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**Firearms and Explosives Licensing**

**Annual Statistical and User Satisfaction Publication 2024/2025**

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# Introduction

This report presents statistics on firearm, shotgun and air weapon certificates issued by Police Scotland under the Firearms Acts 1968 (as amended) and Air Weapon and Licensing Scotland Act 2015.

A firearm, shotgun or air weapon certificate is a type of licence issued by Police Scotland that allows the holder to possess firearms, shotguns or air weapons and associated ammunition. Certificates are valid for 5 years.

This publication details the number of certificates on issue at 31st March 2025. Additional information is also provided on certificates granted, renewed, refused, revoked, registered firearm dealers and visitor permits during the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Starting from the year 2023/24, Police Scotland also started to record data relating to performance. This information is contained in the relevant sections of this report. As more data is captured, comparisons with previous years will be reported in future publications.

The statistical information in this report was extracted from SHOGUN which is Police Scotland’s national system for the management of firearms licensing. SHOGUN is a register of all people who have applied for, or have been granted, a certificate to possess or acquire a firearm, shotgun or air weapon. The system is a live operational database which is centrally updated therefore data only represents a snapshot in time.

The data cannot be produced by council or geographical area.

In addition, Police Scotland will now report information captured from our User Satisfaction Survey as part of this publication.

# Firearm, Shotgun and Air Weapon Certificates on Issue

The information below reflects the number of certificates which were on issue in Scotland on 31 March 2025.

Firearm certificates

* There were 25223 firearm certificates on issue as at 31 March 2025.

Shotgun certificates

* There were 43790 shotgun certificates on issue as at 31 March 2025.

Air Weapon certificates

* There were 31598 air weapon certificates on issue as at 31 March 2025.

# 1. Firearms

## 1.1 Weapons covered by firearm certificates.

* There were 111917 firearms covered by firearm certificates as at 31 March 2025. Firearms can be categorised as rifles, handguns, muzzle-loading handguns, Section 1 shotguns, sound moderators and other firearm types.

## 1.2 New applications, renewals and revocations.

* There were 847 new applications for firearm certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, of which 828 were granted and 19 refused.
* 87.4% of new applications were concluded within 16 weeks, up 7.8% on the previous year.
* There were 3133 renewal applications for firearms certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 of which 3128 were granted and 5 refused.
* 97.8% of renewal applications were concluded before expiry, up 1.2% from the previous year.
* A total of 40 firearms certificates were revoked in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, up 2 from the previous year.

Firearm certificates can be revoked if, for example, the Chief Constable of Police Scotland is satisfied that the holder can no longer be entrusted with firearms in accordance with the [Firearms Act 1968](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/27/contents).

# 2. Shotguns

## **2.1 Weapons covered by shotgun certificates**.

* There were 132376 shotguns covered by shotgun certificates as at 31 March 2025.

## 2.2 New applications, renewals and revocations.

* There were 1215 new applications for shotgun certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 of which 1184 were granted and 31 refused.
* 84% of new applications were concluded within 16 weeks, up 6.3% from the previous year.
* There were 5382 renewal applications for shotgun certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 of which 5374 were granted and 8 refused.
* 97.9% of renewal applications were concluded before expiry, up 2.1% from the previous year.
* A total of 61 shotgun certificates were revoked in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, up 3 from the previous year.

Shotgun certificates can be revoked if, for example the Chief Constable of Police Scotland is satisfied that the holder can no longer be entrusted with shotguns, in accordance with the [Firearms Act 1968](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/27/contents).

# 3. Air Weapons

3.1 Weapons covered by air weapon certificates.

The Air Weapon and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015 does not require the registration of individual weapons and therefore there is no data relating to the number of weapons covered by air weapon certificates.

3.2 New applications, renewals and revocations.

* There were 1330 new applications for air weapon certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, of which 1296 were granted and 34 refused.
* 89.6% of new applications were concluded within 16 weeks, up 6.3% from the previous year.
* There were 2825 renewal applications for air weapon certificates in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 of which 2818 were granted and 7 refused.
* 97.8% of renewal applications were concluded before expiry, up 1% from the previous year.
* A total of 53 air weapon certificates were revoked in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 down 3 from the previous year.

# 4. Registered Firearm Dealers (RFDs)

There were 331 registered firearm dealers in Scotland as at 31 March 2025.

* There were 20 new applications for registration in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, of which 20 were granted and 0 refused.
* 84.2% of new applications were concluded within 16 weeks, down 15.8% in the previous year.
* There were 80 renewal applications for registration in the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 of which 0 were refused.
* 91.2% of renewal applications were concluded before expiry, down 6.2% in the previous year.

# 5. Visitor Permits

Visitor permits allow visitors to Great Britain to possess a firearm, shotgun, air weapon or ammunition without holding a certificate. Visitor permits are usually granted enabling the holder to attend organised shoots such as deer stalking or competitive target shooting events. The following information relates to visitor permits issued in Scotland.

There were 920 visitor permits granted for firearms as at 31 March 2025.

There were 2743 visitor permits granted for shotguns as at 31 March 2025.

There were 80 visitor permits granted for air weapons as at 31 March 2025.

# 6. User Satisfaction 2024/2025

**6.1 About the survey**

* Police Scotland recognises the importance of understanding the views and priorities of those who use the firearms and explosives licensing service. Whilst our aim is to meet our statutory responsibilities in respect of the legislation, we are keen to gauge user satisfaction with the service provided.
* In April 2019 we launched our first ever Firearms and Explosives Licensing User Satisfaction Survey to engage with members of the public who use the service. The survey was conducted over a 12-month period and closed late March 2020 by which time 100 responses had been received. Feedback was analysed and a report produced outlining the nature of the responses. Keen to understand further the views of our users, the survey has run annually since.
* The survey was launched again between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. A total of 19 responses were received.
* Again, the survey consisted of 12 questions, 10 pre-coded and two free-text and was made available via Police Scotland’s Citizen Space platform. Participation was sought from all certificate holders who used our services during this period by the licensing staff and Firearms Enquiry Officers.

# 6.2 What the public said

* Whilst 19 responses only represent a small percentage of our certificate holders, the responses were useful in gauging the level of satisfaction with the service as well as identifying areas where it is perceived improvements can be made.
* The spread of responses from across Scotland was: North 10%. East 42% and West 48%.
* 21% of respondents said they were applying for the renewal of their certification; 15% applying for a grant for the first time; 26% were amending the number/type of weapons or volume of ammunition held; 5% for an additional certificate; and 15% selected “other.”
* A strong majority of respondents (78%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall application process whilst 5% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the service.
* 78% said it was easy to get information from Police Scotland about how to apply for the grant, renewal or variation of a Certificate/Permit or other service they applied for. 67% said it was easy or very easy to fill in the application forms. 77% said it was easy or very easy to contact Police Scotland's Firearms and Explosives Licensing Unit. 68% stated they were satisfied with the speed and efficiency of the service whilst 15% said they were not satisfied.
* The majority of the respondents (83%) felt that the officers and staff they dealt with were knowledgeable and professional whilst 10% were dissatisfied with the interaction with officers and staff.
* Respondents were thereafter given the opportunity to comment on how the service could be improved or provide and further relevant feedback. 11 comments overall were received from the two free-text questions, 63% of which contained positive feedback on the service received which has been conveyed to individual staff members where they have been named.
* Where respondents felt improvements were necessary, the following areas were highlighted:
	+ Improvements required to the Police Scotland website and the ability to make applications online.
	+ Clearer information for GP’s on how to contact Police Scotland should a concern be identified.