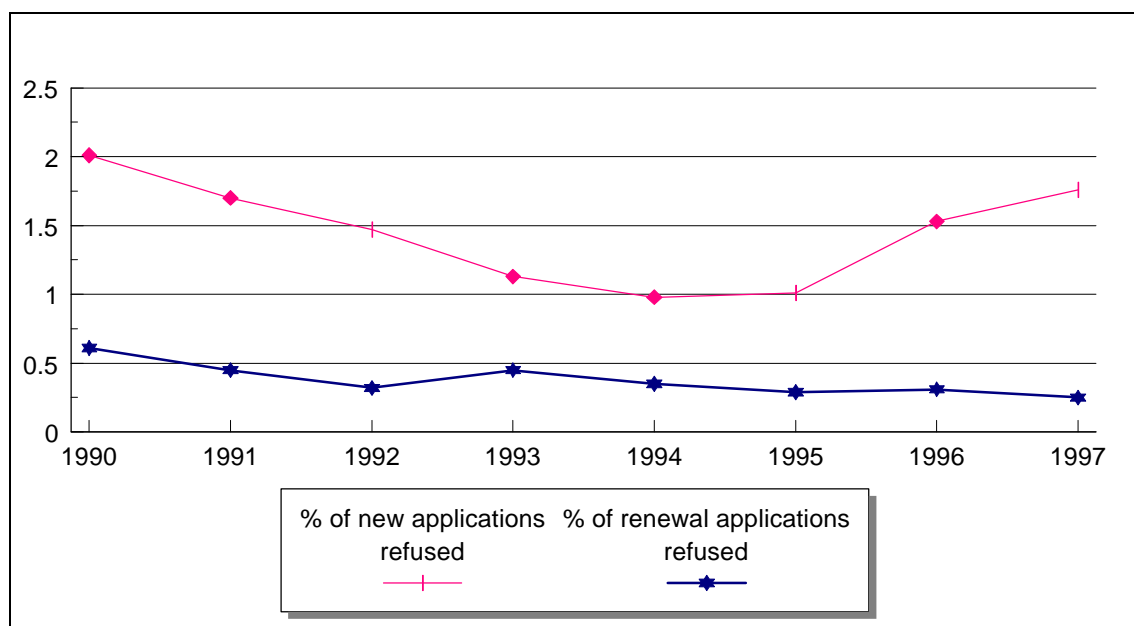


New applications and renewals

4. The number of new firearm certificates granted in 1997 (6,800) was thirty-three per cent down on 1996 (10,200). Two per cent of applications for new firearm certificates were refused in 1997, much the same as in 1996.

5. During 1997 32,800 applications for renewal of a firearm certificate were granted compared with 38,100 during 1996. Less than half of one per cent of applications for renewal of firearm certificates were refused in 1997, a little below the percentage observed in 1996. Figure 3 below shows the trend between 1990 and 1997 in the percentage of both new applications and renewals of firearms certificates that were refused.

Figure 3 Percentage of new and renewal applications for firearm certificates refused



Variations and revocations of certificates

6. Simple one-for-one variations of firearm certificates are handled without charge. The number and type of firearms held on certificate may also be varied on application, and for such variations a fee is charged (see note 8). During 1997, 4,400 such applications for variation of firearm certificates were granted, which is three per cent of the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.

7. Certificates can be revoked if the Chief Officer of Police is satisfied that the holder is no longer fitted to be entrusted with firearms. In 1997, about 400 firearm certificates were revoked, 0.3 per cent of the number on issue, the same number and proportion as in 1996.

SHOTGUN CERTIFICATES (Table B, Tables 3 and 4)

Number of certificates on issue

8. Shotgun certificates on issue were down by two per cent, from 638,000 in 1996 to 623,100 at the end of 1997. Since 1968, the greatest number of certificates on issue was 882,000 in 1988, since when there has been a reduction of more than one quarter. Details for each police force are given in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 4. At the end of 1997, certificates in force covered 1,343,900 shotguns, one per cent more than the 1,335,000 covered in 1996.

Table B Shotgun certificate: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December.

