

GTA REPORT WARNS £2.35 BILLION LOSS TO GUN TRADE, SHOOTING AND EXCHEQUER

A new Gun Trade Association commissioned economic impact report warns aligning Section 1 and Section 2 firearms licensing could drive a £2.35 billion loss to the gun trade, shooting and the Exchequer, with businesses forecasting turnover decline and job losses, while GTA chief executive Stephen Jolly says the policy risks overwhelming an already stretched licensing system and is not supported by robust national gun crime data.

The Gun Trade Association (GTA) has published a new economic impact report assessing the potential consequences of aligning Section 1 and Section 2 firearms licensing, with survey findings indicating widespread concern across the gun trade and forecasts of reduced turnover and employment if reform goes ahead.

The report also references wider estimates of a £2.35 billion loss in economic value across the firearms and ammunition sector and related final-demand sectors, including induced effects, warning of significant impact to the gun trade, shooting and the Exchequer.

GTA chief executive Stephen Jolly said the association's survey and analysis is intended to provide government with an evidence-led assessment of the likely consequences of S1 and S2 alignment, and to strengthen the trade's ability to challenge policy proposals that he believes are not grounded in reliable public safety data. Jolly warned that the debate around further controls is being advanced without credible, consistent national data on gun crime and argued the current approach risks tackling the wrong problem.

Jolly also argued that high-profile incidents cited in support of change point to failures in the administration and management of licensing rather than a need to restructure the licensing categories. He raised concerns about inconsistency in firearms certificate formats across forces and said this undermines confidence in checks during private transfers, adding that standardisation would be a practical reform.

The report, conducted by TDC Research and published in January 2026, is based on a survey of 211 businesses across the UK gun trade and connected sectors, with responses gathered between 24 September and 15 November 2025. GTA members and subscribers to Gun Trade Insider were invited to participate, and the respondent group included 139 GTA members, 69 non-members and three who were unsure.

SURVEY RESULTS SHOW WIDESPREAD CONCERN ACROSS THE TRADE

According to the findings, 93 per cent of respondents said they were aware of the potential alignment, 70 per cent said they were very concerned about its impact, and 75 per cent forecast a reduction in turnover if alignment proceeds.

Respondents were based across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with the South-East and South-West of England the



most represented English regions. The survey suggests the sample was predominantly retail and dealer-facing, with 73 per cent describing a retail focus and 51 per cent a dealer focus. Nearly all respondents reported serving sports and leisure shooting (97 per cent), while 53 per cent also supplied the conservation and pest control sector and 5 per cent reported supplying defence and law enforcement customers.

Turnover data was provided by 147 businesses, totalling £310.7 million for the reporting period, including VAT where relevant. The leading sales categories reported were firearms and airgun parts and accessories (£77.4 million), firearm sales (£70.5 million) and ammunition sales (£64.0 million).

The report also outlines how the trade activity reported by respondents is split between Section 2 and Section 1 markets. It found 180 businesses supplied shotgun certificate holders and 191 supplied firearm certificate holders. Based on turnover data shared, it estimates 42 per cent of reported firearm turnover value is linked to Section 2 activity and 58 per cent to Section 1 activity, while noting the industry-wide split may differ due to the larger number of shotgun certificate holders relative to firearm certificate holders.

Within the sample, the report estimates £53.4 million turnover linked to new and second-hand shotguns and related products and services, with respondents reporting 38,641 new shotguns and 40,209 second-hand shotguns supplied in the past year. For Section 1, it estimates £73.7 million turnover linked to new and second-hand firearms and related products and services, with 29,707 new firearms and 29,523 second-hand firearms supplied in the past year.

The report places this in the context of a longer-term decline in shotgun certificate numbers in England and Wales. It cites official figures showing shotgun certificates on issue falling from 572,488 in 2018/19 to 482,612 in 2024/25, a 16 per cent reduction over six years. The report suggests shotgun sales have dropped in recent years and links that decline to factors including an ageing user base, cost, bureaucracy and reduced popularity, adding that alignment is anticipated to remove the ability to conduct walk-in sales, creating further pressure on shotgun volumes.

On projected economic impact, the report records an average forecast reduction in annual turnover of 35 per cent across all responding businesses sharing turnover data. For businesses anticipating reduced turnover because of alignment,

the average forecast reduction rises to 40 per cent, and the report records an average forecast reduction of 50 per cent among registered firearm dealer-related businesses anticipating reduced turnover.

The report also provides estimates scaled beyond the survey sample, projecting a £393 million reduction in annual turnover for affected GTA member businesses and a £627 million reduction for affected RFD-related businesses. It further references wider estimates of a £875 million reduction in gross value added from the UK shooting sector and a £2.38 billion reduction in economic value across the firearms and ammunition sector and related final-demand sectors, including induced effects.

Employment impacts are also forecast in the report, with responding businesses sharing workforce data indicating an average projected reduction of 24 per cent in full-time employees and 39 per cent in part-time employees. The scaled estimates project potential losses of 892 full-time and 635 part-time roles across GTA member businesses, and 1,917 full-time and 1,524 part-time roles across RFD-related businesses. ■

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