

Statistical Bulletin

Crime and Justice Series

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

FIREARM CERTIFICATE STATISTICS, SCOTLAND, 2013
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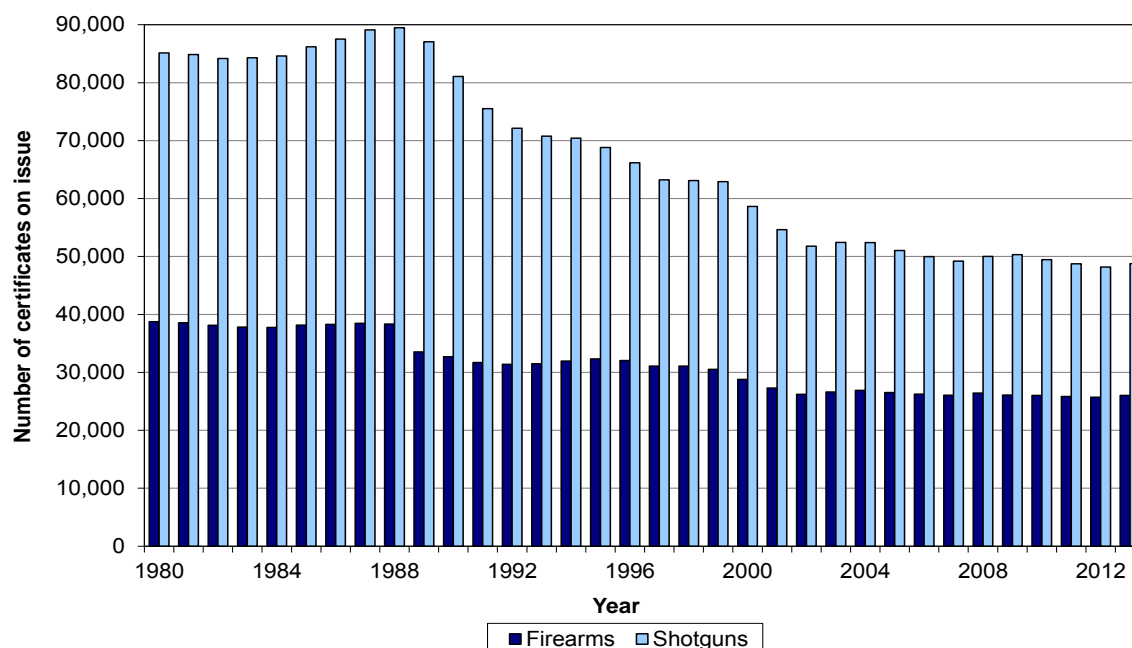


1. Introduction

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 police in Scotland over the last ten years. The bulletin also provides information on the number of registered firearm dealers, visitor permits and European Firearms 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, 2012-13“](#), was published in November 2013.

Chart 1: Number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue in Scotland as at 31 December, 1980 to 2013



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2. Main Points

- There were 26,020 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2013, an increase of 1% compared to the end of 2012. This is the third lowest number of firearm certificates on issue over the ten year period covered by this bulletin ([Table 1](#) and [Charts 1](#) and [2](#)).
- The 26,020 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2013 covered the possession of 84,358 firearms. Due to a change in recording practices relating to sound moderators, there has been an increase of around 10,000 in the number of items held on firearm certificates. For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#). ([Table 1](#) and [Chart 2](#)).
- There were 48,779 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2013, an increase of 1% from the end of 2012. Despite the increase in the most recent year, there has been a 7% decrease in the number of shotgun certificates on issue over the ten year period covered by this bulletin ([Table 5](#) and [Charts 1](#) and [4](#)).
- The 48,779 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2013 covered the possession of 141,923 shotguns, the highest number of shotguns held on certificate over the last ten years. This is an increase of 10% in the number of shotguns held on certificate compared to 2004 ([Table 5](#) and [Chart 4](#)).
- The average number of shotguns held on each certificate issued has increased from 2.5 in 2004 to 2.9 in 2013 ([Table 5](#)).
- There were 350 registered firearm dealers in Scotland at the end of 2013, a decrease of three since the end of 2012. This is still the second highest number of registered dealers in the ten year period covered by this bulletin, an increase of 25% from the 280 registered dealers at the end of 2004 ([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.

Having consulted with users via [ScotStat](#), and there being no objections, it was intended that this bulletin would be the first to present statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) on a financial year basis. It was envisaged that this bulletin would cover the five year calendar period from 2004 to 2008 as well as the five year financial period from 2008-09 to 2012-13.

Prior to consulting with users on moving to presenting the data on a financial year basis, discussions were had with the Police Service of Scotland, hereafter referred to as Police Scotland throughout this bulletin. Police Scotland confirmed that it would be possible to provide the data on a financial year basis for the five year period requested.

However, when Police Scotland tried to extract the data from the SHOGUN system, the firearms licensing system, it was discovered that data cannot be retrospectively extracted from the SHOGUN system. This is because the SHOGUN system is a live operational system and to obtain data as at a specific date, it has to be extracted on that date. As a result, it will not be possible to move to presenting the data on a financial year basis in this bulletin. The data presented in this bulletin are therefore for the calendar years 2004 to 2013.