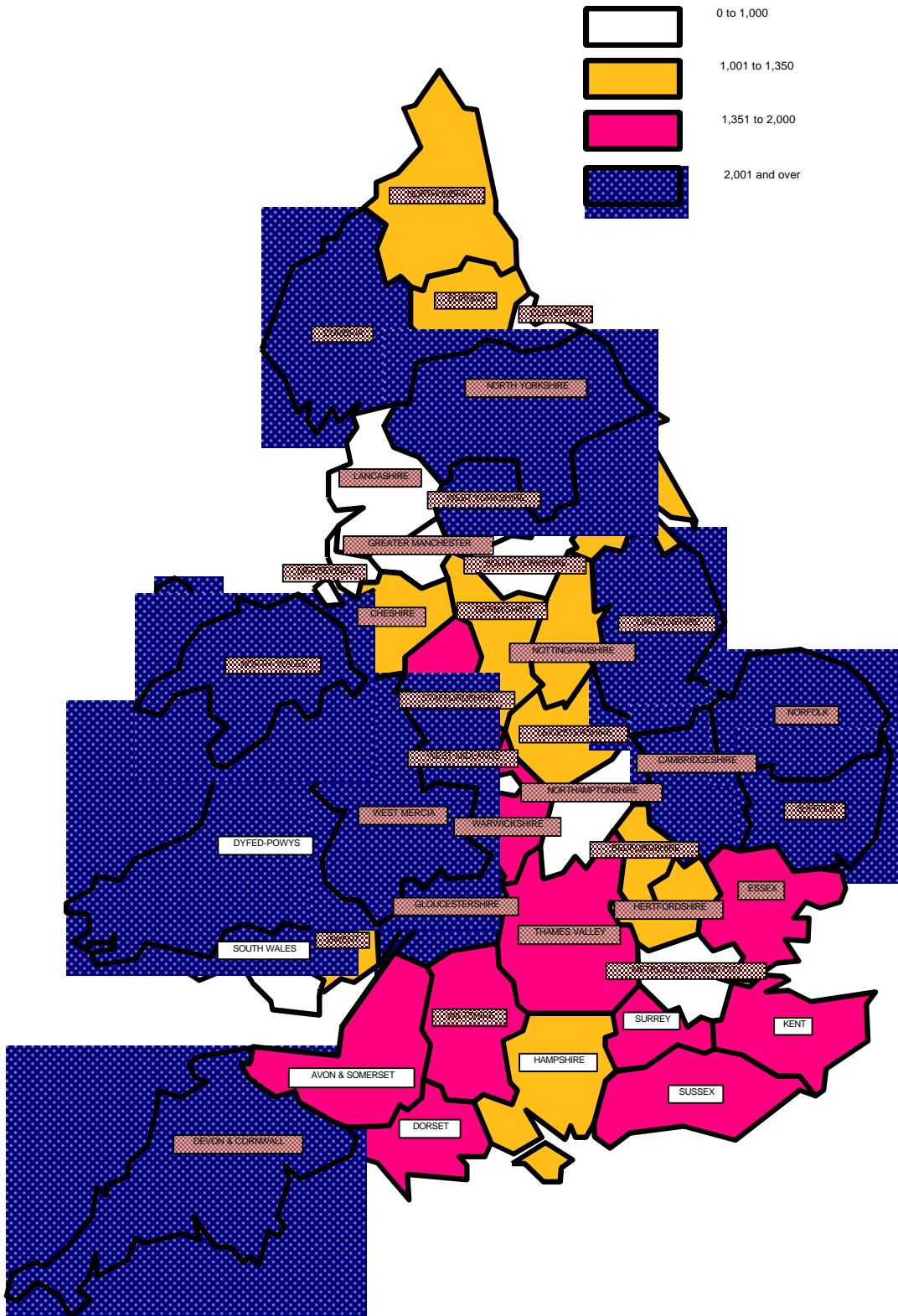
England and Wales		Numbers				Shotgun certificates on issue at 31 December	Number of shotguns covered by certificates on issue at 31 December (3)
Year	Applications (1)						
	Grant of new shotgun certificate		Renewal of shotgun certificate				
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused			
1971	..	..	..	..	715,500	..
1990	37,800	550	213,500	6501)	802,300	..	
1991	35,500	540	208,700	450	724,600 2)	..	
1992	33,000	530	197,200	240	689,200	..	
1993	31,100	450	195,800	190	681,100	..	
1994	32,200	440	201,400	140	670,000	..	
1995	24,800	360	195,900	130	653,800	1,325,800	
1996	25,800	500	193,100	230	638,000	1,335,000	
1997	20,800	380	174,500	170	623,100	1,343,900	

(1) Includes estimates made centrally for a small number of forces.

(2) Reductions of about 9,000 certificates in Essex, 6,000 certificates in Kent and 2,000 in West Mercia occurred in 1991 due to previous over-recording in these forces' figures.

(3) Full returns for all police forces available from 1995.

Figure 4 Shotgun certificates per 100,000 population by police force area at 31 December 1997



New applications, renewals and revocations

9. During 1997, there were less new shotgun certificates granted (20,800) than in 1996 (25,800) and also fewer shotgun certificates renewed in 1997 (174,500) than in 1996 (193,100). Two per cent of new applications for shotgun certificates were refused during 1997, around the same as in 1996 (1.8 per cent). The proportion of shotgun renewals that were refused in 1997 also remained about the same as in 1996 (0.1 per cent).

10. During 1997, 1,130 shotgun certificates were revoked, 0.2 per cent of the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.

FIREARMS DEALERS (Table C, Table 5)

11. The number of registered dealers has not changed much since 1990 and annual changes have been both up and down. At the end of 1997 the number of registered dealers in firearms was 2,400, three per cent lower than in 1996. Details for each police force are given in Table 5.

Table C Firearms dealers: applications for registration and renewal, granted and refused; dealers registered at 31 December.

