



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011-00343

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Firearms Certificates

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

I would like to request information regarding firearms certificates held by individuals within the police authority area.

Within your police authority area, for the each year from 2006 to present, how many applications were made for firearms certificates?

#### Question 2

How many firearms certificates were issued/approved?

#### Question 3

How many firearms certificates were rejected?

#### Question 4

Please provide a complete list of the types of firearms which have been approved for use, and the county within which the person registered to use each particular firearm lives.

#### Question 5

For the question above, please also provide a breakdown of the ages of those who hold the firearms certificates.

#### Question 6

How many reports or charges were there in relation to firearms offences? Please provide a breakdown of what offences these were.

### Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the

“appropriate costs limit” under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

The information you have requested in question 4 is not held in an easily retrievable format. There are currently 60,999 firearm certificate holders in NI. To retrieve the information requested would require each individual record to be analysed to identify the county in which the holder lives and the type of firearm(s) registered. I have estimated that it would take an average of 5 minutes per record to search and record the relevant information. This would equate to an estimated 5083 hours retrieval time.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

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’. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. The nature and structure of the information requested in question 4 unfortunately makes refinement of this part of your request impossible. However, the Firearms department have advised that it is likely that a response to questions 1, 2, and 3 could be provided within the cost limit. It may also be possible to provide a response to questions 5 and 6 without the cost limit being exceeded.

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.

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 letter.

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](mailto: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.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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