

Statistical Bulletin

Crime and Justice Series

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

FIREARM CERTIFICATE STATISTICS, SCOTLAND, 2012 29 May 2013

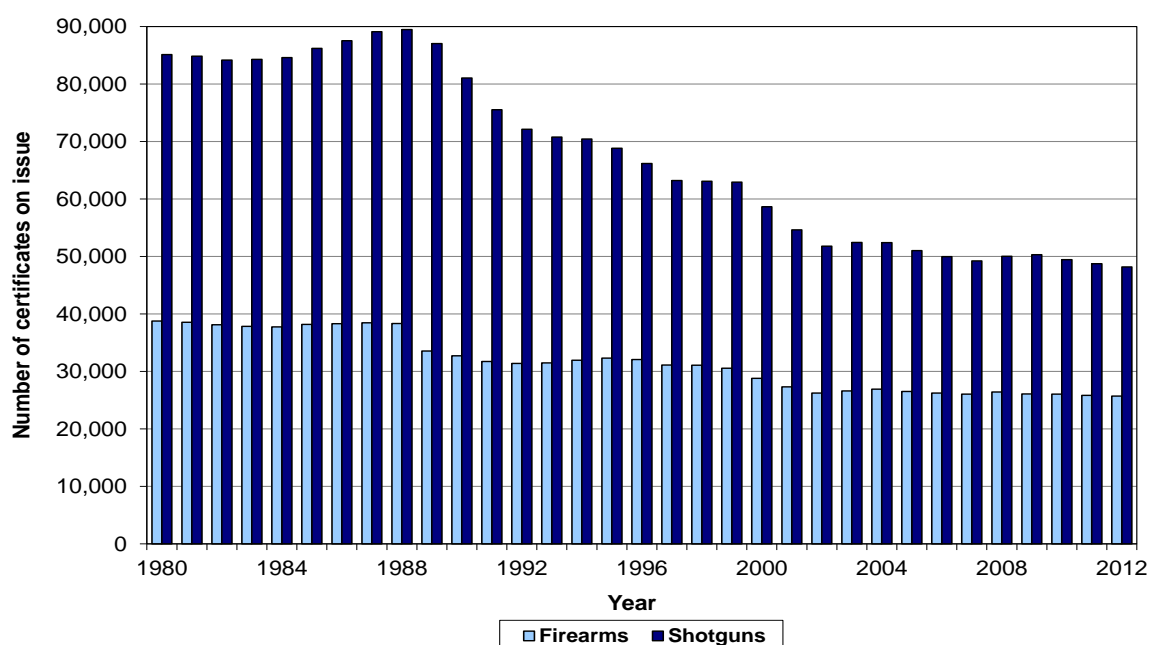


1. Introduction

This bulletin presents statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended), covering certificates issued by the eight Scottish police forces over the last ten years. The bulletin also provides information on the number of registered firearm dealers, visitor permits and European Firearm Passes (EFPs) issued.

In this bulletin, statistics for shotguns are shown separately from other firearms. The definitions of a firearm and of a shotgun are given in [Section 4](#), along with regulations covering firearms licensing and further background information on the data presented in this bulletin. A related publication provides statistics on the number of crimes and offences involving the alleged use of a firearm. The National Statistics bulletin [Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland, 2011-12](#), was published in December 2012.

Chart 1: Number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue in Scotland as at 31 December, 1980 to 2012



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2. Main Points

- There were 25,702 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2012, the lowest number of firearm certificates on issue over the ten year period covered by this bulletin ([Table 1](#) and Charts [1](#) and [2](#)).
- The 25,702 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2012 covered the possession of 72,005 firearms, the highest number of firearms held on certificate over the last ten years. This is an increase of 19% in the number of firearms held on certificate compared to 2003 ([Table 1](#) and [Chart 2](#)).
- The average number of firearms held on each certificate issued has increased from 2.3 in 2003 to 2.8 in 2012 ([Table 1](#)).
- There were 48,168 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2012, the lowest number of shotgun certificates on issue over the ten year period covered by this bulletin ([Table 5](#) and Charts [1](#) and [4](#)).
- The 48,168 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2012 covered the possession of 141,569 shotguns, the highest number of shotguns held on certificate over the last ten years. This is an increase of 13% in the number of shotguns held on certificate compared to 2003 ([Table 5](#) and [Chart 4](#)).
- The average number of shotguns held on each certificate issued has increased from 2.4 in 2003 to 2.9 in 2012 ([Table 5](#)).
- There were 353 registered firearm dealers in Scotland at the end of 2012. This is the highest number of registered dealers in the ten year period covered by this bulletin, an increase of 24% from the 284 registered dealers at the end of 2003 ([Table 8](#)).

3. Commentary

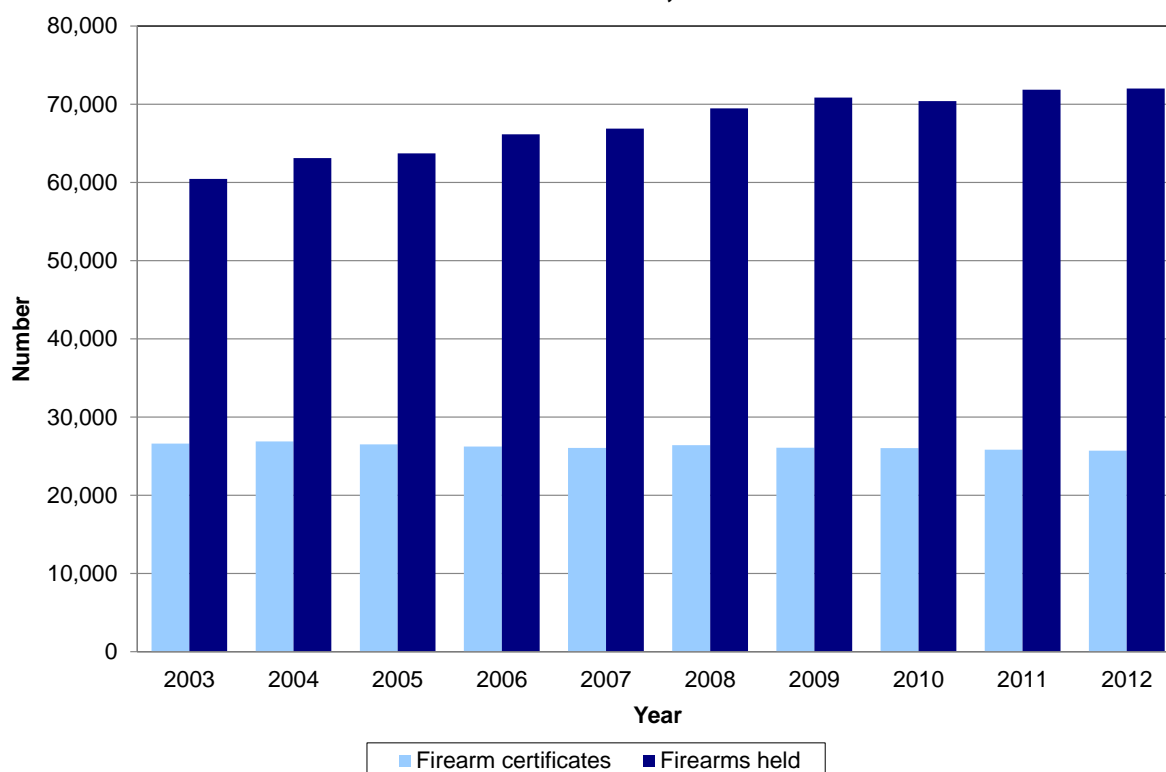
It should be noted that amendments to firearm regulations in January 1995 increased the validity period of firearm and shotgun certificates from three to five years. This effectively meant that there were no certificate renewals in either 1998 or 1999 and this in turn has had a cyclical effect of increasing the number of certificate renewals, cancellations and certificates on issue in certain years, whilst reducing the number in the intervening years.