England and Wales		Numbers				Dealers Registered at 31 December
Year	Applications for registration from dealers					
	Previously unregistered		Previously registered			
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused		
1990	177	10	-	(1)	2,480	
1991	166	14	-	(1)	2,560	
1992	184	3	1,900	11	2,380	
1993	161	13	140	1	2,440	
1994	165	7	120	1	2,520	
1995	193	10	1,758	13	2,470	
1996	149	14	240	2	2,490	
1997	102	5	180	2	2,400	

(1) The extension of the period of the certificates from 1 year to 3 years in 1989 means that no applications were received from dealers who were previously registered.

VISITORS' PERMITS (Table D, Tables 6 and 7)

12. During 1997 there were 1,170 applications granted on behalf of individuals for visitors' firearms permits (down three per cent on 1996), and 160 group applications (down six per cent) covering a further 900 persons (down 24 per cent).

In addition, visitors' shotgun permits were granted for 3,380 individuals (down 12 per cent) and 570 groups (up four per cent), covering 3,200 persons (down three per cent). Compared with 1996, the number of weapons covered by visitors' firearms permits decreased by 29 per cent, from 4,900 in 1996 to 3,500 in 1997. Weapons covered by visitors' shotgun permits increased by 8 per cent (10,900 to 11,800).

Table D Visitors' permits: applications granted for individuals and groups.

England and Wales		Numbers			
Year	On behalf of individuals	Group applications		Total persons covered	Total weapons covered
		Number granted	Persons covered		
Firearms					
1992	700	90	730	1,430	2,990
1993	800	170	1,540	2,340	4,420
1994	1,000	130	1,000	2,000	3,830
1995	960	150	1,000	1,960	3,700
1996	1,210	170	1,190	2,400	4,900
1997	1,170	160	900	2,100	3,500
Shotguns					
1992	2,340	460	2,720	5,060	9,300
1993	2,530	480	2,740	5,270	8,760
1994	2,760	510	2,940	5,700	9,560
1995	2,850	500	3,000	5,850	10,200
1996	3,820	550	3,300	7,120	10,900
1997	3,380	570	3,200	6,570	11,800

EUROPEAN FIREARMS PASSES AND ARTICLE 7 AUTHORITIES (Tables 8 and 9)

13. Tables 8 and 9 give details of the issue of European Firearms Passes (EFPs) and Article 7 Authorities (A7as) (see note 11). The police began to issue them in January 1993. By the end of 1997, 6,700 EFPs were on issue, compared with 6,600 at the end of 1996. During 1997, 49 applications for A7as were granted to certificate holders, fewer than the 64 applications granted in 1996.

Table 1 Firearm certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December

England and Wales					Numbers
Year	Applications (1)				Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December
	Grant of new firearm certificate		Renewal of firearm certificate		
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	
1968	..	..	..	..	216,300
1971	..	..	..	..	190,600
1974	..	..	..	..	185,900
1979	..	..	..	..	169,600
1980	..	..	..	..	168,000
1981	..	..	..	..	164,900
1982	..	..	..	..	162,700
1983	10,500	230	43,400 (2)	200	159,800
1984	11,400	220	43,700 (2)	180	160,300
1985	11,700	220	44,200 (2)	150	160,400
1986	12,100	260	43,600 (2)	240	160,300
1987	11,500	230	42,600 (2)	280	159,000
1988	10,100	240	41,400 (2)	410	155,400
1989	10,800	260	40,500	300	149,400
1990	11,200	230	38,700	240	142,500
1991	10,100	180	38,400	170	138,600
1992	10,600	160	38,500	120	136,800
1993	10,900	120	37,300	170	138,400
1994	11,700	120	37,900	130	140,200
1995	10,900	110	38,500	110	141,700
1996	10,200	160	38,100	120	141,900
1997	6,800	120	32,800	80	133,600

(1) Information is provided in Table 2 on applications for variation of a firearm certificate.

(2) Includes estimates made centrally for a small number of forces.

Table 2**Firearm certificates: applications for grant, renewal and variation, granted and refused; revocations; certificates on issue at 31 December; firearms covered by certificates in force and average number of firearms per certificate, by police force area**

