



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02327

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: MEMBERSHIP LEVELS OF SHOOTING CLUBS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please provide details on the membership levels of pistol shooting clubs/gun clubs in Northern Ireland over the last five years. (Clarified as a "composite ball park figure available on the membership level today, and the overall membership levels in previous years.")

Answer

I noted from your clarification of 3rd August that you were seeking to establish whether gun club membership has risen or fallen over the last five years and I advised Firearms Branch of this. I have since been advised by Firearms that this would still be cost prohibitive and because this information is not held on a central database to obtain levels of membership over the last five years would involve a manual search of every club file to identify the numbers of members recorded. The cost of extracting the information held for the 5 year period requested, including locating, retrieving and extracting it would in itself exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004 which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450. It is estimated that it would take in excess of 64 hours to examine the information held by Firearms Branch, bringing your request over cost.

However, as previously mentioned information in respect of membership levels could be retrieved from the most recent list of members available on file within cost limits and Firearms Branch have advised that there are currently 62 authorised firearms clubs in Northern Ireland with a total of 5,116 members.

Question 2

How many firearms have been registered to these clubs over that period? (Clarified as "firearms currently possessed by clubs").

Answer

As per your clarification you advised that you were happy to receive the information provided for firearms currently possessed by clubs. You also asked if there was any way of easily establishing if the figure is up or down on previous years without eating up hours of time and I asked Firearms to attempt to retrieve same from their systems.

I can inform you that Firearms Branch have advised there are currently 633 firearms registered to 62 authorised firearms clubs in Northern Ireland. A figure has also been obtained from the system for firearms registered to clubs in and around 2005, however, it should be noted that some figures were retrieved from club certificates in 2006, 2007 and 2008 dependent on the date at which the club certificate was first granted. The figure for this is 542 firearms registered to authorised firearms clubs.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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 @ www.psnipolice.uk

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