The statistics on firearm certificates are used to inform [National Outcome 9](#) – ‘we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger’ as well as [The Strategy for Justice in Scotland](#). These statistics are also used by a wide range of stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy research and development, and for research purposes.

3.1 Firearm Certificates (Tables [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [4](#), and Charts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [6](#))

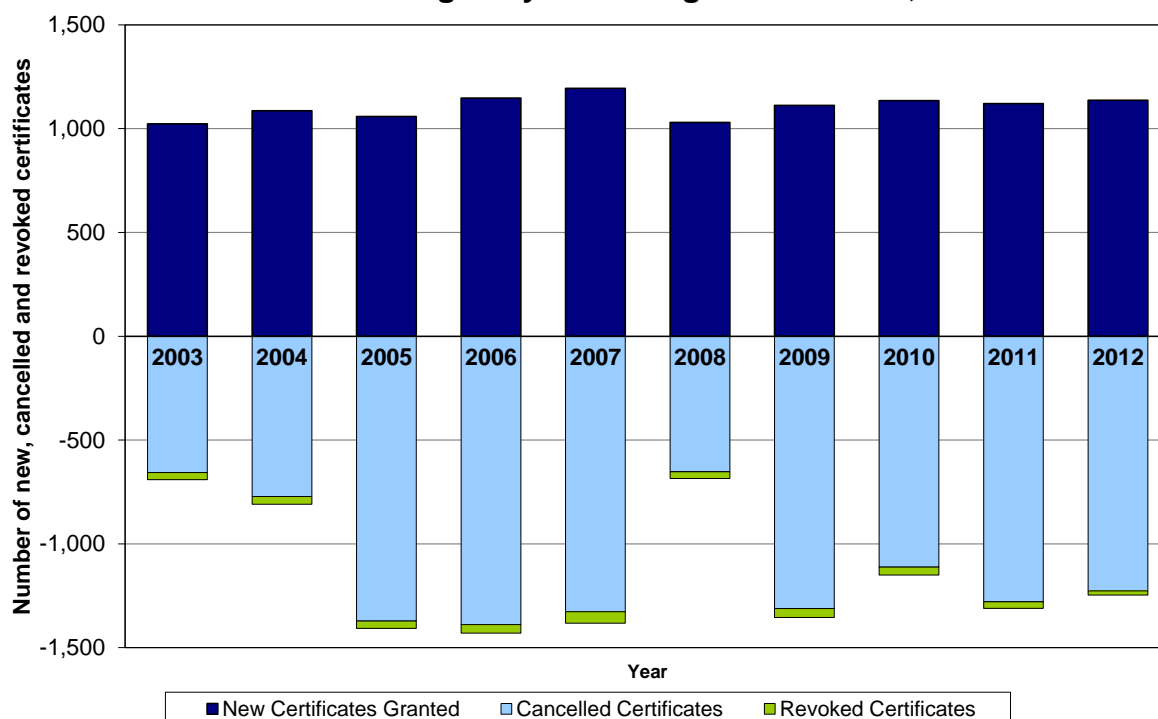
- There were 25,702 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2012, a decrease of less than 1% from 2011, and the lowest number of firearm certificates on issue over the last ten years.
- The number of firearms held on certificate increased by less than 1%, from 71,860 in 2011 to 72,005 in 2012. For further information on the number of weapons possessed on firearm or shotgun certificates, please see Notes [4.2.9](#) and [4.2.10](#). This is the highest number of firearms held on certificate over the ten years covered by this bulletin and is 19% higher than the 60,440 held on certificate in 2003.

Chart 2: Number of firearm certificates on issue and number of firearms held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012



- Although the number of firearm certificates on issue are at their lowest level in ten years, the figures have remained relatively stable over the period with an overall slight decreasing trend since 2003. In contrast, the number of firearms held on certificate has shown an increasing trend, resulting in the average number of firearms held on each certificate rising from 2.3 in 2003 to 2.8 in 2012.
- In 2012, there were 1,149 applications for a new firearm certificate, an increase of 1% on the 1,141 applications in 2011. Of the total number of applications for a new firearm certificate in 2012, 1,137 were granted with 12 applications, 1% of total applications, being refused.
- In 2012, there were 6,250 applications for the renewal of a firearm certificate, with only five of those applications being refused.
- There were 1,227 firearm certificates cancelled and 20 certificates revoked in 2012, compared to 1,279 cancellations and 32 revocations in 2011. The number of cancellations and revocations outnumbered the new applications granted by 110, thus contributing to a reduction in the overall number of firearm certificates on issue for the fourth consecutive year.

