



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-00118

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: FIREARMS CERTIFICATES ISSUED

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information requested and the answers to your questions are as follows -

Question 1 : Please specify how many firearms certificates were awarded during the 2008 calendar year. Please provide a breakdown by DCU area.

Question 3: Please specify the number of people who currently hold firearms certificates. Please provide a breakdown by DCU area.

Question 4: Please specify the number of authorised gun clubs and legal gun ranges across Northern Ireland. Please detail which (if any) are in Co Tyrone.

Answer 1, 3 and 4: The figures requested can be found in the attached 01846, 01847 and 01848 pdf's.

Question 2: Please detail the number and type of firearm certificate (i.e. how many handguns, shotguns etc) issued during the 2008 calendar year in each of the following DCU areas: Dungannon and South Tyrone, Cookstown, Omagh and Strabane.

Answer: I have been advised by Firearms Branch that the information requested cannot be retrieved easily and readily from the computer system. It is not stored in the format requested and to extract this information a script would need to be obtained from our IT provider. The script would then be used to interrogate the system to identify all different types of firearms held on firearm certificates in the four relevant DCUs. There are 123 different firearm types on the system and the query would have to be carried out for each firearm type (the script cannot combine firearm types into categories) for each DCU - $123 \times 4 = 492$ queries. Firearms Branch have estimated that it would take 5 minutes per query, therefore a total of 2460 minutes (41 hours) and a further 1 hour to collate the information into a table format for the response which would take well in excess of the time permitted to locate and provide the information as set down in FOI legislation.

Due to the factors above the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Under Section 16 of the Act we have a duty to provide advice and assistance and should you consider submitting a refined request I can advise that to keep cost within the £450 ceiling the Police Service of Northern Ireland can supply the information below -

Firearm certificates are recorded on the computer system and the local police station stored against the record. A standard report already exists on the system's management information reporting system, which provides full details of all firearm certificate holders within each police station area. Firearms Branch could interrogate the system, using the standard report, in respect of all 18 station areas within the four DCUs requested. This would produce a separate excel spreadsheet for each station and list all firearm holdings for the area which you could analyse to obtain the information requested.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.psnipolice.uk/>

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

FIREARM CERTIFICATES ISSUED* 01.01.08-31.12.08

DCU NAME	NUMBER OF FIREARM CERTIFICATES
Antrim	450
Ards	635
Armagh	846
Ballymena	738
Ballymoney	366
Banbridge	707
Carrickfergus	131
Castlereagh	232
Coleraine	439
Cookstown	642
Craigavon	704
Down	705
Dungannon & South Tyrone	896
East Belfast	108
Fermanagh	980
Foyle	370
Larne	324
Limavady	346
Lisburn	787
Magherafelt	689
Moyle	202
Newry & Mourne	954
Newtownabbey	309
North Belfast	102
North Down	206
Omagh	763
South Belfast	86
Strabane	442
West Belfast	51
TOTAL	14,210

* Note: Statistics include initial grant applications and further grant applications. The Firearms (NI) Order 2004 abolished the system of renewal of firearm certificates and replaced it with a requirement for a further grant application upon expiry.

CURRENT FIREARM CERTIFICATES ISSUED

DCU NAME	NUMBER OF FIREARM CERTIFICATES
Antrim	2152
Ards	2978
Armagh	3611
Ballymena	3277
Ballymoney	1569
Banbridge	2956
Carrickfergus	736
Castlereagh	1001
Coleraine	1989
Cookstown	2688
Craigavon	3173
Down	2994
Dungannon & South Tyrone	3845
East Belfast	494
Fermanagh	4067
Foyle	1537
Larne	1460
Limavady	1531
Lisburn	3454
Magherafelt	3065
Moyle	927
Newry & Mourne	3798
Newtownabbey	1416
North Belfast	479
North Down	1104
Omagh	2810
South Belfast	383
Strabane	2033
West Belfast	261
TOTAL	61,788

Response to Qu.4 ATI Request FOI F- 2009- 00118

There are currently 59 authorised target clubs which are authorised to use 69
*firearms ranges in Northern Ireland.

The following are situated in County Tyrone:

Bracken Projectile Club

Bready Air Rifle Club

Dungannon Rifle & Pistol Club

Dunnyboe Target Club

Kirlish Rifle & Pistol Club

Laghey Small Bore Rifle & Pistol Club

Maralin Rifle Club

Mowillian Air Rifle Club

Orritor Rifle Club

Royal School Dungannon Rifle Club

Seskinore Harriers Air Pistol Club

Sherrygroom Rifle & Pistol Club

Western Area Medical Target Shooting Club

* Please note that ranges would not be referred to as 'legal gun ranges'. They are ranges which the clubs use and the Chief Constable must be satisfied that a range is safe for the use of a particular calibre of firearm.