



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-00925

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Firearms Licences held in Northern Ireland

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

It should be noted that Article 7 of the Firearms (NI) Order 2004 stipulates that the Chief Constable may grant a firearm certificate to a young person and defines "young person" as a person under the age of 18 who has attained the age of 16. Under Firearms Legislation the minimum age requirement is 16.

Question 1

Could I have the following information under Freedom of Information:

How many people under the age of 18 currently hold a firearm licence?

Answer

There are currently 38 persons under the age of 18 who hold a firearm certificate.

Question 2

How many people under the age of 16 currently hold a firearm licence?

Answer

No-one under the age of 16 holds a firearm certificate.

Question 3

How many people under the age of 10 currently hold a firearm licence?

Answer

No-one under the age of 10 holds a firearm certificate.

Question 4

Please state the age of the youngest person who currently holds a firearm licence and how many of that age hold a licence?

Answer

The youngest person who holds a firearm certificate is aged 16. There are currently 15 persons aged 16 who hold firearm certificates.

Question 5

What firearms would all the above be for and mainly used for if you know?

Answer

Article 7 of the Firearms (NI) Order 2004 regulates the circumstances under which a young person may be granted a firearm certificate. Please refer to the document at the end of this correspondence detailing the relevant Article.

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 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.

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

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

ARTICLE 7 OF THE FIREARMS (NI) ORDER 2004 – YOUNG PERSONS

Grant of firearm certificate to young persons

7. - (1) In this Article "young person" means a person under the age of 18 who has attained the age of 16.

(2) The Chief Constable may grant a firearm certificate to a young person if -

(a) each firearm to which it relates is -

(i) an air gun to which paragraph (4) applies;

(ii) a shotgun; or

(iii) a .22 rimfire rifle that is to say of a calibre not exceeding 5.59 millimetres; and

(b) the Chief Constable attaches a condition under Article 6(1) that the firearm and any ammunition for it to which the certificate relates are for the purpose of -

(i) pest control; or

(ii) the protection of livestock;

on agricultural land occupied by the holder or on which he works and also resides.

(3) The Chief Constable may grant a firearm certificate to a young person if -

(a) each firearm to which it relates is -

(i) an air gun to which paragraph (4) applies; or

(ii) a shotgun; and

(b) the Chief Constable attaches a condition under Article 6(1) that the holder shall have the firearm and any ammunition for it to which the certificate relates in his possession only -

(i) for sporting purposes; and

(ii) for a specified period of at least 12 months under the supervision of a person who has attained the age of 21 and has held a firearm certificate for a firearm of that type for at least three years.

(4) This paragraph applies to an air gun which is capable of discharging a missile so that the missile has, on being discharged, a kinetic energy in excess of one joule.