

22 August 2019

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20191662

REQUEST

a) How many crimes were committed in your police jurisdiction involving firearms/ shotguns in 2017-2018 & 2018/2019? This includes numbers arrested, charged and/ or criminally prosecuted.

b) What was the status of the weapons involved (i.e. licenced, unlicensed or unknown)?

c) How many fresh applications for firearm/ shotgun licences were made in 2017-2018 & 2018/2019? How many were refused?

*d) How many applications for renewals for pre-existing firearm/shotgun licences were made in the year 2017-2018 & 2018-2019?
How many were refused?*

e) How many revocations of firearm/ shotgun licences were made by the police force in 2017-2018 & 2018-2019? How many were successfully appealed by the applicant?

f) How many firearms/ shotguns were seized by police in 2017-2018 & 2018-2019? How many of these were subsequently returned to their owners? How many of these were destroyed?

g) Any local policies or guidance regarding systems for firearm and shotgun control and monitoring.

RESPONSE

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt), to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- a. states that fact,
- b. specifies the exemption in question and
- c. states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

Section 12(2) – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

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The following exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

Section 12(2) – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

We have received a number of similar requests in the past in respect of question f). Our Business Managers at each of our four Districts: Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield have previously advised a response to your request in full would exceed the 18 hour cost threshold. To conduct a search, we would firstly have to compile a list of 'firearm' related words such as 'gun', 'revolver', 'pistol', 'rifle', 'shotgun', 'shot-gun' etc., and then conduct property searches on our Property other than Found (POTF) database and review every record returned for each District (and property store for Sheffield). Results are dependent on how the data has been input originally i.e mis-spellings/double keying would not be picked up e.g. rifel, shot gun. I am advised that the process for Rotherham and Barnsley alone would exceed 144 hours of work.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 provide that the cost limit for non-central government public authorities is £450. This must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour, providing an effective time limit of 18 hours. . If you feel your endeavours can be achieved within the appropriate limit by refining your request, South Yorkshire Police would be more than happy to consider any further request.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner to public authorities is that where one part of a request is reasonably estimated to exceed the appropriate limit then the authority is not obliged to consider or comply with the remainder of the request up to the point at which the appropriate limit has been reached. Please note point 30 of the below link:-

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf

Although excess cost removes the force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have supplied information relating to your request in the links below, as a gesture of goodwill. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request neither does it bind South Yorkshire Police to any commitment that it will release information in such a manner in the future.

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/firearm-offences-ref-20180250/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/firearms-licensing-ref-20180205/>

I have also enclose a relevant policy document which may be of interest in regard to question (g)