Chart 3: New firearm certificate applications (granted), cancellations and revocations in Scotland during the year ending 31 December, 2003 to 2012



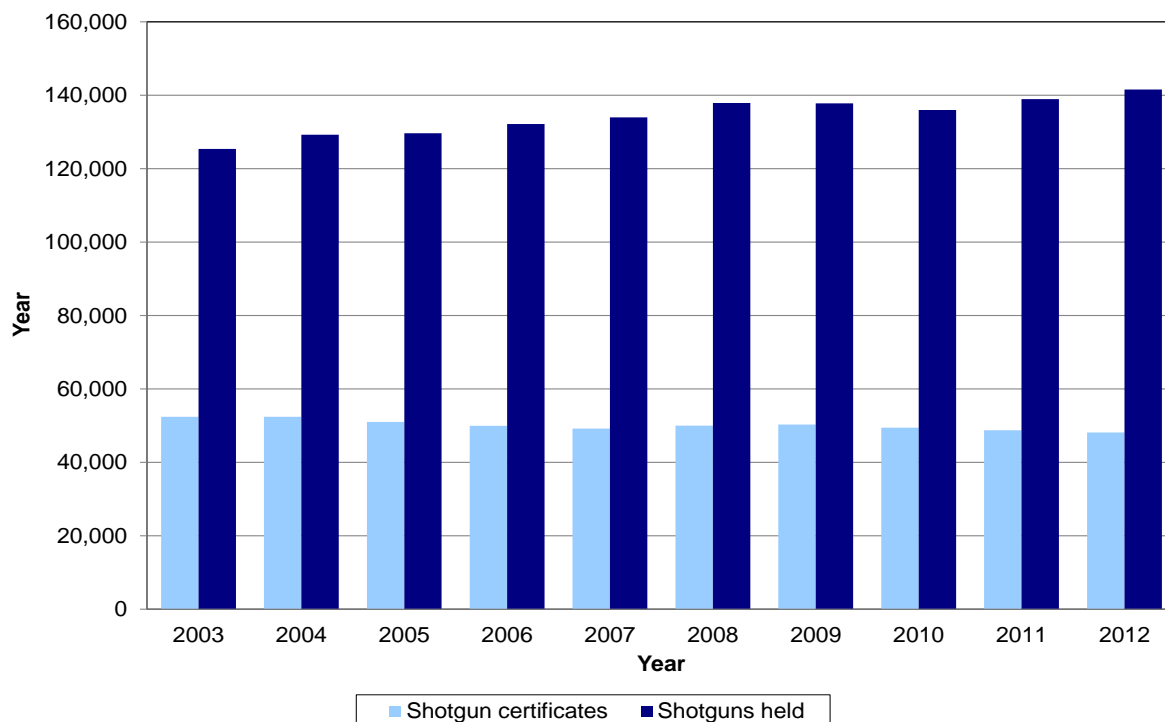
- Over a quarter of all firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2012 were issued by Northern Constabulary, 6,699 out of the total of 25,702 certificates. Grampian Police issued the second highest number of firearm certificates, with 4,466 certificates. These two forces were followed by Strathclyde Police and Lothian and Borders Police, where there were 3,773 and 3,634 certificates on issue at the end of 2012, respectively.

- In 2012, the number of firearm certificates on issue per head of population was highest in Northern Constabulary, 2,301 per 100,000 population, and lowest in Strathclyde Police, 169 per 100,000 population. This is not unexpected given that those police forces with the higher number of firearm certificates on issue per head of population police the more rural areas of Scotland, where populations are lower and employment and recreational activities may require the use of firearms.
- The 25,702 firearm certificates on issue as at 31 December 2012, covered the possession of 72,005 firearms. In addition, the certificates on issue authorised a further 9,467 firearms to be purchased or acquired. For further information please see [Note 4.2.10](#).
- Of the 53,177 firearms held on certificate where it was possible to distinguish the weapon type, 82% were rifles. For further information on why it is not possible to distinguish the weapon type in all cases, please see [Note 4.2.6](#).

3.2 Shotgun Certificates (Tables [5](#), [6](#) and [7](#), and Charts [1](#), [4](#), [5](#) and [6](#))

- There were 48,168 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2012, a decrease of 1% from 2011 and the lowest number on issue in the ten year period cover by this bulletin.
- The 48,168 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2012 covered the possession of 141,569 shotguns. This is an increase of 2% from the 138,939 shotguns held on certificate at the end of 2011 and the highest number over the last ten years.

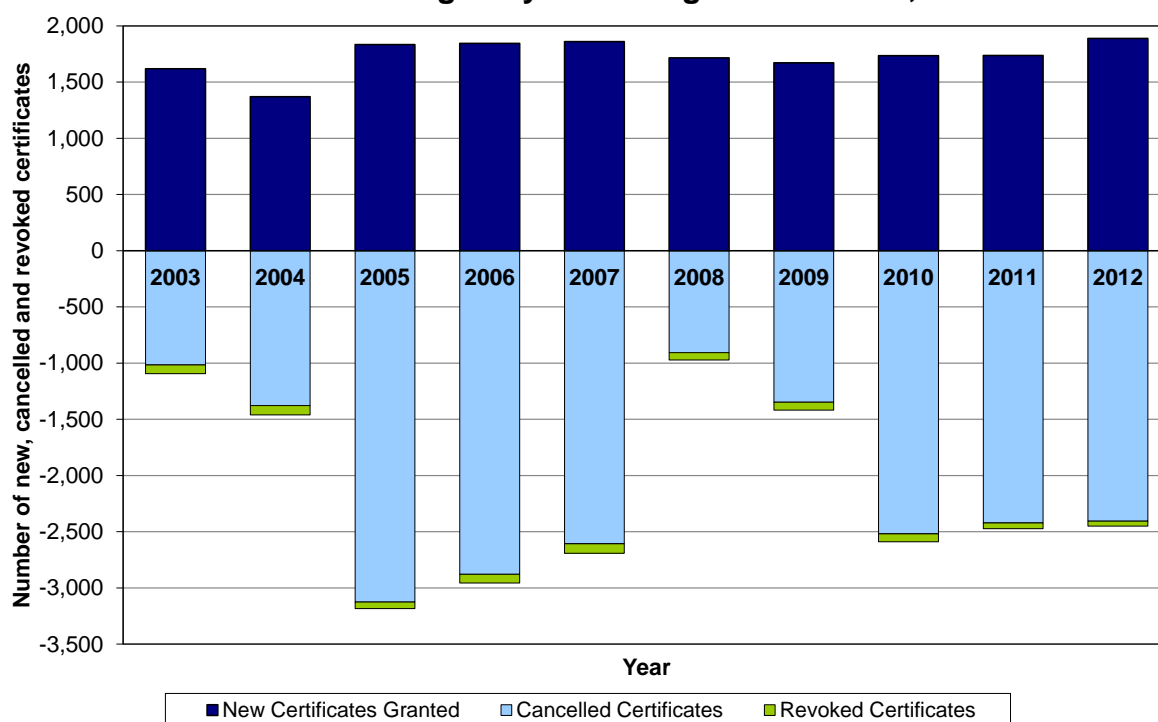
Chart 4: Number of shotgun certificates on issue and number of shotguns held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012



- The average number of shotguns held on each certificate issued has increased from 2.4 in 2003 to 2.9 in 2012.

