

4 July 2019

Application reference: 152890

Dear Mr Taylor,

**Aintree Pistol Club**

Following Merseyside Police's visit to the club on 20 June the Secretary of State has decided to withdraw his approval for Aintree Pistol Club with **immediate** effect under the provision in section 15(5)(b) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988. This allows the Secretary of State to withdraw approval to a shooting club at any time. This is because of several serious concerns about the way the club is managed which fall under the following categories:

1. record keeping
2. administration of new members
3. firearms' security

Given these serious concerns, the Secretary of State considered it inappropriate to seek your representations before withdrawing approval.

Further information about each of these points is below:

Record Keeping

The police inspected the members' signing in book which, whilst filled in correctly, contained unclear signatures. I understand that the police discussed a suitable signing-in sheet format with you. There is no system to monitor ammunition at the club and you were aware that people could remove ammunition from the club's premises.

Administration of new members

The police checked the list of members which you provided and noted over 100 members who did not appear on the police's records. The police are also concerned that you were not sure how to identify if club members were of good character. This is a requirement of being a member of a Home Office approved shooting club as per point D of page 3 of the Home Office Shooting Club Criteria document which was sent to you on 28 January with the renewed approval letter.



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Physical security of firearms

The police checked the club's firearms against your certificate. They found your wife's long-barrelled pistol stored in the club cabinet despite you being aware that it should not have been kept there. This cabinet is left open during the club's opening hours and all members could access it.

They also found six shotguns which were part of your dealership which were not stored correctly because they were left in a cabinet which was accessible to club members and guests which is a breach of Home Office approval as per point M on page 4 of the criteria document. The police found four shotguns which did not appear on the list of guns in NFLMS and a rifle in a gun slip containing ammunition which you later confirmed belonged to the club but was used exclusively by a member of the club in gratitude for his work. However, this particular member has been refused a shotgun and firearm certificate on a number of occasions and the police have advised that his sons have links to organised crime in the Merseyside area.

Conclusion

The outcome of these breaches demonstrates that you have shown a disregard for your responsibilities as a registered firearms dealer and the club secretary by storing guns held under your registered firearms dealership (RFD) in the insecure gun cabinet which could be accessed by members or guests during the club's opening hours. This is a direct contravention of your RFD which states that 'reasonable measure shall be taken to maintain the safekeeping of all firearms and ammunition dealt with or kept in the course of the registered firearms dealers business.' The police were also concerned about a risk you have shown to public safety following the poor management of your RFD, Aintree Pistol Club and disregard for the legislation in relation to security standards, record keeping and ensuring that only people of good character attend the club.

I recognise that this decision will be a disappointment for you but I should point out that you are entitled to submit an application for Home Office shooting club approval for the Aintree Pistol Club once you have satisfactorily addressed all the concerns raised above.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Firearms Licensing Department of Merseyside Police for their records.

Yours sincerely,



David Hughes  
Head of Firearms and Import/Export Drugs Licensing