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 changed the policing landscape in Scotland, replacing the previous eight police forces, the Scottish Police Services Authority and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency from 1 April 2013. Police Scotland is now responsible for operational policing in Scotland and is held to account by the Scottish Police Authority. The statistics set out in this bulletin cover the three months preceding and the nine months following the establishment of Police Scotland.

Following the establishment of Police Scotland, a national SHOGUN system has been developed. The national SHOGUN system is expected to become operational during the second half of 2014. Due to the nature of the SHOGUN system, once the national system is introduced it will only be possible to provide statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates at a national level, with no regional or geographic breakdowns being available. As a consequence, the data in this bulletin are presented on a national level only.

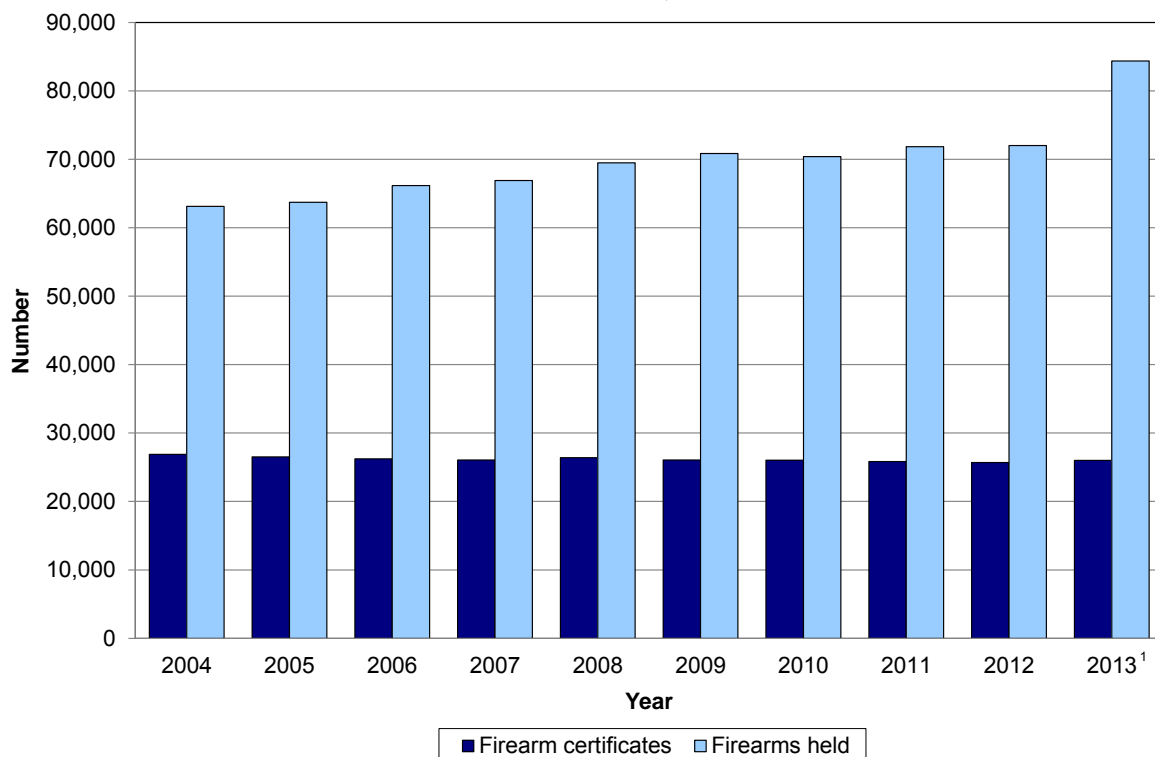
In addition, the new system will only be able to recover statistics from the point of introduction onwards. The national SHOGUN system will have to be running for 12 months before complete statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates will be available. In the interim period, the system will only be able to provide headline statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates at a given time. This means that for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 bulletins, only headline statistics for the number of firearm and shotgun certificates will be available.

To facilitate moving to presenting the data on a financial year basis, the next bulletin will only cover the three month period from 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014. It is therefore our intention to publish these data on a headline basis, in the same format as how we intend to present the 2014-15 and 2015-16 data. For further information on the data which will be available in these bulletins, please see [Note 4.3.3](#).

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

- There were 26,020 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2013, an increase of 1% from 2012. The number of firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2013 is higher than at the end of 2011 as well as 2012, but lower than the other years covered by this bulletin.