England and Wales 1997

Numbers

Police force area	Applications						Revo- cations	Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December	Number of firearms covered by certificates in force at 31 December	Average number of firearms per certificate
	Grant of new certificate		Renewal of certificate		Variation of certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused				
Avon and Somerset	210	2	1,096	-	131	-	14	5,062	12,303	2.4
Bedfordshire	72	2	341	-	26	2	2	1,336	2,992	2.2
Cambridgeshire	136	4	675	-	52	7	3	2,670	5,090	1.9
Cheshire	104	4	709	-	59 (1)	-	8	2,677	6,578	2.5
Cleveland	35	-	186	-	89	-	14	815	1,740	2.1
Cumbria	126	-	924	-	53	-	4	3,247	6,071	1.9
Derbyshire	178	3	611	1	54	-	5	2,417	5,378	2.2
Devon and Cornwall	537	4	2,011	3	223	1	16	8,632	16,750	1.9
Dorset	133	1	902	2	21	2	3	2,794	5,438	1.9
Durham	95	1	558	1	42	-	3	2,163	3,973	1.8
Essex	239	2	1,076	5	75	2	9	3,861	8,770	2.3
Gloucestershire	148	1	593	1	144	2	11	2,379	5,885	2.5
Greater Manchester	72	4	497	-	43	1	16	2,127	5,290	2.5
Hampshire	286	10	1,387	7	150 (1)	-	19	5,074	10,087	2.0
Hertfordshire	110	1	501	-	26	-	-	1,866	4,069	2.2
Humber	135	4	801	-	34	5	4	2,818	4,956	1.8
Kent	178	4	979	4	45	-	10	3,856	9,598	2.5
Lancashire	134	3	776	4	55	-	7	2,777	6,397	2.3
Leicestershire	75	-	452	5	23	-	12	1,796	4,113	2.3
Lincolnshire	226	-	1,045	-	36	-	3	3,552	8,004	2.3
London, City of	-	-	4	-	14	-	-	33	216	6.5
Merseyside	31	-	367	-	22	-	4	1,465	3,528	2.4
Metropolitan Police	343	7	1,715	4	188	-	29	7,712	18,018	2.3
Norfolk	171	5	962	7	80 (1)	9	12	3,556	8,743	2.5
Northamptonshire	90	-	627	-	61	-	4	2,205	5,302	2.4
Northumbria	208	3	943	-	83	-	7	3,531	9,534	2.7
North Yorkshire	209	5	1,312	6	75	1	19	5,615	15,098	2.7
Nottinghamshire	96	19	351	1	47 (1)	-	5	1,789	7,008	3.9
South Yorkshire	55	4	368	-	54	-	10	1,627	3,487	2.1
Staffordshire	190	4	660	6	56	-	8	2,538	5,875	2.3
Suffolk	145	2	774	-	58	7	8	3,627	6,536	1.8
Surrey	116	-	640	-	44	-	6	2,278	6,415	2.8
Sussex	327	-	1,335	-	78	-	10	5,770	15,658	2.7
Thames Valley	467	3	1,669	1	140 (1)	6	24	6,429	15,127	2.4
Warwickshire	105	1	454	-	34	4	3	1,800	4,113	2.3
West Mercia	166	1	769	5	399 (1)	10	14	5,414	12,760	2.4
West Midlands	85	1	342	2	700 (1)	-	13	1,942	2,714	1.4
West Yorkshire	147	5	708	10	174	9	12	3,004	7,320	2.4
Wiltshire	190	2	693	-	297	2	6	2,724	6,361	2.3
Dyfed-Powys	195	2	679	1	40	-	21	3,345	6,731	2.0
Gwent	73	1	287	2	29	-	7	940	2,284	2.4
North Wales	110	4	591	3	252	-	6	2,339	4,162	1.8
South Wales	70	1	446	1	69	-	2	1,994	4,492	2.3
All forces	6,818	120	32,816	82	4,375	70	393	133,596	304,964	2.3

(1) Estimate.

Table 3 Shot gun certificates: applications for grant and renewal, granted and refused; certificates on issue at 31 December

England and Wales					Numbers
Year	Applications (1)				Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December
	Grant of new shot gun certificate		Renewal of shot gun certificate		
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	
1971	..	..	..	..	715,500
1974	..	..	..	..	767,000
1979	..	..	..	..	782,100
1980	..	..	..	..	781,900
1981	..	..	..	..	785,200
1982	..	..	..	..	780,600
1983	46,600	500	233,700 (1)	170	783,400
1984	55,600	580	233,000 (1)	150	798,400
1985	60,500	690	232,900 (1)	170	819,300 (2)
1986	64,100	810	239,900 (1)	160	841,000
1987	65,000	960	246,300 (1)	230	861,300
1988	56,800	980	245,000 (1)	340	882,000 (2)
1989	47,500	970	226,200	330	865,100
1990	37,800	550	213,500	650 (1)	802,300
1991	35,500	540	208,700	450	724,600 (3)
1992	33,000	530	197,200	240	689,200
1993	31,100	450	195,800	190	681,100
1994	32,200	440	201,400	140	670,000
1995	24,800	360	195,900	130	653,800
1996	25,800	500	193,100	230	638,000
1997	20,800	380	174,500	170	623,100

(1) Includes estimates made centrally for a small number of forces.

(2) The records of shot gun certificates were computerised for the Metropolitan Police District in 1985 and for Thames Valley in 1988 bringing to light previous under-recording of these figures by up to 7,000 in each force.

(3) Reductions of about 9,000 certificates in Essex, 6,000 certificates in Kent and 2,000 in West Mercia have occurred in 1991 due to previous over-recording in these forces' figures.

