

**Information Governance Unit
Information Management Branch**

:

31 December 2010

Dear XXXX

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 02/12/2010, which was received by Greater Manchester Police on 02/12/2010, for the following information:

Your Request

- Question 1. I would like to know the total number of people in the Forces Jurisdiction who have firearm and shotgun licenses (separately) please.
- Question 2. I would then like to know how many applications were made for the above licenses in 2010 and how many were approved, disapproved and how many are pending.
- Question 3. I would then like to know how many of those license applications in 2010 were made by under-18s. I would like the age of the applicant, the gender of the applicant and then whether or not the license was approved, disapproved or is pending.

Response

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police.

Question 1 & 2. Information for the period 2007 – 2009, is exempt by virtue of section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is an absolute exemption and relates to information that is easily accessible by the applicant by other means. The requested information for 2007 – 2009 is available from the Home Office Website, via the following link; <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/firearms1.html>

In addition, your request for information for the 2010 period has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the data requested.

Section 17 of the Freedom Of Information Act requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide 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 otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption applies; Section 22(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is a class based and qualified exemption and relates to information intended for future publication. The requested information will be published by the Home Office via the above link. Furthermore, because this exemption is qualified, the public interest test needs to be articulated, please see below;

Public Interest Test Considerations

Section 22(1)

Factors in favour of disclosure

The public interest may be served by providing this information because in this particular circumstances, it is simply the right thing to do and by disclosing the requested information members of the general public would be aware of the number of individuals in the GMP's policing area, who have a firearm/shotgun license and how many applications were made, approved, disapproved and pending for the 2010 period.

In addition, the disclosure of the requested information would enhance public knowledge in relation surrounding this subject matter and disclosure of the requested information is likely to support better inform public awareness and debate regarding the granting of firearm/shotgun licenses.

Factors in maintaining the exemption

The requested information for 2010 period is intended to be published by the Home Office via the following website <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/firearms1.html>.

Section 21 and 22 exemptions were specifically laid down by parliament to benefit those authorities that proactively publish information. However, in order to satisfy an additional need outside of this schedule will render these exemptions less effective and remove the benefits of proactive publication.

Moreover, to respond to this request, the information would need to be retrieved and collated, as it is effectively not held at the present time. To gather the information, prior to the requirement to do so for the next publication by Home Office, will involve a disproportionate use of resources at this time. In addition, in certain circumstances, such as this one, the timing of the request may create a public interest against disclosure.

Balancing Test

The information requested is intended for disclosure, in the near future by the Home Office via the above link to their website and therefore to utilize resources to collate this information at this time is disproportionate. Therefore, having considered all the factors for disclosure and maintaining the exemption in relation to section 22(1) above, it is the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information for the 2010 period for question 1 & 2 from disclosure.

Question 3.

Firearm Certificates.

1 16 year old male applied for and was granted a Firearm Certificate.

Shotgun Certificates.

A total of 23 applications were made for shotgun certificates, all by males. All were granted. and 1 was a renewal application.

Age ranges:

1x10 years

2x11 years

2x12 years

1x13 years

5x14 years

1x15 years

3x16 years

8x17 years. (1 renewal).

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet, which details your right of complaint.

Should you have any further inquiries concerning this matter, please write or contact me, on telephone number 0161 856 2529 quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

Information Access Officer

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?

You have the right to require Greater Manchester Police to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again –

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter.

That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of Greater Manchester Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding access to information, you can lodge a complaint with Greater Manchester Police to have the decision reviewed.

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer
Information Governance Unit, Information Management Branch
Greater Manchester Police
Police Headquarters
Chester House
Boyer Street
Manchester
M16 0RE

The Information Commissioner

After lodging a complaint with Greater Manchester Police if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you can make an application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk. Alternatively, phone or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Phone: 01625 545 700