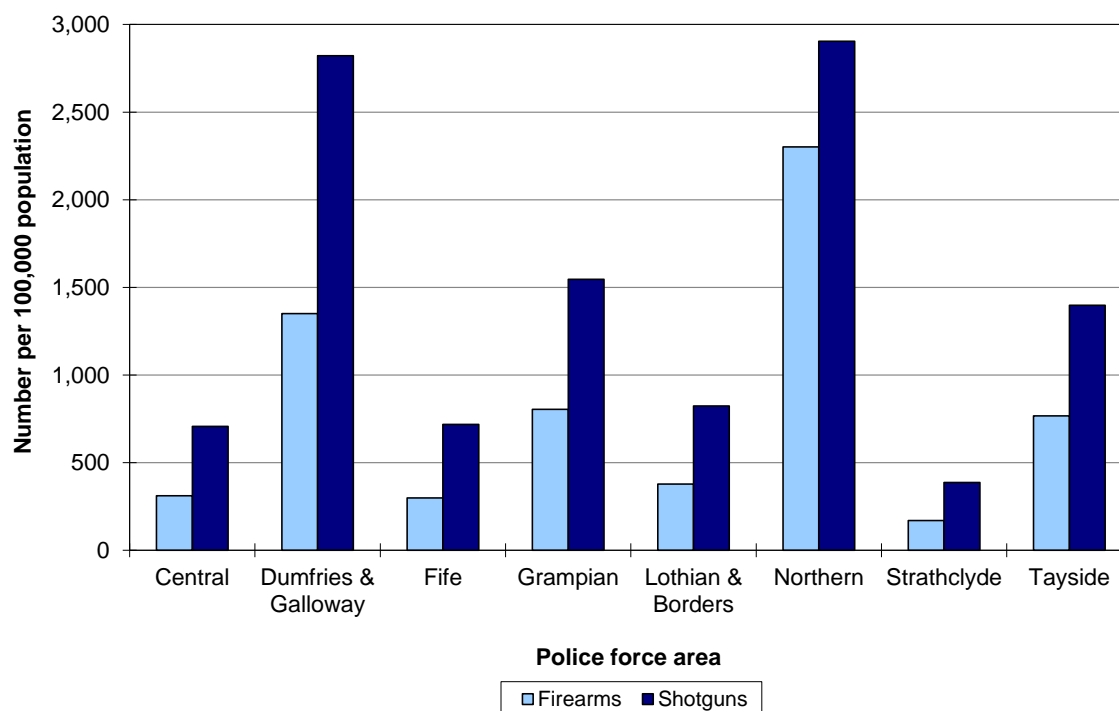
- In 2012, there were 1,926 applications for a new shotgun certificate, of which 1,888 were granted and 38 were refused, 2% of the total number of new applications.
- There were 11,589 applications for a renewal of a shotgun certificate in 2012, with only six of those applications being refused.
- In 2012, a total of 2,406 shotgun certificates were cancelled, which accounted for almost 5% of all shotgun certificates from the previous year. There were 45 shotgun certificates revoked in 2012, a slight decrease on the 52 certificates revoked in 2011. The number of cancellations and revocations outnumbered the number of new applications granted by 563, thus contributing to a reduction in the number of shotgun certificates on issue for the third year in a row.

Chart 5: New shotgun certificate applications (granted), cancellations and revocations in Scotland during the year ending 31 December, 2003 to 2012



- As at 31 December 2012, Strathclyde Police had the highest number of shotgun certificates on issue with 8,621. This was closely followed by the 8,586 shotgun certificates on issue from Grampian Police and the 8,454 on issue from Northern Constabulary.
- However, per head of population, the number of shotgun certificates on issue was highest in Northern Constabulary, 2,904 per 100,000 population, and lowest in Strathclyde Police, 387 per 100,000 population. Again, this is not unexpected given that those police forces with the higher number of shotgun certificates on issue per head of population police the more rural areas of Scotland, where populations are lower and employment and recreational activities may require the use of shotguns.

Chart 6: Number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue per 100,000 population¹ by police force area, as at 31 December 2012



1. Population estimates are as at mid-year 2011 from the National Records of Scotland. The mid-year 2012 population estimates are scheduled for publication in summer 2013.

(<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>)

3.3 Firearm Dealers (Tables [8](#), [9](#) and [10](#))

- There were 353 registered firearm dealers in Scotland at the end of 2012, an increase of 2% from the 346 registered dealers in 2011 and the highest number of registered dealers over the ten year period covered by this bulletin. The number of registered firearm dealers as at the 31 December 2011 has been revised since the publication of the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin. For further information, please see [Note 4.2.7](#).
- In 2012, there were 31 new applications granted for registration from firearm dealers, with 72 renewal of registration applications granted. There were no refusals for either new registration or renewal applications, although 24 registrations were cancelled.
- The number of registered dealers per head of population was highest for Northern Constabulary, with 22 firearm dealers per 100,000 population, and was lowest for Lothian and Borders Police, where there were three firearm dealers per 100,000 population.

3.4 Visitor Permits (Tables [11a](#) and [11b](#))

- In 2012, a total of 2,021 firearm applications for a Visitor Permit were submitted by EC and non-EC residents, a 4% decrease on the 2,109 applications submitted in 2011.
- In 2012, a total of 3,701 shotgun applications for a Visitor Permit were submitted by EC and non-EC residents. This is a 14% decrease on the 4,306 applications submitted in 2011.

3.5 European Firearms Passes (Tables [12a](#) and [12b](#))

- There were 1,237 European Firearms Passes (EFPs) on issue at the end of 2012, an increase of 9% on the 1,131 on issue at the end of 2011. The number of EFPs on issue as at 31 December 2011 has been revised since the publication of the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin, with the revised data given in [Table 12a](#). For further information please see [Note 4.2.5](#).
- In 2012, a total of 175 new applications were issued for an EFP, with 154 renewals issued and 69 cancellations.
- The number of EFPs on issue in 2012 was highest for Lothian and Borders Police, where there were 406 on issue, and was lowest for Fife Constabulary, where there were 39. Please note that the number of EFPs on issue in 2012 for Strathclyde Police is an undercount. For further information, please see [Note 4.2.4](#).