Table 4

Shot gun certificates: applications for grant, renewal and variation, granted and refused; revocations; certificates on issue at 31 December; shot guns covered by certificates in force and average number of shot guns per certificate, by police force area

England and Wales 1997							Numbers	
Police force area	Applications				Revocations	Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December	Number of shot guns covered by certificates in force at 31 December	Average number of shot guns per certificate
	Grant of new certificate		Renewal of certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused				
Avon and Somerset	496	9	5,834	-	57	21,722	46,860	2.2
Bedfordshire	205	3	1,951	-	12	6,850	14,104	2.1
Cambridgeshire	327	6	4,433	4	18	14,701	31,645	2.2
Cheshire	352	13	4,077	7	24	13,114	28,759	2.2
Cleveland	83	1	761	-	-	2,593	5,194	2.0
Cumbria	249	5	3,462	-	9	10,746	21,580	2.0
Derbyshire	569	12	3,591	3	33	12,341	28,466	2.3
Devon and Cornwall	684	21	9,857	-	30	36,628	83,275	2.3
Dorset	275	3	4,050	-	6	12,472	24,590	2.0
Durham	152	6	1,745	-	7	6,632	13,443	2.0
Essex	802	11	6,016	12	49	20,619	45,081	2.2
Gloucestershire	525	4	3,683	1	22	11,826	26,862	2.3
Greater Manchester	254	13	2,438	5	32	9,066	21,831	2.4
Hampshire	1,033	11	6,276	15	59	21,535	47,034	2.2
Hertfordshire	500	7	2,389	-	7	9,698	21,797	2.2
Humberside	275	15	3,323	1	17	10,330	24,326	2.4
Kent	591	23	6,340	7	31	21,588	45,719	2.1
Lancashire	389	35	4,122	15	37	12,574	27,602	2.2
Leicestershire	238	-	3,466	12	41	11,288	25,061	2.2
Lincolnshire	591	2	4,865	1	6	16,325	38,188	2.3
London, City of	3	-	4	-	-	33	58	1.8
Merseyside	114	-	1,487	-	13	4,335	8,337	1.9
Metropolitan Police	1,685	18	7,943	8	41	33,295	62,249	1.9
Norfolk	1,026	20	6,664	4	44	21,775	56,243	2.6
Northamptonshire	264	-	2,777	1	9	9,554	21,039	2.2
Northumbria	277	11	2,609	7	24	9,450	19,749	2.1
North Yorkshire	482	5	4,815	12	24	19,071	38,204	2.0
Nottinghamshire	369	14	2,797	4	13	12,716	23,641	1.9
South Yorkshire	273	6	2,386	-	20	8,324	16,693	2.0
Staffordshire	490	8	4,801	8	25	14,867	31,526	2.1
Suffolk	768	5	4,941	-	24	17,979	40,170	2.2
Surrey	411	3	3,354	-	21	11,325	24,242	2.1
Sussex	828	-	5,669	-	26	22,356	47,166	2.1
Thames Valley	1,645	15	8,303	2	74	29,975	71,785	2.4
Warwickshire	233	4	3,151	1	13	9,606	20,221	2.1
West Mercia	699	6	8,006	5	32	30,063	62,841	2.1
West Midlands	269	7	2,846	10	39	10,603	20,690	2.0
West Yorkshire	474	24	3,102	-	30	11,559	25,687	2.2
Wiltshire	364	2	3,153	4	13	11,808	31,700	2.7
Dyfed-Powys	731	14	4,031	11	78	20,349	36,586	1.8
Gwent	275	8	2,266	10	21	7,291	14,877	2.0
North Wales	363	6	3,983	-	42	13,741	28,321	2.1
South Wales	158	6	2,741	-	10	10,356	20,461	2.0
Total	20,791	382	174,508	170	1,133	623,079	1,343,903	2.2

Table 5 Firearms dealers: applications for registration granted and refused; removals from register; dealers registered at 31 December by police force area

England and Wales 1997

Numbers

Police force area	New applications for registration from dealers		Applications for new certificates from registered dealers		Dealers removed from register	Dealers registered at 31 December
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused		
Avon and Somerset	4	-	8	-	3	81
Bedfordshire	-	-	1	1	2	14
Cambridgeshire	-	-	2	-	2	38
Cheshire	-	-	8	-	2	29
Cleveland	1	-	-	-	-	10
Cumbria	2	-	-	-	2	34
Derbyshire	3	-	4	-	7	41
Devon and Cornwall	8	-	4	-	2	106
Dorset	1	-	10	-	1	48
Durham	1	-	-	-	1	14
Essex	2	-	10	1	8	116
Gloucestershire	2	-	1	-	-	41
Greater Manchester	3	-	2	-	3	39
Hampshire	3	-	3	-	3	60
Hertfordshire	6	1	15	-	3	59
Humberside	2	-	2	-	3	40
Kent	3	-	9	-	4	89
Lancashire	3	-	4	-	4	45
Leicestershire	2	-	2	-	2	31
Lincolnshire	1	-	6	-	-	54
London, City of	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	1	21
Metropolitan Police	11	2	9	-	14	264
Norfolk	2	1	2	-	3	36
Northamptonshire	1	-	-	-	-	25
Northumbria	3	-	3	-	1	42
North Yorkshire	-	-	-	-	2	42
Nottinghamshire	2	-	3	-	1	41
South Yorkshire	-	-	2	-	1	27
Staffordshire	3	-	-	-	2	53
Suffolk	1	-	8	-	1	57
Surrey	2	-	10	-	3	90
Sussex	7	-	13	-	4	110
Thames Valley	3	-	6	-	4	136
Warwickshire	2	-	2	-	1	42
West Mercia	3	-	6	-	7	104
West Midlands	6	-	6	-	-	83
West Yorkshire	3	-	5	-	6	61
Wiltshire	2	-	8	-	7	57
Dyfed-Powys	2	-	3	-	5	35
Gwent	-	-	-	-	1	13
North Wales	1	1	3	-	1	36
South Wales	1	-	-	-	-	38
Total	102	5	180	2	117	2,402