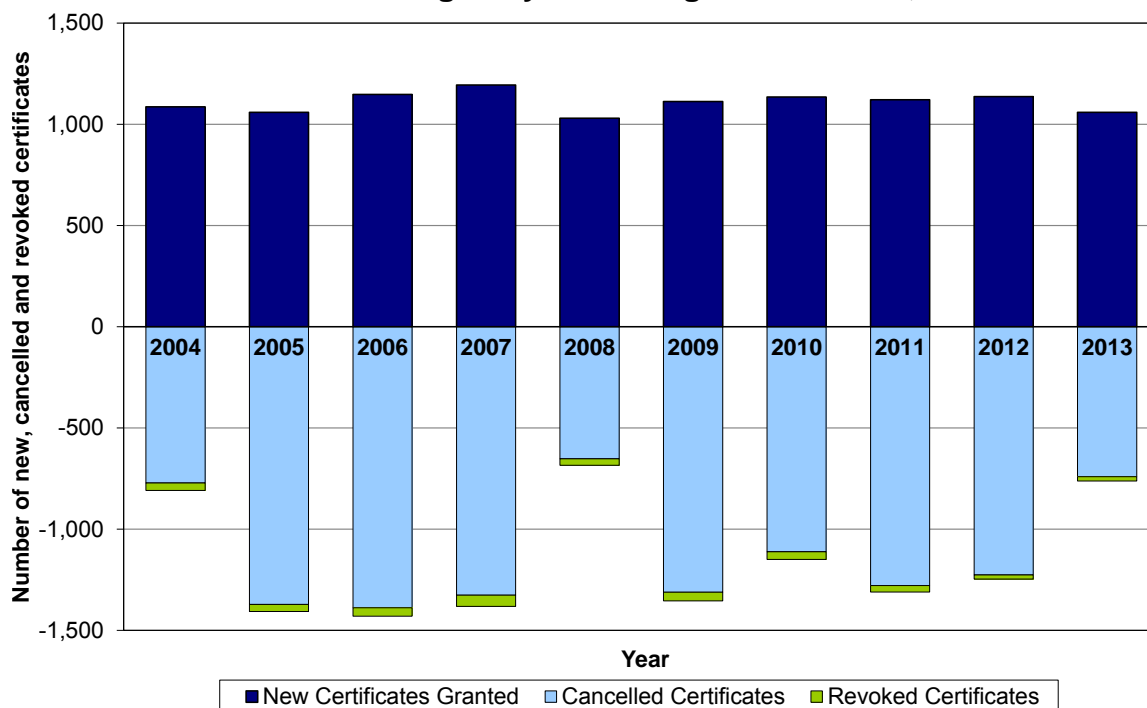
Chart 2: Number of firearm certificates on issue and number of firearms held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013



1. Due to a change in recording practices relating to sound moderators, there has been an increase of around 10,000 in the number of items held on firearm certificates. For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#).

- The number of items held on firearms certificate in 2013 was 84,358. However this increase from 72,005 the previous year, is largely due to a change in the recording practice in relation to sound moderators. For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#). Around 10,000 of the increase this year in the number of items held on firearm certificates is the result of two legacy police force areas now including sound moderators in the miscellaneous category. If this had not been the case, the number of items held on firearms certificate would have increased by approximately 3% since 2012. For further information on the number of items possessed on firearm certificates, please see Notes [4.2.8](#) and [4.2.9](#).
- Although the number of firearm certificates on issue has increased marginally in the last year, the figures have remained relatively stable over the ten year period covered by this bulletin with an overall slightly decreasing trend since 2004. In contrast, the number of items held on certificate has shown an increasing trend from 2004 to 2012, resulting in the average number of firearms held on each certificate rising from 2.3 in 2004 to 2.8 in 2012. Following the change in recording practice relating to sound moderators, the average number of items held on each certificate was 3.2 in 2013.
- In 2013, the number of firearm certificates on issue per head of population in Scotland was 488 per 100,000 population, an increase of four per 100,000 population compared to 2012. Despite the increase in the last year there are now 41 fewer firearm certificates on issue per 100,000 head of population than in 2004.

Chart 3: New firearm certificate applications (granted), cancellations and revocations in Scotland during the year ending 31 December, 2004 to 2013

