



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-00551

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Firearms Licensing

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

How many applications for Shot Gun Certificates or a Firearms Licences have you received since 1 August 2011?

Clarification received - This is the total number of applications received including renewals and new licences.

#### Question 2

How many times since 1 August 2011 have you contacted the GP of an individual who has applied for a Shot Gun Certificate or a Firearms Licence?

#### Question 3

How many Shot Gun Certificates or Firearms Licences have you revoked as a result of the information you received?

Clarification received - This includes those not issued as well as those revoked.

### 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 (18 hours). To retrieve the requested information would require a trawl of 7,431 records to ascertain if a medical report was requested. In the relevant cases a further search would be required to analyse the outcome of the medical enquiries and ascertain the impact on the firearm certificate, whether the application was refused or approved. Taking an average of 5 minutes per record it is estimated that the retrieval process would take approximately 622 hours. This greatly exceeds the cost limit of 18 hours.

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; however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved prior to realising that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of this request.

### **Answer 1**

Since 1 August 2011, PSNI has received 7,431 applications for firearm certificates. This figure relates to both initial first time grants and renewals. There is only one type of firearm certificate in Northern Ireland. Separate certificates are not issued for shotguns and firearms.

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.