Table 6

Visitors' firearm permits: applications for groups and individuals, persons and weapons covered by police force area

England and Wales 1997										Numbers
Police force area	New applications					Weapons covered by new applications	Variation applications			
	On behalf of individuals		Group applications				Granted	Refused		
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Persons covered by group applications					
Avon and Somerset	62	-	32	-	113	188	1	-		
Bedfordshire	1	-	4	-	25	26	-	-		
Cambridgeshire	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-		
Cheshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Cleveland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Cumbria	11	-	-	-	-	27	-	-		
Derbyshire	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
Devon and Cornwall	65	-	-	-	-	77	-	-		
Dorset	162	-	2	-	21	236	2	-		
Durham	7	-	-	-	-	7	1	-		
Essex	1	-	6	-	40	50	-	-		
Gloucestershire	17	-	2	-	5	20	-	-		
Greater Manchester	1	-	2	-	31	33	-	-		
Hampshire	145	-	2	-	32	233	-	-		
Hertfordshire	41	-	1	-	5	52	-	-		
Humberside	9	-	-	-	-	13	-	-		
Kent	14	-	9	-	60	86	-	-		
Lancashire	5	-	-	-	-	7	-	-		
Leicestershire	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-		
Lincolnshire	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-		
London, City of	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Merseyside	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-		
Metropolitan Police	102 (1)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norfolk	4	-	1	-	2	11	-	-		
Northamptonshire	14	-	8	-	26	47	-	-		
Northumbria	14	-	23	-	73	105	3	-		
North Yorkshire	6	-	5	-	25	35	-	-		
Nottinghamshire	3	-	2	-	19	32	-	-		
South Yorkshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Staffordshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Suffolk	31	-	13	-	67	112	1	-		
Surrey	144	-	18	-	253	1,104	44	-		
Sussex	86	-	3	-	52	189	112	-		
Thames Valley	100	-	-	-	-	124	3	-		
Warwickshire	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-		
West Mercia	7	-	6	-	21	43	-	-		
West Midlands	30	1	-	-	-	162	1	-		
West Yorkshire	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-		
Wiltshire	74	-	17	-	53	182	-	-		
Dyfed-Powys	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Gwent	5	-	1	-	5	12	-	-		
North Wales	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
South Wales	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-		
Total	1,174	1	157	-	928	3,500 (2)	170 (2)	-		

(1) Includes a few covering group applications.

(2) Includes an estimate made centrally for one force.

Table 7

Visitors' shot gun permits: applications for groups and individuals, persons and weapons covered by police force area

England and Wales 1997

Numbers

Police force area	New applications					Weapons covered by new applications	Variation applications	
	On behalf of individuals		Group applications				Granted	Refused
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Persons covered by group applications			
Avon and Somerset	73	-	15	-	119	317	-	-
Bedfordshire	15	-	21	-	103	162	-	-
Cambridgeshire	55	-	-	-	-	83	-	-
Cheshire	9	-	-	-	-	22	1	-
Cleveland	1	-	3	-	10	17	-	-
Cumbria	18	-	10	-	58	141	-	-
Derbyshire	12	-	1	-	3	22	-	-
Devon and Cornwall	68	-	18	-	123	387	-	-
Dorset	37	-	11	-	61	178	-	-
Durham	119	-	-	-	-	256	4	-
Essex	32	-	16	-	125	138	-	-
Gloucestershire	76	-	50	-	156	374	-	-
Greater Manchester	7	-	-	-	-	7	1	-
Hampshire	255	-	29	-	311	926	13	-
Hertfordshire	35	-	2	-	18	77	-	-
Humberside	6	-	8	-	41	71	-	-
Kent	71	-	49	-	317	659	36	-
Lancashire	25	-	-	-	-	71	-	-
Leicestershire	22	-	-	-	-	60	-	-
Lincolnshire	96	-	5	-	33	222	-	-
London, City of	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merseyside	5	-	-	-	-	12	-	-
Metropolitan Police	567 (1)	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norfolk	49	2	10	-	105	152	2	-
Northamptonshire	143	-	15	-	69	390	-	-
Northumbria	44	-	17	-	85	312	-	-
North Yorkshire	35	-	60	-	340	757	4	-
Nottinghamshire	8	-	2	-	27	42	-	-
South Yorkshire	8	-	9	-	35	40	-	-
Staffordshire	18	-	3	-	12	54	-	-
Suffolk	48	-	33	-	200	359	5	-
Surrey	77	-	5	-	21	183	-	-
Sussex	167	-	13	-	92	389	9	-
Thames Valley	879	-	2	-	12	1,537	13	-
Warwickshire	15	-	2	-	15	47	-	-
West Mercia	60	-	50	-	202	403	-	-
West Midlands	20	-	2	-	13	108	1	-
West Yorkshire	8	-	-	-	-	17	-	-
Wiltshire	130	-	75	-	292	725	6	-
Dyfed-Powys	14	-	8	-	45	83	-	-
Gwent	26	-	2	-	10	78	2	-
North Wales	21	-	26	-	139	222	-	-
South Wales	5	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
Total	3,379	4	572	-	3,192	11,800 (2)	110 (2)	-

(1) Includes a few covering group applications.

