



Dear GTA Member

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 has now come into force, introducing a significant and welcome change to the law concerning sound moderators. However, the GTA has intentionally delayed its initial announcement, as further guidance from the Home Office had been promised. At the time of writing, this guidance has yet to be issued.

Previously, a sound moderator capable of being fitted to a firearm required a firearm certificate which had to be specifically authorised. The new legislation removes sound moderators and flash hiders from the legal definition of a firearm, thereby removing an unnecessary administrative burden on both certificate holders and police firearms licensing departments, while maintaining the existing controls over the possession of firearms themselves.

For existing certificate holders, there is nothing that needs to be done. If your firearm certificate already includes authority for one or more sound moderators, those entries will remain until your next renewal. At renewal, police forces will cease recording moderators as separate authorities, and the existing entries will naturally fall away without any action being required on your part. It will also benefit RFDs by removing the need to keep a record of transactions.

To ensure Section 1 moderators are held lawfully only by those with a legitimate purpose and who have been subject to full suitability checks to possess a firearm. Subsection 44(2) adds a new section 2A to the Firearms Act 1968 creates a summary only offence of possessing a relevant accessory without having a valid firearm certificate. As with primers and powders, RFDs therefore must ensure the buyer has a valid FAC prior to the sale taking place.

Moderators for air weapons and shotguns can already be held without the need for a certificate and that will continue to be the case.

These measures extend and apply to England and Wales and Scotland.

The GTA, working with the British Shooting Sports Council, has consistently argued

that sound moderators are vital safety devices and should not be subject to legislative control, making this a small but nonetheless positive step forward.

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