



Firearms and Explosives Licensing Service – User Satisfaction 20/21

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 was relaunched in June 2020 until the end of March 2021, resulting in an additional 315 responses being 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. Encouragement was also given by the shooting organisation to their members to take part.

What the public said

Whilst 315 responses only represents a small percentage of our certificate holders, the responses were very useful in gauging the level of satisfaction with the service as well as identifying areas where it is perceived improvements can be made.

We received a good spread of response from across Scotland: 40% from the North, 33% from the East and 25% from the West.

61% of respondents said they were applying for the renewal of their certification, 12% were applying for the grant of a certificate and 11% were seeking to vary their existing certificates.

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A strong majority of respondents (88%) said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall application process whilst 7% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the service.

Over 80% said it was easy to get information, complete the application forms and contact Police Scotland. 82% stated they were satisfied with the speed and efficiency of the service whilst 9% said they were not satisfied.

The majority of the respondents (85%) felt that the officers and staff they dealt with were knowledgeable and professional whilst 4% 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.

364 comments overall were received, 42% of which contained positive feedback on the service received which has been conveyed to individual staff members where they are have been named.

Where respondents felt improvements were necessary, the following areas were highlighted:

- Poor Police Scotland website – 5%
- Application process too slow – 6%
- Legislative issues in relation to the requirement for an Air Weapons Certificate – 7%
- The costs associated with providing information from their General Practitioner (GP) – 8%
- Inconsistencies in Firearms Enquiry Officer's knowledge and experience of engaging with them – 9%
- Difficulty in contacting both the licensing function and Firearms Enquiry Officers – 16%.

Message from Supt Alison Higgins

I want to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the survey, particularly during the past year through the health pandemic when all our lives have changed so drastically.

It is clear to me that the vast majority who did respond are satisfied with the service they received. Clearly we had to make many changes to our processes to continue to ensure firearms were held lawfully during the lockdown restrictions and I am pleased to read the positive comments in relation to this. We will continue to use available technology to carry out renewals remotely as our 'business as usual' position going forward.

I believe this has been a worthwhile exercise which allows us to compare the responses with those from last year. It is evident the percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the overall service has improved from 75% to 80%, whilst the number dissatisfied with the speed and efficiency of the service has dropped from

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19% to 9%. I believe this in part reflects the changes we made to our processes in relation to the results from last years' survey.

I will review the feedback from this years' survey and take action where I can in relation to the comments received where it is deemed there is room for improvement. We will relaunch the survey for a further 12 months and I would encourage you to participate and feedback on your interaction with us.

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