3.6 Article 7 Authorities ([Table 13](#))

- There were no applications (granted) for Article 7 Authorities made by certificate holders or non-certificate holders in 2012. This is the third year in a row where there have been no applications (granted).

Table 1: Firearm Certificates – number of new applications (granted and refused), firearm certificates on issue and firearms held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

Year	Applications for new firearm certificates		Firearm certificates on issue	Firearms held on certificate	Number
	Granted	Refused			Average number of firearms held on each certificate
2003	1,023	14	26,605	60,440	2.3
2004	1,086	12	26,897	63,115	2.3
2005 ¹	1,059	18	26,511	63,710	2.4
2006 ¹	1,147	9	26,234	66,164	2.5
2007	1,194	9	26,056	66,893	2.6
2008	1,030	13	26,415	69,481	2.6
2009	1,112	12	26,072	70,856	2.7
2010	1,135	17	26,035	70,410	2.7
2011	1,121	20	25,831	71,860	2.8
2012	1,137	12	25,702	72,005	2.8

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.2.](#)

Table 2: Firearm Certificates – new applications, renewals, variations, cancellations, revocations and number of firearm certificates on issue by police force area, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

Police Force Area	Applications						Cancellations ²	Revocations ²	Firearm certificates on issue	Firearm certificates on issue per 100,000 population ³
	New Firearm Certificate		Renewal of Firearm Certificate		Variation of Firearm Certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Fee Charged ¹	No Fee Charged				
Central	46	-	200	-	36	38	47	-	921	311
Dumfries & Galloway	70	-	542	-	68	99	146	-	2,000	1,351
Fife	61	-	249	-	17	25	69	1	1,097	299
Grampian	185	2	1,007	-	196	116	241	1	4,466	804
Lothian & Borders	155	5	891	-	90	144	153	5	3,634	378
Northern	294	3	1,657	-	273	626	259	8	6,699	2,301
Strathclyde	182	1	815	4	35	86	202	4	3,773	169
Tayside	144	1	884	1	162	80	110	1	3,112	767
Scotland	1,137	12	6,245	5	877	1,214	1,227	20	25,702	489

Notes:

1. For further information on when a fee is charged for a variation of a firearm certificate please see [Note 4.4.2](#).
2. For further information on cancellation and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.8](#).
3. Population estimates are as at mid-year 2011 from the National Records of Scotland. The mid-year 2012 population estimates are scheduled for publication in summer 2013. (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>)

Table 3: Firearm Certificates – cancellations and revocations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

Firearm Certificates	Number and percentage									
	2003	2004	2005 ¹	2006 ¹	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of certificates on issue	26,605	26,897	26,511	26,234	26,056	26,415	26,072	26,035	25,831	25,702
Number of cancellations²	657	772	1,372	1,389	1,327	653	1,312	1,112	1,279	1,227
Percentage of certificates cancelled from previous year	2.5	2.9	5.1	5.2	5.1	2.5	5.0	4.3	4.9	4.8
Number of revocations²	34	37	35	41	55	32	43	38	32	20
Percentage of certificates revoked from previous year	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.2](#).
2. For further information on cancellation and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.8](#).

Table 4: Firearm Certificates – number of firearms possessed on certificate and number of additional firearms authorised to be purchased or acquired on certificate, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

	Type of Weapon										Number	
	Section 1 Shotgun ¹	Rifle	Handgun ²	Carbine		Muzzleloader		Air weapon ³		Miscellaneous ⁴	Weapons in Tayside Police ⁵	Total
				Under Lever	Bolt Action	Rifle	Handgun	Rifle	Handgun			
Possessed ⁶	1,758	43,856	578	179	11	183	488	415	171	5,538	18,828	72,005
Authorised to be purchased/acquired	301	5,289	69	8	7	79	82	107	-	1,309	2,216	9,467
Total	2,059	49,145	647	187	18	262	570	522	171	6,847	21,044	81,472

Notes:

1. Any smooth-bore gun which has a barrel of less than 24 inches in length, has a magazine which takes more than two cartridges or has a removable magazine.
2. Includes those weapons which were exempt from the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1997, e.g. single shot humane killers, shot pistols, trophies of war, antique firearms and 'handguns' used by the SSPCA.
3. For further information on the types of air weapons that a firearm certificate is required for please see [Note 4.3.3](#).
4. Includes weapons such as Section 5 firearms, tranquillising rifles, etc.
5. For technical reasons, Tayside Police are unable to provide a breakdown of firearms by weapon type.
6. For further information on the number of weapons possessed on firearm or shotgun certificates please see Notes [4.2.9](#) and [4.2.10](#).

Table 5: Shotgun Certificates – number of new applications (granted and refused), shotgun certificates on issue and shotguns held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

Year	Applications for new firearm certificates		Shotgun certificates on issue	Shotguns held on certificate	Number
	Granted	Refused			Average number of shotguns held on each certificate
2003	1,618	38	52,421	125,395	2.4
2004	1,369	31	52,409	129,218	2.5
2005 ¹	1,833	26	51,029	129,630	2.5
2006 ¹	1,844	18	49,974	132,181	2.6
2007	1,860	31	49,213	133,940	2.7
2008	1,716	33	50,021	137,881	2.8
2009	1,671	22	50,308	137,768	2.7
2010	1,735	37	49,449	135,987	2.8
2011	1,736	41	48,726	138,939	2.9
2012	1,888	38	48,168	141,569	2.9

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.2.](#)

Table 6: Shotgun Certificates – applications, renewals, cancellations, revocations and number of shotgun certificates on issue by police force area, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

Police Force Area	Applications				Cancellations ¹	Revocations ¹	Shotgun certificates on issue	Shotgun certificates on issue per 100,000 population ²
	New Shotgun Certificate		Renewal of Shotgun Certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused				
Central	75	-	493	-	126	-	2,093	707
Dumfries & Galloway	143	1	1,153	-	209	-	4,178	2,822
Fife	140	-	507	-	142	2	2,638	718
Grampian	401	3	1,908	-	514	1	8,586	1,546
Lothian & Borders	304	13	1,925	-	334	19	7,925	824
Northern	281	12	2,082	1	349	13	8,454	2,904
Strathclyde	331	7	1,883	4	497	8	8,621	387
Tayside	213	2	1,632	1	235	2	5,673	1,398
Scotland	1,888	38	11,583	6	2,406	45	48,168	917