(2) Includes an estimate made centrally for one force.

Table 8**European firearm passes: applications for grant, renewal and variation; cancellations; passes on issue at 31 December by police force area**

England and Wales 1997

Numbers

Police force area	Applications			Cancellations	Passes on issue at 31 December
	Grant of new certificate	Renewal of certificate	Variation of certificate		
Avon and Somerset	43	19	3	-	136
Bedfordshire	18	2	4	22	53
Cambridgeshire	51	-	-	-	51
Cheshire	23	5	4	-	167
Cleveland	2	1	-	-	13
Cumbria	5	3	1	5	28
Derbyshire	28	11	11	1	139
Devon and Cornwall	31	36	-	25	189
Dorset	49	8	2	-	97
Durham	4	4	-	1	27
Essex	60	33	32	17	142
Gloucestershire	48	31	-	-	174
Greater Manchester	28	11	4	2	64
Hampshire	103	45	37	10	305
Hertfordshire	30	42	31	11	150
Humberside	10	12	-	7	47
Kent	120	67	17	23	528
Lancashire	30	25	12	12	125
Leicestershire	20	7	-	-	90
Lincolnshire	23	24	-	3	111
London, City of	-	-	-	-	-
Merseyside	5	6	2	-	29
Metropolitan Police	216 (1)	..	..	..	..
Norfolk	28	7	4	6	98
Northamptonshire	6	28	1	1	162
Northumbria	24	12	7	11	72
North Yorkshire	28	2	2	3	78
Nottinghamshire	21	18	-	2	130
South Yorkshire	35	10	-	-	71
Staffordshire	21	13	-	-	112
Suffolk	38	14	2	2	108
Surrey	71	24	13	5	402
Sussex	104	2	271	51	347
Thames Valley	135	126	8	30	672
Warwickshire	25	24	27	8	112
West Mercia	46	50	14	54	246
West Midlands	42	52	11	21	211
West Yorkshire	19	-	6	1	128
Wiltshire	42	21	1	-	128
Dyfed-Powys	17	-	-	-	17
Gwent	16	2	-	12	34
North Wales	32	-	-	-	130
South Wales	42	4	10	-	218
Total	1,739	801	600 (2)	400 (2)	6,700 (2)

(1) Includes renewals.

(2) Includes an estimate made centrally for one force.

Table 9

Article 7 authorities: applications for grant, granted and refused; variations; cancellations by police force area

England and Wales 1997										Numbers
Police force area	Applications								Variations	Cancellations
	By certificate holders		By non-certificate holders		For possession outside UK		For ammunition only			
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused		
Avon and Somerset	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bedfordshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cambridgeshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cheshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cleveland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cumbria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derbyshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
Devon and Cornwall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dorset	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Durham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Essex	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gloucestershire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greater Manchester	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Hampshire	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Hertfordshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Humberside	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kent	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Lancashire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leicestershire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincolnshire	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
London, City of	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merseyside	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Metropolitan Police	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norfolk	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Northamptonshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northumbria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Yorkshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nottinghamshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Yorkshire	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staffordshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suffolk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Surrey	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Sussex	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thames Valley	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Warwickshire	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
West Mercia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Midlands	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
West Yorkshire	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wiltshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dyfed-Powys	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gwent	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Wales	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Wales	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	49	-	-	-	14	-	1	-	6	9

NOTES

Availability of statistics

1. The previous bulletin in this series, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 17/97, gave figures up to 1996. Statistics on **offenders found guilty or cautioned under the Firearms Acts** are published in 'Criminal statistics, England and Wales' Table 3.13 and in 'Criminal Statistics, England and Wales', Supplementary Volumes 1 and 2. Further offences are included within the offence groups 'wounding' and 'other wounding' but these cannot be identified in the statistics. Statistics on **notifiable offences in which firearms were reported to have been used or misappropriated** are published in Chapter 3 of 'Criminal statistics' and by police force area in Supplementary Volume 3.

Accuracy of the statistics

2. The statistics in this bulletin are compiled by each police force and included in an annual aggregate return to the Home Office. They are subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

Coverage of the statistics

3. The term 'variation' was more clearly defined in the 1991 statistics to cover only those changes which increase the number of firearms authorised by the certificate, i.e. where a fee for variation would be charged. This is responsible for much of the apparent decrease in variations since 1990.

