

Applicants for an SIA licence who have ‘conflict related convictions’

This guidance is for individuals who apply for a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence and have conviction(s) relating to the period of conflict in Northern Ireland from its commencement in 1969 to the introduction of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

We have published our approach for considering conflict-related convictions that pre-date the Good Friday Agreement (April 1998). This is available on our website:

- www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/pages/ni-conflict-convictions.aspx

We process around 9,000 applications per month and so we rely upon a set process for dealing with such large volumes of applications. Part of our application process is to seek a criminality disclosure for the applicant from the relevant body, and in the case of applications from Northern Ireland residents this is a standard disclosure from Access Northern Ireland.

Once we receive the standard disclosure we will consider the information shown within the disclosure. We may then (if appropriate) write to applicants in the form of a ‘minded to refuse’ letter seeking further information about the criminal offences shown within the standard disclosure.

We have no way of knowing if the offences shown on the standard disclosure are conflict related. If you receive a ‘minded to refuse’ letter from us seeking further information regarding the offences shown on the standard disclosure, **and**, you believe that those offences were conflict related, you need to reply to our letter to advise us of this within the 21 day period allowed.

Once you have informed us that the offence(s) on record are conflict related we will send you a further letter asking for independent, verifiable evidence. This may be any one of the following:

- A letter from the solicitor who acted on your behalf (or that solicitor’s firm) stating that from their records the conviction(s) arises directly from the most recent period of conflict in Northern Ireland.
- A copy of the judgement which states that the offence(s) in question arose directly from the most recent period of conflict in Northern Ireland.

We would advise that you seek one of the above forms of verifiable evidence in advance of applying as obtaining this may take several weeks.

As an alternative, you may choose to follow the standard mitigation route. Details of this are featured in our *Get Licensed* booklet, which is available from our website:

Supplementary Guidance

- www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/pages/publications.aspx?category=Licensing+Booklets

All personal data held by the SIA is kept under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1988.

If for any reason you need to extend the time needed to obtain the verifiable evidence, you must advise us so that we can put a hold on your application whilst we await the information from you. We cannot hold an application indefinitely, and therefore it is vital that you keep the SIA up to date with your progress.

If there are any other relevant convictions on record, then we will assess both the other convictions and the conflict convictions in accordance with our criteria about applicants with multiple offences on record.

We are continuing to forge links with relevant agencies in Northern Ireland and if we find improved methods we will update this guidance.