**BMA ADVICE**

**43. Is a fee chargeable for the completion of applications for firearms?**

On 18th July 2019, Home Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BMA and the National Police Chiefs Council recognising that, whilst the legal responsibility for monitoring firearms holders rests with the police, doctors should use reasonable endeavours to support the process.

The completion of applications for firearms is not covered under doctors’ NHS terms and conditions of services. Doctors that choose to do this work may, therefore, charge a reasonable fee based on the time spent completing the form.

When a doctor is presented with a firearms application, the following principles should be considered:

* There is nothing to prevent doctors from countersigning firearms applications when they are simply acting as a person of good standing, i.e. where the applicant is not, and never has been, their patient.
* Where the applicant is a patient, doctors are advised not to support firearm applications unless they believe that they have sufficient knowledge about an individual to justify a judgement that the individual could safely possess and control such a firearm. Such occasions will probably be rare.
* Doctors must make it clear that they are in no position to judge the ’future dangerousness’ of any applicant.
* If doctors have reason to believe that an individual has access to firearms and is currently a danger to him or herself or to society they should encourage the individual to return the licence and surrender the firearms. Doctors should, however, also be prepared to breach confidence and inform the appropriate authorities if necessary. They need to bear in mind that they may need to justify the decision if confidentiality is breached without the individual’s permission.