Regulations on the issue of firearm and shotgun certificates

4. All persons acquiring or in possession of a firearm or shotgun must have a certificate issued by the Chief Police Officer for the police force area in which the person lives, unless they were otherwise exempt. Persons sentenced to any form of custody for a period of three years or more are prohibited from possessing firearms for life. Those sentenced to three months or more but less than three years are subject to a five year prohibition from the date of their release.
5. For weapons covered by section 1 of the 1968 Firearms Act (as amended) which include rifles, large magazine smooth bore guns and specially dangerous air weapons, the Chief Police Officer must be satisfied that an applicant has good reason for wanting a weapon, is fit to be entrusted with it, and that the public safety or the peace will not be endangered. The certificate lists the number, type and serial number of each weapon held and any conditions attaching (a standard condition is that weapons and ammunition are held in a secure place when not in use).
6. Shotgun certificates, covered by section 2 of the 1968 Act and section 2 of the 1988 Act, permit the holder to possess any number of shotguns, which can include pump-action and self-loading weapons which have a magazine which is incapable of holding more than two cartridges but excluding large magazine smooth bore guns. Apart from the general prohibitions applying to all types of firearm, applications may not be granted or renewed if a Chief Police Officer has reason to

believe that the applicant is prohibited by the Firearms Acts from possessing a shotgun or if he is satisfied that the applicant does not have a good reason for possessing, purchasing or acquiring one. Nor may applications be granted or renewed unless the Chief Police Officer is satisfied that the applicant can be permitted to possess a shotgun without danger to the public safety or to the peace (section 3 of the 1988 Act). The certificate specifies the description of the shotguns including, if known, the identification numbers of the guns.

7. Certain types of weapons (e.g. machine guns) are prohibited under section 5 of the Act as amended by section 1 of the 1988 Act; their possession can only be granted by the Secretary of State after careful enquiries by the police.

8. The Firearms (Period of Certificate) Order 1994 came into effect on 1 January 1995. The Order extends the life of all firearm and shotgun certificates granted or renewed after that date to five years. Some renewals occur because the person has moved residence to a different police force area. To alter the number and type of weapons held on a firearm certificate, an application for a variation must be made to the Chief Police Officer. The expiry date of a shotgun certificate can be aligned with the holder's firearm certificate (section 11 of the 1988 Act). In 1989, forces began recording the number of weapons for both firearm and shotgun certificates on their computer systems.

9. Section 13 of the 1988 Act increased the registration period for dealers from 1 to 3 years. The grounds for refusal of new applications for registration were extended and a register of transactions must be retained for at least five years.

10. The conditions for exemptions from holding a firearm certificate were revised in sections 15 to 19 of the 1988 Act. Visitors' permits were introduced which allow the holder to possess a firearm or shotgun without holding a certificate. Permits are in force for a period not exceeding twelve months. Group applications may be made for up to twenty persons (section 17 of the 1988 Act).

11. Each EC state was required to amend its firearms legislation to meet the requirements of the 1991 EC Weapons Directive. In the UK these changes were made by means of the Firearms Acts (Amendment) Regulations 1992. The Regulations made provision for the police to issue two new documents to British residents: the European Firearms Pass (EFP) and the Article 7 Authority (A7a).

(a) The EFP is broadly speaking a passport for firearms. EC residents travelling to shoot in another EC state will need an EFP issued by their State of residence. There is only one criterion for the issue of an EFP to a British resident. The applicant must possess a valid firearm or shotgun certificate. The EFP does not replace the certificate.

(b) Article 7 of the Weapons Directive requires any shooter in the EC wanting to purchase firearms of certain types outside his or her State of residence to have the prior authority of their own State. The issue of these authorities is at the discretion of the Chief Police Officer. If the shooter does not hold an appropriate firearm certificate, the firearm cannot be brought back to the UK, even if an A7a has been granted.

12. Following the shooting incident in Dunblane, Scotland, in March 1996, changes to the existing firearms legislation were introduced to increase public safety. The resulting Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 banned all handguns over .22 calibre with effect from 1 October 1997. A hand-in exercise took place between 1 July and 30 September 1997 which resulted in 110,382 of these larger calibre handguns being surrendered in England and Wales, while 24,620 smaller calibre handguns were handed in voluntarily in anticipation of further legislation. The remaining large calibre handguns held on certificate include muzzle-loading guns, signalling apparatus, firearms used for the humane killing of animals, war trophies etc. (All handguns were subsequently prohibited from 1 February 1998).

13. Symbols used in the tables: - nil .. not available

Enquiries and next bulletin issue

14. This bulletin has been prepared by the Data Collection Unit and the Crime and Criminal Justice Unit of the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office. It is based on the data provided by the firearms officers in the 43 police forces in England and Wales. If you have any enquiries about figures in this bulletin or wish to request further analysis of the data (for which there may be a charge) please contact Graham Wilkins. The address is as follows:

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15. Copies of this bulletin are available from:

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16. Press enquiries should be made to:

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17. The next statistical bulletin in this series is planned for issue during the summer of 1999.

**The Home Office
Research, Development and Statistics Directorate**

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The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate is an integral part of the Home Office, serving Ministers and the Department, its services, Parliament and the public through research, development and statistics. Information and knowledge from these sources informs policy development and the management of programmes; their dissemination improves wider public understanding of matters of Home Office concern.

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