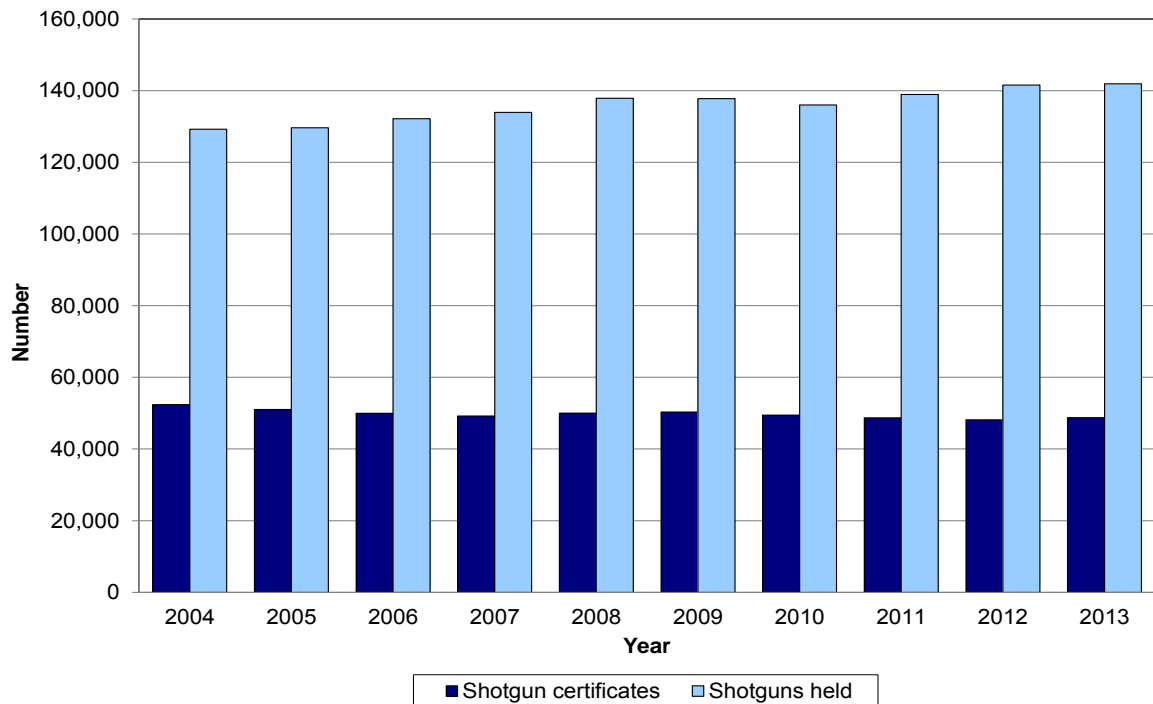


- In 2013, there were 1,067 applications for a new firearm certificate, a decrease of 7% on the 1,149 applications in 2012. Of the total number of applications for a new firearm certificate in 2013, 1,059 were granted with eight applications, 1% of total applications, being refused.
- In 2013, there were 1,822 applications for the renewal of a firearm certificate, with three of those applications being refused.
- There were 741 firearm certificates cancelled and 21 certificates revoked in 2013, compared to 1,227 cancellations and 20 revocations in 2012. The number of new applications granted outnumbered the number of cancellations and revocations by 297, thus contributing to an increase in the overall number of firearm certificates on issue in Scotland, the first increase since 2008.
- The 26,020 firearm certificates on issue as at 31 December 2013 covered the possession of 84,358 items. In addition, the certificates on issue authorised a further 11,190 items to be purchased or acquired. For further information please see [Note 4.2.9](#). It should be noted that due to a change in recording practices, there has been an increase in the number of items, including sound moderators, held on firearm certificates. For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#).
- Of the 64,269 items held on firearm certificates, where it was possible to distinguish the type of item, 69% were rifles. For further information on why it is not possible to distinguish the item type in all cases, please see [Note 4.2.5](#).

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

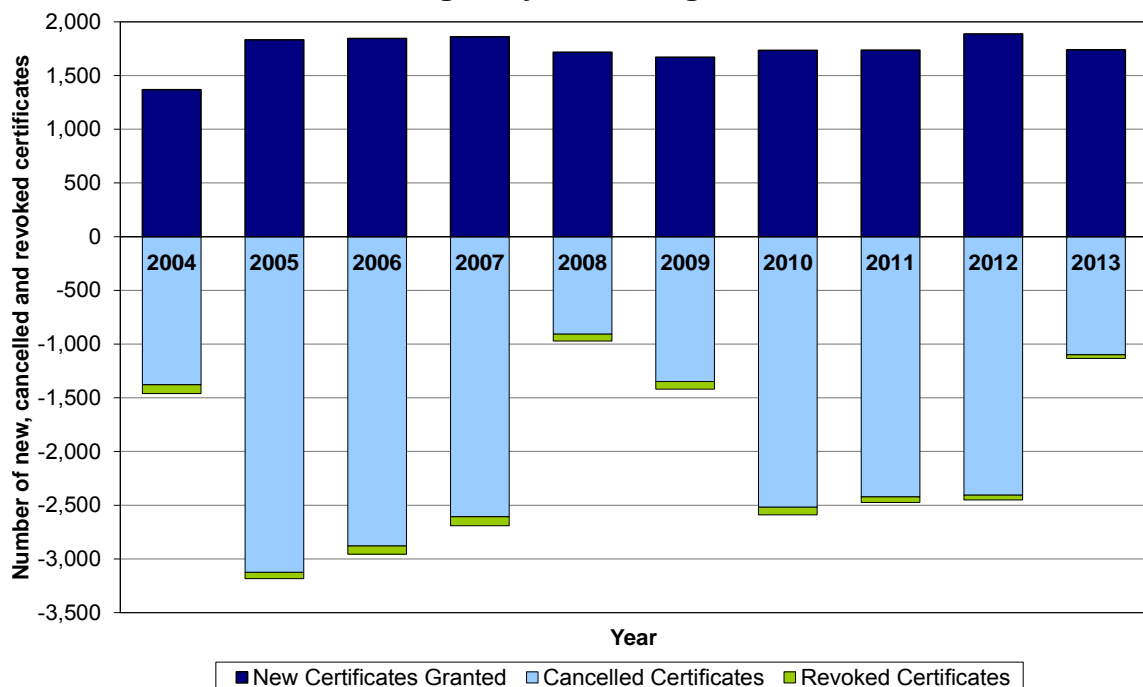
- There were 48,779 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2013, an increase of 1% from 2012. The increase in shotgun certificates on issue is the first since 2009 and the number of shotgun certificates on issue is now at its highest level since 2010.
- The 48,779 shotgun certificates on issue at the end of 2013 covered the possession of 141,923 shotguns. This is an increase of less than half of 1% from the 141,569 shotguns held on certificate at the end of 2012 and the highest number over the last ten years. For further information on the number of weapons possessed on shotgun certificates, please see Notes [4.2.8](#) and [4.2.9](#)
- Since 2004 there has been an increase of 10% in the number of shotguns held on certificate, while over the same period there has been a 7% decrease in the number of shotgun certificates on issue. As a result, the average number of shotguns held on each certificate issued has increased from 2.5 in 2004 to 2.9 in 2013.
- The number of shotgun certificates on issue in Scotland in 2013 per 100,000 population was 916. This is an increase of nine per 100,000 population compared to 2012, but lower than the per head of population figure for the other years covered by this bulletin.