Notes:

1. For further information on cancellation and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.8](#).
2. Population estimates are as at mid-year 2011 from the National Records of Scotland. The mid-year 2012 population estimates are scheduled for publication in summer 2013. (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>)

Table 7: Shotgun Certificates – cancellations and revocations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

	Number and percentage									
Shotgun Certificates	2003	2004	2005¹	2006¹	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of certificates on issue	52,421	52,409	51,029	49,974	49,213	50,021	50,308	49,449	48,726	48,168
Number of cancellations²	1,016	1,378	3,125	2,879	2,608	907	1,348	2,519	2,422	2,406
Percentage of certificates cancelled from previous year	2.0	2.6	6.0	5.6	5.2	1.8	2.7	5.0	4.9	4.9
Number of revocations²	78	83	58	77	83	65	71	71	52	45
Percentage of certificates revoked from previous year	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.2](#).
2. For further information on cancellation and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.8](#).

Table 8: Firearm Dealers – new applications for registration (granted and refused) and number of firearm dealers registered in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

Year	New applications for registration from dealers		Registered dealers
	Granted	Refused	
2003	16	1	284
2004	18	1	280
2005	24	-	275
2006	26	-	283
2007	44	6	301
2008	39	-	327
2009	29	-	335
2010	35	-	337
2011 ¹	32	-	346
2012	31	-	353

Notes:

1. The number of registered dealers as at 31 December 2011 has been revised from 347, as reported in the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin, to 346. For further information please see [Note 4.2.7](#).

Table 9: Firearm Dealers – applications, renewals, cancellations and number of firearm dealers registered by police force area, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

Police Force Area	Applications				Cancellations	Registered Dealers ¹	Number and rate
	New Registration		Renewal of Registration				Registered dealers per 100,000 population ²
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused			
Central	2	-	2	-	-	13	4
Dumfries & Galloway	7	-	7	-	9	30	20
Fife	1	-	1	-	1	22	6
Grampian	5	-	14	-	1	57	10
Lothian & Borders	3	-	6	-	4	25	3
Northern	5	-	10	-	4	63	22
Strathclyde	2	-	18	-	2	80	4
Tayside	6	-	14	-	3	63	16
Scotland	31	-	72	-	24	353	7

Notes:

1. The number of firearm dealers registered at the end of the year may not equal the number of new registrations added to the previous end of year total, minus refused registration renewals and cancellations, as it is possible for dealers to be removed from the register if a danger to public safety is identified, etc. In 2009, one firearms dealer within the Strathclyde Police force area had their licence revoked.

2. Population estimates are as at mid-year 2011 from the National Records of Scotland. The mid-year 2012 population estimates are scheduled for publication in summer 2013. (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>)

Table 10: Firearm Dealers – cancellations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

	Number and percentage									
Firearm Dealers	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011¹	2012
Number of registered firearm dealers²	284	280	275	283	301	327	335	337	346	353
Number of cancellations	16	24	27	18	24	13	20	29	23	24
Percentage of firearm dealers cancelled from previous year	5.6	8.5	9.6	6.5	8.5	4.3	6.1	8.7	6.8	6.9

Notes:

1. The number of registered dealers as at 31 December 2011 has been revised from 347, as reported in the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin, to 346. For further information please see [Note 4.2.7](#).
2. The number of firearm dealers registered at the end of the year may not equal the number of new registrations added to the previous end of year total, minus refused registration renewals and cancellations, as it is possible for dealers to be removed from the register if a danger to public safety is identified, etc. In 2009, one firearms dealer within the Strathclyde Police force area had their licence revoked.

Table 11a: Visitor Permits¹ – number of applications from EC and non-EC residents by police force area, Scotland, as at 31 December 2011

Police Force Area	Applications				Number	
	EC Residents		Non-EC Residents		Total Applications	
	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns
Central	62	25	5	2	67	27
Dumfries & Galloway	104	198	8	13	112	211
Fife	47	188	-	7	47	195
Grampian	306	466	46	65	352	531
Lothian & Borders	130	258	14	51	144	309
Northern	671	966	46	107	717	1,073
Strathclyde	406	240	4	1	410	241
Tayside	260	1,673	-	46	260	1,719
Scotland	1,986	4,014	123	292	2,109	4,306

Notes:

1. For further information on visitor permits please see Notes [4.6.1](#) and [4.6.2](#).

Table 11b: Visitor Permits¹ – number of applications from EC and non-EC residents by police force area, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

Police Force Area	Applications				Number	
	EC Residents		Non-EC Residents		Total Applications	
	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns
Central	54	5	-	6	54	11
Dumfries & Galloway	96	185	8	27	104	212
Fife	50	236	2	6	52	242
Grampian	248	381	35	46	283	427
Lothian & Borders	125	194	2	71	127	265
Northern	660	801	90	97	750	898
Strathclyde	393	176	3	5	396	181
Tayside	243	1,381	12	84	255	1,465
Scotland	1,869	3,359	152	342	2,021	3,701

Notes:

1. For further information on Visitor Permits please see Notes [4.6.1](#) and [4.6.2](#).

Table 12a: European Firearms Passes – new applications, variations, cancellations and number of European Firearms Passes on issue by police force are, Scotland, as at 31 December 2011

Police Force Area	Applications Issued			Cancellations	Number
	New European Firearm Pass ¹	Renewal of European Firearm Pass	Variation of European Firearm Pass ²		European Firearm Passes on issue
Central	10	15	-	10	67
Dumfries & Galloway	14	24	-	8	103
Fife	6	10	-	6	39
Grampian	26	45	-	13	202
Lothian & Borders	24	24	6	3	381
Northern	11	20	7	21	72
Strathclyde ^{3,4}	64	-	-	5	104
Tayside	11	25	6	12	163
Scotland	166	163	19	78	1,131

Notes:

1. An applicant for a European Firearm Pass must hold a valid firearm or shotgun certificate.
2. Variation refers only to the insertion or deletion of firearm particulars on the European Firearms Pass.
3. The number of European Firearms Passes issued by Strathclyde Police is currently an undercount. For further information please see [Note 4.2.4](#).
4. The number of European Firearms Passes issued by Strathclyde Police has been revised since the publication of the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin. For further information please see [Note 4.2.5](#).

