

Age restrictions for firearm and shotgun certificates

Before starting your firearm or shotgun certificate application, double check below whether you, or the person on whose behalf you're enquiring, is legally entitled to buy, own or use a firearm. Find out more about the UK Firearms Licensing Law.

Please note

Some young shotgun and firearm certificate holders have a notice on their certificates stating that they cannot purchase shotguns until they reach 17 years of age. This has now been increased to 18 years of age. Anyone who holds this type of certificate should have received a letter explaining the change in the law and how it affects them.

Where 'Exceptions' are mentioned in the table, please refer to the list immediately below.

Activity	Under 18	Under 15	Under 14
Buy or hire any firearm or ammunition (including shotguns and air weapons)	X	X	X
Possess a Section 1 firearm and ammunition	✓	✓	X Exceptions: 1, 2, 3
Receive a Section 1 firearm and ammunition as a gift	✓	✓	X
Possess an assembled shotgun and ammunition	✓	X Exceptions: 1, 4, 5	X Exceptions: 1, 4, 5
Receive a shotgun as a gift	✓		
Possess an air weapon	X Exceptions 1,2,3,4,6	X Exceptions 1,2,3,4,6	X Exceptions 2,3,4,6
Receive an air weapon as a gift	X	X	X
Possess an air weapon in a public place	X Exceptions 1,2,3,4	X Exceptions 1,2,3,4	X Exceptions 1,2,3,4

Exceptions

If carrying on behalf of the certificate holder (who is aged 18 years or over) and for the certificate holders' sporting purposes only

1. As part of an approved club or cadet corps
2. On a Miniature Rifle Range
3. Under the supervision of someone over 21 years old
4. When the shotgun is in a securely fastened gun cover so that it cannot be fired
5. Unless on private property with the permission of the land owner. It is an offence for someone under this exception to fire any missile beyond the boundary of the premises unless with permission of the adjacent landowner