Chart 4: Number of shotgun certificates on issue and number of shotguns held on certificate in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013



- In 2013, there were 1,766 applications for a new shotgun certificate, of which 1,739 were granted and 27 were refused, 2% of the total number of new applications.
- There were 3,446 applications for a renewal of a shotgun certificate in 2013, with eight of those applications being refused.

Chart 5: New shotgun certificate applications (granted), cancellations and revocations in Scotland during the year ending 31 December, 2004 to 2013



- In 2013, a total of 1,100 shotgun certificates were cancelled, which accounted for 2% of all shotgun certificates from the previous year. There were 34 shotgun certificates revoked in 2013, a slight decrease on the 45 certificates revoked in 2012. The number of new applications granted outnumbered the number of cancellations and revocations by 605, thus contributing to the increase in the number of shotgun certificates on issue.

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

- There were 350 registered firearm dealers in Scotland at the end of 2013, a decrease of 1% from the 353 registered dealers in 2012. Despite the decrease, this is still the second highest number of registered dealers in the ten year period covered by this bulletin.
- In 2013, there were 42 new applications granted for registration of firearm dealers, with 162 renewal of registration applications granted. There were no refusals for either new registration or renewal of registration applications, although 43 registrations were cancelled.
- The number of registered dealers per population has remained stable through the period from 2004 to 2013. In 2013, there were seven registered dealers per 100,000 population, the third year in a row this has been the case.

3.4 Visitor Permits ([Table 11](#))

- In 2013, a total of 1,964 firearm applications for a Visitor Permit were submitted by EU and non-EU residents, a 3% decrease on the 2,021 applications submitted in 2012.
- In 2013, a total of 3,813 shotgun applications for a Visitor Permit were submitted by EU and non-EU residents. This is a 3% increase on the 3,701 applications submitted in 2012.

3.5 European Firearms Passes ([Table 12](#))

- There were 1,349 European Firearms Passes (EFPs) on issue at the end of 2013, an increase of 9% on the 1,237 on issue at the end of 2012. Please note that the number of EFPs on issue in 2013 in the legacy Strathclyde Police force area is an undercount. For further information, please see [Note 4.2.4](#).
- In 2013, a total of 138 new applications were issued for an EFP, with 48 renewals issued and 26 cancellations.

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 2013. This is the fourth 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 items held on firearm certificates in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications for new firearm certificates		Firearm certificates on issue	Firearm certificates on issue per 100,000 population ¹	Items held on firearm certificates	Number & Rate
	Granted	Refused				Average number of items held on each firearm certificate
2004	1,086	12	26,897	529	63,115	2.3
2005 ²	1,059	18	26,511	519	63,710	2.4
2006 ²	1,147	9	26,234	511	66,164	2.5
2007	1,194	9	26,056	504	66,893	2.6
2008	1,030	13	26,415	508	69,481	2.6
2009	1,112	12	26,072	498	70,856	2.7
2010	1,135	17	26,035	495	70,410	2.7
2011	1,121	20	25,831	487	71,860	2.8
2012	1,137	12	25,702	484	72,005	2.8
2013 ³	1,059	8	26,020	488	84,358	3.2

Notes:

1. Mid-year population estimates are from the National Records of Scotland:
<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html>.
2. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).
3. Due to a change in recording practices relating to sound moderators, there has been an increase of around 10,000 in the number of items held on firearm certificates. For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#).

Table 2: Firearm Certificates – new applications, renewals, variations, cancellations, revocations and number of firearm certificates on issue in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications						Cancellations ²	Revocations ²	Firearm certificates on issue
	New Firearm Certificate		Renewal of Firearm Certificate		Variation of Firearm Certificate				
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Fee Charged ¹	No Fee Charged			
2004	1,086	12	766	3	1,010	1,211	772	37	26,897
2005 ³	1,059	18	6,470	5	1,035	1,239	1,372	35	26,511
2006 ³	1,147	9	6,605	17	990	1,310	1,389	41	26,234
2007	1,194	9	6,634	7	1,047	1,471	1,327	55	26,056
2008	1,030	13	1,698	1	1,201	2,723	653	32	26,415
2009	1,112	12	2,100	1	1,173	1,431	1,312	43	26,072
2010	1,135	17	5,699	2	912	1,293	1,112	38	26,035
2011	1,121	20	6,385	8	1,019	1,052	1,279	32	25,831
2012	1,137	12	6,245	5	877	1,214	1,227	20	25,702
2013	1,059	8	1,819	3	882	880	741	21	26,020

Notes:

1. For further information on when a fee is charged for a variation of a firearm certificate please see [Note 4.5.2](#).
2. For further information on cancellations and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.7](#).
3. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).

