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ANNEX

REVIEW OF FIREARMS LEGISLATION: PRINCIPLE REFORM PROPOSALS

1. A tightening-up of the legal definition of "firearm" and the permitting of deactivated firearms, subject to specified controls;
2. Removing the grant of full firearms certificates (FAC) from non-UK residents, and replacing these with a system of Visitors' certificates renewable annually;
3. Rescheduling the legal criteria for the grant of a firearms certificate, to give primacy to public safety considerations;
4. Extending the grounds of "intemperate habits" for refusing a certificate, to include drugs and solvent abuse;
5. Extending the life of firearms certificates from 3 to 5 years;
6. Replacing the current system of certificate renewals, with the more rigorous re-grant system;
7. Permitting the legal borrowing of shotguns and airguns in specified circumstances;
8. Expressly empowering the Chief Constable to take account of criminal convictions overseas;
9. Introducing minimum standards of competency in firearms handling, validated by test, as a condition for the grant of firearms certificates;

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10. Permitting persons aged between 14 and 18 years to use a shotgun or air gun with ammunition for sporting purposes and vermin control albeit on specified lands and subject to adult supervision;
11. Introducing minimum statutory conditions for firearms clubs and extending their period of authorisation from 3 to 6 years;
12. Extending the grounds on which firearms dealers' authorisation can be refused by the Secretary of State;
13. Extending the RUC's powers of search with warrant, to include public safety ground;
14. Extending the RUC's power to ballistically test firearms, to include all categories of guns;
15. Extending the Chief Constable's powers of delegation under the legislation, to include civilians specialising in firearms matters;
16. Redefining the legal criteria for "antique" firearms;
17. In Firearms appeals to the Secretary of State, making such decisions binding on the Chief Constable;
18. Requiring persons legally prohibited from possessing a firearm, to serve a minimum period before seeking removal of their prohibition;

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19. The Northern Ireland Office to issue and publish a Memorandum on Firearms Law and Policy for the guidance of the Chief Constable; and
20. The Secretary of State to establish a non-statutory Firearms Consultative Forum.

Police Division

January 1998

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