Table 12b: European Firearms Passes – new applications, variations, cancellations and number of European Firearms Passes on issue by police force are, Scotland, as at 31 December 2012

Police Force Area	Applications Issued			Cancellations	Number
	New European Firearm Pass ¹	Renewal of European Firearm Pass	Variation of European Firearm Pass ²		European Firearm Passes on issue
Central	3	16	-	5	65
Dumfries & Galloway	11	18	-	18	96
Fife	4	4	-	4	39
Grampian	19	61	-	19	202
Lothian & Borders	26	18	1	1	406
Northern	45	-	-	4	113
Strathclyde ³	50	1	-	8	146
Tayside	17	36	7	10	170
Scotland	175	154	8	69	1,237

Notes:

1. An applicant for a European Firearms Pass must hold a valid firearm or shotgun certificate.
2. Variation refers only to the insertion or deletion of firearm particulars on the European Firearms Pass.
3. The number of European Firearms Passes issued by Strathclyde Police is currently an undercount. For further information please see [Note 4.2.4](#).

Table 13: Article 7 Authorities¹ – number of applications (granted) in Scotland by certificate and non-certificate holders and for possession outside the UK as at 31 December, 2003 to 2012

Year	Number of Applications (Granted)		
	Certificate Holders	Non-Certificate Holders	For Possession Outside UK
2003	-	-	-
2004	-	-	-
2005	1	-	-
2006	3	-	-
2007	2	-	-
2008	-	-	-
2009	1	-	-
2010	-	-	-
2011	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-

Notes:

1. For further information on Article 7 Authorities please see [Note 4.6.3](#).

4. Notes on statistics used in this bulletin

4.1 Definitions

- 4.1.1 Within the definition of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended), a “**firearm**” means a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged. It includes any prohibited weapon, any component part of such a weapon and any accessory to such a weapon designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by the firing of the weapon.

It is, with certain statutory exceptions, an offence to possess, purchase, or acquire any firearm or ammunition to which Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968 applies without holding a firearm certificate.

Section 1 of the 1968 Act applies to all firearms except a shotgun or an air gun.

A “**shotgun**” is defined as a smooth-bore gun (not being an air gun) which: (i) has a barrel not less than 24 inches in length and does not have any barrel with a bore exceeding two inches in diameter; (ii) either has no magazine or has a non-detachable magazine incapable of holding more than two cartridges; and (iii) is not a revolver gun. Other smooth-bore guns may require a firearm certificate.

It is, with certain statutory exceptions, an offence for a person to possess, purchase, or acquire any shotgun without holding a shotgun certificate.

4.2 Accuracy of the statistics

- 4.2.1 The statistics presented in this bulletin are provided by each of the eight Scottish police forces in an annual aggregate return to the Scottish Government’s Justice Analytical Services Division.
- 4.2.2 A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by Fife Constabulary. Subsequently, the number of applications, variations and cancellations for both firearm and shotgun certificates are not wholly consistent with the totals reported. The force resolved the problem for the provision of 2007 data.
- 4.2.3 A software problem in 2009 affected the European Firearms Passes (EFPs) data submitted by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary. The number of EFP cancellations in 2009 has been revised to six, replacing the previously published figure of five, thus reducing the total number of passes in force at the end of the year to 90.
- 4.2.4 Strathclyde Police introduced a new Firearms Licensing System (SHOGUN) on 31 March 2010. At present, the system is unable to distinguish between grants of new European Firearms Passes (EFPs) and renewal/variation

applications. As a result, all EFP applications issued since then have been treated as a new EFP. There is therefore an undercount of EFPs issued by Strathclyde Police. This undercount will be rectified as and when firearm certificates come up for renewal.

- 4.2.5 The number of European Firearms Passes (EFPs) on issue from Strathclyde Police reported in the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2010](#) and [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletins contained the 320 EFPs that were on issue as at 31 December 2009. As the SHOGUN system is unable to distinguish between grants of new EFPs and renewal/variation applications, it was inaccurate to include these 320 EFPs in the figures for 2010 and 2011. As a result, the 320 EFPs on issue as at 31 December 2009 have now been excluded from the Strathclyde Police figures for 2010 and 2011. The revised totals for EFPs on issue from Strathclyde Police are as follows:
- 45 as at 31 December 2010
 - 104 as at 31 December 2011
- 4.2.6 For technical reasons, Tayside Police are unable to provide a breakdown of firearms by weapon type.
- 4.2.7 Following a review by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary it was discovered that a temporary firearms dealer certificate had been cancelled but their system had not been updated to reflect this. This caused the number of registered dealers within the Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary force area, as at 31 December 2011, to be inflated by one in the figures reported in the [Firearms Certificates Statistics, Scotland, 2011](#) bulletin.
- 4.2.8 The cancellation of a firearm or shotgun certificate is undertaken by the holder; revocations are at the authority of the Chief Constable and occur in instances where it is believed that the holder should no longer be allowed to possess a weapon.
- 4.2.9 A firearm or shotgun certificate permits the holder to possess one or more weapons, thus changes in the number of certificates will not necessarily reflect changes in the number of weapons held legally.
- 4.2.10 It is accepted that the total number of firearms covered by certificates will include an element of double counting, i.e. two or more individuals may each hold a certificate which permits them to possess the same firearm weapon. A certificate allows the holder to either possess or authorises them to purchase or acquire a weapon or a number of weapons.
- 4.2.11 To allow ease of comparison with the data from the previous year, tables containing figures as at 31 December 2011 on Visitor Permits ([Table 11a](#)) and European Firearms Passes ([Table 12a](#)) are contained in this bulletin in addition to the figures as at 31 December 2012 (Tables [11b](#) and [12b](#)).

4.2.12 Population data are derived from relevant mid-year population estimates prepared by the National Records of Scotland: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>.

4.3 Regulations on the issue of firearm and shotgun certificates

4.3.1 All persons acquiring or in possession of a firearm or shotgun must have a certificate issued by the Chief Constable for the police force area in which the person lives, unless they are otherwise exempt. Persons sentenced to a term of imprisonment for a period of three years or more are prohibited from possessing firearms for life. Those sentenced to three months or more but less than three years are subject to a five year prohibition from the date of their release.