Table 3: Firearm Certificates – cancellations and revocations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

	Number & Percentage									
Firearm Certificates	2004	2005¹	2006¹	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of certificates on issue	26,897	26,511	26,234	26,056	26,415	26,072	26,035	25,831	25,702	26,020
Number of cancellations²	772	1,372	1,389	1,327	653	1,312	1,112	1,279	1,227	741
Percentage of certificates cancelled from previous year	2.9	5.1	5.2	5.1	2.5	5.0	4.3	4.9	4.8	2.9
Number of revocations²	37	35	41	55	32	43	38	32	20	21
Percentage of certificates revoked from previous year	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).
2. For further information on cancellations and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.7](#).

Table 4: Firearm Certificates – number of items possessed on firearm certificates and number of additional items authorised to be purchased or acquired on firearm certificates in Scotland as at 31 December 2013

	Type of Item										Breakdown of type of item not available ⁷	Number Total
	Section 1 Shotgun ¹	Rifle	Handgun ^{2,3}	Carbine		Muzzleloader		Air weapon ⁴		Miscellaneous ^{5,6}		
				Under Lever	Bolt Action	Rifle	Handgun	Rifle	Handgun			
Possessed ⁸	1,824	44,150	800	87	12	194	481	350	107	16,264	20,089	84,358
Authorised to be purchased/acquired	360	5,397	109	16	5	50	104	92	1	3,991	1,065	11,190
Total	2,184	49,547	909	103	17	244	585	442	108	20,255	21,154	95,548

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 items 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. A large part of the increase in the number of handguns compared to previous years is a result of harmonised recording practises resulting from the establishment of Police Scotland. Humane killers should be recorded as handguns but in previous returns some legacy force areas had not been recording them as such.
4. For further information on the types of air weapons that a firearm certificate is required for please see [Note 4.4.3](#).
5. Includes items such as Section 5 firearms, tranquillising rifles, etc.
6. Due to a change in recording practices relating to sound moderators, there has been an increase of around 10,000 in the number of miscellaneous items held on firearm certificates and an increase of around 2,500 in the number of miscellaneous items authorised to be purchased or acquired . For further information please see [Note 4.2.6](#).
7. For technical reasons, within the legacy Tayside Police force area it is not possible to provide a breakdown of items held on firearm certificates.
8. For further information on the number of items possessed on firearm or shotgun certificates please see Notes [4.2.8](#) and [4.2.9](#).

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, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications for new shotgun certificates		Shotgun certificates on issue	Shotgun certificates on issue per 100,000 population ¹	Shotguns held on certificate	Number & Rate
	Granted	Refused				Average number of shotguns held on each certificate
2004	1,369	31	52,409	1,031	129,218	2.5
2005 ²	1,833	26	51,029	999	129,630	2.5
2006 ²	1,844	18	49,974	974	132,181	2.6
2007	1,860	31	49,213	952	133,940	2.7
2008	1,716	33	50,021	961	137,881	2.8
2009	1,671	22	50,308	962	137,768	2.7
2010	1,735	37	49,449	940	135,987	2.8
2011	1,736	41	48,726	919	138,939	2.9
2012	1,888	38	48,168	907	141,569	2.9
2013	1,739	27	48,779	916	141,923	2.9

Notes:

1. Mid-year population estimates are from the National Records of Scotland:

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

2. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).

Table 6: Shotgun Certificates – new applications, renewals, cancellations, revocations and number of shotgun certificates on issue in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications				Cancellations ¹	Revocations ¹	Number Shotgun certificates on issue
	New Shotgun Certificate		Renewal of Shotgun Certificate				
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused			
2004	1,369	31	1,426	2	1,378	83	52,409
2005 ²	1,833	26	13,682	8	3,125	58	51,029
2006 ²	1,844	18	13,400	30	2,879	77	49,974
2007	1,860	31	13,133	9	2,608	83	49,213
2008	1,716	33	2,964	4	907	65	50,021
2009	1,671	22	3,476	0	1,348	71	50,308
2010	1,735	37	11,416	9	2,519	71	49,449
2011	1,736	41	12,440	9	2,422	52	48,726
2012	1,888	38	11,583	6	2,406	45	48,168
2013	1,739	27	3,438	8	1,100	34	48,779

Notes:

1. For further information on cancellations and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.7](#).
2. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).

Table 7: Shotgun Certificates – cancellations and revocations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

	Number & Percentage									
Shotgun Certificates	2004	2005¹	2006¹	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of certificates on issue	52,409	51,029	49,974	49,213	50,021	50,308	49,449	48,726	48,168	48,779
Number of cancellations²	1,378	3,125	2,879	2,608	907	1,348	2,519	2,422	2,406	1,100
Percentage of certificates cancelled from previous year	2.6	6.0	5.6	5.2	1.8	2.7	5.0	4.9	4.9	2.3
Number of revocations²	83	58	77	83	65	71	71	52	45	34
Percentage of certificates revoked from previous year	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Notes:

1. A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy Fife Constabulary. For further information please see [Note 4.2.3](#).
2. For further information on cancellations and revocations of firearm or shotgun certificates please see [Note 4.2.7](#).

Table 8: Firearm Dealers – new applications for registration (granted and refused) and number of firearm dealers registered in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	New applications for registration from dealers		Registered dealers	Number & Rate
	Granted	Refused		Registered dealers per 100,000 population ¹
2004	18	1	280	6
2005	24	-	275	5
2006	26	-	283	6
2007	44	6	301	6
2008	39	-	327	6
2009	29	-	335	6
2010	35	-	337	6
2011	32	-	346	7
2012	31	-	353	7
2013	42	-	350	7

Notes:

1. Mid-year population estimates are from the National Records of Scotland:

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

Table 9: Firearm Dealers – applications, renewals, cancellations and number of firearm dealers registered in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications				Cancellations	Registered Dealers ¹
	New Registration		Renewal of Registration			
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused		
2004	18	1	152	-	24	280
2005	24	-	56	-	27	275
2006	26	-	31	-	18	283
2007	44	6	143	1	24	301
2008	39	-	67	-	13	327
2009	29	-	49	-	20	335
2010	35	-	140	-	29	337
2011	32	-	80	-	23	346
2012	31	-	72	-	24	353
2013	42	-	162	-	43	350

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 legacy Strathclyde Police force area had their licence revoked.

Table 10: Firearm Dealers – cancellations in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

	Number & Percentage									
Firearm Dealers	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of registered firearm dealers¹	280	275	283	301	327	335	337	346	353	350
Number of cancellations	24	27	18	24	13	20	29	23	24	43
Percentage of firearm dealers cancelled from previous year	8.5	9.6	6.5	8.5	4.3	6.1	8.7	6.8	6.9	12.2

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 legacy Strathclyde Police force area had their licence revoked.

Table 11: Visitor Permits¹ – number of applications from EU and non-EU residents in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications				Number	
	EU Residents		Non-EU Residents		Total Applications	
	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns	Firearms	Shotguns
2004	2,499	4,910	199	653	2,698	5,563
2005	2,324	4,269	185	546	2,509	4,815
2006	2,194	3,945	207	435	2,401	4,380
2007	2,388	4,290	185	395	2,573	4,685
2008	2,235	4,035	202	391	2,437	4,426
2009	2,253	3,827	145	295	2,398	4,122
2010	2,153	4,030	145	337	2,298	4,367
2011	1,986	4,014	123	292	2,109	4,306
2012	1,869	3,359	152	342	2,021	3,701
2013	1,824	3,466	140	347	1,964	3,813

Notes:

1. For further information on visitor permits please see Notes [4.7.1](#) and [4.7.2](#).

Table 12: European Firearms Passes – new applications, variations, cancellations and number of European Firearms Passes on issue in Scotland as at 31 December, 2004 to 2013

Year	Applications Issued			Cancellations	Number European Firearm Passes on issue
	New European Firearm Pass ¹	Renewal of European Firearm Pass	Variation of European Firearm Pass ²		
2004	160	15	4	33	836
2005	158	122	23	103	891
2006	181	145	28	98	974
2007	205	167	21	87	1,092
2008	188	59	42	44	1,236
2009	130	40	26	90	1,276
2010 ³	164	156	31	76	1,043
2011 ³	166	163	19	78	1,131
2012 ³	175	154	8	69	1,237
2013 ³	138	48	17	26	1,349

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 in the legacy Strathclyde Police force area 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, 2004 to 2013

Year	Number of Applications (Granted)			Number
	Certificate Holders	Non-Certificate Holders	For Possession Outside UK	
2004	-	-	-	-
2005	1	-	-	-
2006	3	-	-	-
2007	2	-	-	-
2008	-	-	-	-
2009	1	-	-	-
2010	-	-	-	-
2011	-	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-	-
2013	-	-	-	-

Notes:

1. For further information on Article 7 Authorities please see [Note 4.7.3](#).

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 derived from data returns submitted by Police Scotland in respect of information held on firearm and shotgun certificates on issue under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended).
- 4.2.2 As the SHOGUN system is a live operational system there can be small changes in the number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue day to day as new applications, renewals, variations or cancellations are entered and processed through the system. As a consequence, the total number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue as at 31 December each year are accurate. There may be small differences in the actual number of new applications, renewals, variations or cancellations each year, compared to those shown in the tables contained in this bulletin, depending on the exact date that data were extracted from the SHOGUN system. Any resultant differences will be minor.