4.3.2 There are certain conditions applicable to weapons covered by Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968 and Section 2 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, which includes: rifles, large magazine smooth bore guns, and especially dangerous air weapons. In particular, the Chief Constable must be satisfied that an applicant has good reason for wanting a weapon, is fit to be entrusted with it and that the public safety or the peace will not be endangered. The certificate lists the number, type and serial number of each weapon held and any conditions attached, a standard condition is that weapons and ammunition are held in a secure place when not in use.

4.3.3 A certificate is only required for air weapons that are of a type declared by the Secretary of State under the Dangerous Air Weapons Rules 1969 (as amended) to be specifically dangerous. The vast majority of air weapons held in Scotland do not require a certificate. Section 39 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 banned air weapons that use, or are designed or adapted for use with, a self-contained gas cartridge system. With effect from 20 January 2004, under section 5(3) of the 1968 Act, such weapons could not be purchased, acquired, manufactured, sold or transferred without the authority of the Secretary of State or Scottish Ministers. The offence of possession was brought into force separately under subsection 4 and came into effect on 30 April 2004. This made provision for existing owners to keep and continue to use their weapons, provided the weapons were added to a firearm certificate, new or variation. Existing owners who did not wish to apply for a certificate were able to hand their weapon into the police for disposal by 30 April 2004. This has had the result of substantially increasing the number of air weapons possessed on certificate compared to previous years.

4.3.4 Shotgun certificates covered by Section 2 of the 1968 Act and Section 2 of the 1988 Act permit the holder to possess any number of shotguns, which can include pump-action and self-loading weapons which have a magazine which is incapable of holding more than two cartridges but excluding large magazine smooth bore guns. Applications may not be granted or renewed if a Chief Constable has reason to believe that the applicant is prohibited by the Firearms Acts from possessing a shotgun. Nor may applications be granted or renewed unless the Chief Constable is satisfied that the applicant can be

permitted to possess a shotgun without danger to public safety or to the peace (Section 3 of the 1988 Act). The certificate specifies the description of the shotguns including, if known, the identification numbers of the guns.

- 4.3.5 Certain types of weapons (e.g. machine guns) are prohibited under Section 5 of the 1968 Act, as amended by Section 1 of the 1988 Act; their possession can only be authorised by the Secretary of State or Scottish Ministers after careful enquiries by the police.
- 4.3.6 Following the Dunblane incident in 1996, changes to the existing firearms legislation were introduced to enhance public safety. As a result, the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 was implemented and thereafter the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1997. Under these Acts, all pistols, otherwise referred to as “handguns”, were banned. A number of types of handgun were exempted from the Act including muzzle-loading guns, shot pistols, slaughtering instruments, firearms used for the humane killing of animals, trophies of war etc.

4.4 Regulations on the renewal, cancellation, revocation, and variation of firearm and shotgun certificates

- 4.4.1 It should be noted that amendments to firearm regulations in January 1995 increased the validity period of firearm and shotgun certificates from three to five years. This effectively meant that there were no certificate renewals in either 1998 or 1999 and this in turn has had the cyclical effect of both increasing the number of certificate renewals, cancellations and certificates on issue in certain years, whilst reducing the number in the intervening years.
- 4.4.2 To alter the number and type of weapons held on a firearm certificate, an application for a variation must be made to the Chief Constable. A fee is charged where the variation increases the number of firearms authorised by the certificate. The expiry date of a shotgun certificate can be aligned with the holder’s firearm certificate (Section 11 of the 1988 Act).

4.5 Regulations on firearm dealer certificates

- 4.5.1 Section 13 of the 1988 Act increased the registration period for firearm dealers from one to three years. The grounds for refusal for new applications for registration were extended and a register of transactions must be retained for at least five years.
- 4.5.2 Section 31 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 required businesses that sell air weapons to register with the police as firearm dealers. The section was brought into place in two stages: businesses were able to apply for registration from 6 April 2007 and the offence of not being registered came into effect on 1 October 2007.

4.6 Regulations on Visitor Permits and European Firearm Passes

- 4.6.1 The conditions for exemptions from holding a firearm certificate were revised in sections 15 to 19 of the 1988 Act. Visitor Permits were introduced allowing the holder to possess a firearm or shotgun without holding a certificate. Permits are in force for a period not exceeding 12 months. Group applications may be made for up to 20 persons (section 17 of the 1988 Act).
- 4.6.2 There is no charge for a Visitor Permit variation when an amendment is made to the existing conditions specified on the permit, excluding numbers of firearms authorised and expiry date. If a change is required which increases the number of firearms or shotguns authorised on the permit, or which extends the expiry date of the permit, then this is treated as a new application.
- 4.6.3 Each EU state was required to amend its firearms legislation to meet the requirements of the 1991 EC Weapons Directive. In the UK these changes were made by means of the Firearms Acts (Amendment) Regulations 1992, which made provision for the police to issue two new documents to British residents: the European Firearms Pass (EFP) and an Article 7 Authority.

The EFP is broadly speaking a passport for firearms. EU residents intending to take their firearm or shotgun to another EU state will need an EFP issued by their State of residence. There is only one criterion for the issue of an EFP to a British resident, namely that the applicant must possess a valid firearm or shotgun certificate. The EFP does not replace the certificate.

Article 7 of the Weapons Directive requires any EU resident wanting to purchase a category B firearm (e.g. short and semi-automatic rifles, carbines and smooth bore guns), outside his or her State of residence to have the prior authority of their own State. In England, Wales and Scotland this agreement is at the discretion of the local Chief Constable for the area in which they reside. Information relating to the authority of a person to purchase or acquire a firearm/shotgun when in another EC State was first collected centrally in 1994. Firearms cannot be brought into the UK if an individual does not hold an appropriate firearm certificate, even if Article 7 Authority has been granted.

4.7 Other

- 4.7.1 Firearm certificates statistics for England and Wales are published by the Home Office in the Firearm and Shotgun Certificates in England and Wales statistical bulletin series. Unlike the Scotland data, the England and Wales data are published on a financial year basis. The latest bulletin for England and Wales contained information as at 31 March 2012 and was published on 16 August 2012. The bulletin can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearm-and-shotgun-certificates-in-england-and-wales-2011-to-2012>

Data for England and Wales as at 31 March 2013 are scheduled for publication in late summer of 2013.

- 4.7.2 The following symbol is used throughout the tables in this bulletin:
- = nil.

4.7.3 Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys and data collection are to be published.

The estimated cost of compliance for supplying and validating the data for this bulletin is: **£500**.

Details of the calculation methodology are available on the Scottish Government Crime and Justice website at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/costcalculation>

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