- 4.2.3 A software problem in 2005 and 2006 affected the data submitted by the legacy 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 legacy force resolved the problem for the provision of the 2007 data.
- 4.2.4 The legacy Strathclyde Police moved to using the SHOGUN system as their firearms licensing system on 31 March 2010. At present, the version of the SHOGUN system used in the legacy Strathclyde Police force area is unable to distinguish between grants of new European Firearms Passes (EFPs) and renewal/variation applications. As a result, all EFP applications issued in the legacy Strathclyde Police force area since then have been treated as a new EFP. There is therefore an undercount of EFPs issued in the legacy Strathclyde Police force area. This undercount will be rectified as and when firearm certificates come up for renewal.
- 4.2.5 For technical reasons, within the legacy Tayside Police force area it is not possible to provide a breakdown of items held on firearm certificates.
- 4.2.6 During the production of this bulletin and through liaising with Police Scotland, it was discovered there were differences in what the eight legacy police forces had included in the miscellaneous category for the type of items possessed and authorised to be purchased or acquired on firearm certificates. This in turn affects the total number of items recorded as being held on firearm certificates (Tables [1](#) and [4](#), and [Chart 2](#)). The issue related to sound moderators, which are designed to suppress noise and flash. They are not firearms in themselves but are subject to certification and as such, are included in the count of items held on firearm certificates. These should be included in the miscellaneous category but only the legacy Fife Constabulary and Strathclyde Police forces had included them in previous returns.

For the data as at 31 December 2013, in addition to these two legacy force areas, the legacy force areas of Grampian Police and Northern Constabulary have now included sound moderators in the miscellaneous category. The inclusion of sound moderators from these two additional legacy force areas has resulted in an artificial increase of around 10,000 in the number of items held on firearm certificates and 2,500 authorised to be purchased or acquired when compared with the previous year's figures. Sound moderators will be included in the miscellaneous category for the whole of Scotland from the next bulletin onwards.

- 4.2.7 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.
- 4.2.8 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.

4.2.9 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.

4.3 Changes to forthcoming bulletins

4.3.1 With the establishment of Police Scotland and then the introduction of the national SHOGUN system it will no longer be applicable or possible to present the data at a legacy police force level. At present, only data for Scotland will be available from this bulletin onwards.

4.3.2 This is the last bulletin in this series that will present data on a calendar year basis. The next bulletin will present data for the three month period from 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014. This will aid the move to presenting data on a financial year basis from 2014-15 onwards.

4.3.3 Due to the introduction of the National SHOGUN system during the second half of 2014, only headline statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates will be available for 2014-15 and 2015-16. This will affect the tables as follows:

Table 1: All data will be available except for data on applications for new firearm certificates.

Table 2: This data will not be available.

Table 3: This data will not be available.

Table 4: This data will be available in the same format.

Table 5: All data will be available except for data on applications for new shotgun certificates.

Table 6: This data will not be available.

Table 7: This data will not be available.

Table 8: All data will be available except for data on applications for new registrations from firearm dealers.

Table 9: This data will not be available.

Table 10: This data will not be available.

Table 11: This data will not be available.

Table 12: Only data on the number of European Firearms Passes on issue will be available.

Table 13: This data will not be available.

As a result of the move to reporting on a financial year basis, the data as at 31 March 2014 will only cover the three month period from 1 January 2014, therefore this data will also be presented in this format.

4.4 Regulations on the issue of firearm and shotgun certificates

4.4.1 All persons acquiring or in possession of a firearm, which comes under the Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968, 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.

- 4.4.2 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.
- 4.4.3 At present, 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.
- 4.4.4 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.
- 4.4.5 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.

4.4.6 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.

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

4.5.1 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.

4.5.2 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).

4.6 Regulations on firearm dealer certificates

4.6.1 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.

4.6.2 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.

4.7 Regulations on Visitor Permits and European Firearms Passes

4.7.1 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).

4.7.2 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.

- 4.7.3 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 EU 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.

4.8 UK Statistics Authority

- 4.8.1 The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Assessment Report, which was published in June 2011, can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-119---statistics-on-homicide--domestic-abuse--firearm-offences-and-firearm-certificates-recorded-by-the-police-in-scotland.pdf>.

4.9 UK data sources

- 4.9.1 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 2013 and was published on 29 August 2013. The bulletin can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearm-and-shotgun-certificates-in-england-and-wales-2012-to-2013>.

Firearm and shotgun certificates data for England and Wales as at 31 March 2014 are scheduled for publication in late summer of 2014.

- 4.9.2 Similar statistics for the Police Service of Northern Ireland are not published; however, data can be provided through a Freedom of Information request: <http://www.psni.police.uk/directory/aboutus/publications.htm>.

4.10 Mid-year population estimates

- 4.10.1 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>.

- 4.10.2 Following the 2011 census, the mid-year population estimates for 2004 to 2011 have been revised. The revised mid-year population estimates for 2004 to 2011 have been used to calculate population rates for 2004 to 2011 throughout this bulletin.

4.11 Other

- 4.11.1 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: **£1,000**.

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>.

- 4.11.2 The following symbol is used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = nil.

A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION FOR SCOTLAND

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics.

are available via an alternative route.

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact JusticeAnalysts@scotland.gsi.gov.uk for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: 0131 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

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