



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2008-04620

**Keyword:** Complaints/Discipline

**Subject:** SUSPENDED OFFICER's LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

**Request:**

**I am attempting to establish facts and figures for this matter, that being the number of officers suspended and the amount of annual leave that these officers are permitted/granted to reclaim on their return to duty?**

### **Answer:**

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information in full.

**As of the date of your request i.e. 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008, a total of 34 police officers were suspended from duty.**

In each case the officer under suspension is either awaiting termination of criminal/ internal misconduct proceedings or the subject of a criminal/internal misconduct investigation. It should be noted that not all allegations result in criminal and/or internal misconduct proceedings and those that do are not always proven.

Suspension is considered in the most serious cases where it is likely that a misconduct panel would impose a sanction of dismissal, requirement to resign as an alternative to dismissal or a reduction in rank, should the case against the officer be proven.

Each case is examined on an individual basis to determine the level and nature of misconduct of the officer and the extent to which the PSNI's Code of Ethics has been breached. The seriousness of the offence, the circumstances surrounding its commission and its potential impact will dictate the level of action to be pursued and the sanction ultimately imposed.

A suspended officer will not be entitled to any annual leave allowance while on suspension. The officer may still take holidays, but is not required to use annual leave for this. If a suspended member intends to absent themselves from their approved address for a holiday or other purposes, they must submit a report seeking approval through the normal channels to the Head of Professional Standards Department setting out the reasons for the request. The Head of Professional Standards Department will normally grant such requests. These requirements do not apply to Part Time officers.

If the officer is reinstated following a decision not to charge with a disciplinary offence, where charges are dismissed, or where a punishment for a disciplinary offence has been a reduction in pay, a fine, a reprimand or caution, the officer will be entitled to annual leave allowance that will include the period of suspension. It will then be at the discretion of the Chief Constable or their delegated officer to allow the officer to carry forward leave.

If a suspended officer receives a sanction of dismissal, requirement to resign, or reduction in rank, they will not receive

annual leave for the period they were suspended.

The amount of leave, if any, that a suspended officer may avail of will therefore depend on a number of factors including the total quota of leave applicable to their rank and service, leave taken before suspension, the length of suspension, the outcome of the disciplinary process and any discretion exercised on the carrying forward of leave.

The information requested has been obtained from the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI, which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers.

Whilst the PSNI takes seriously any wrongdoing by a police officer, the number of suspended officers must be put into context of the overall size of the PSNI i.e. around 9000 officers at date of your request.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason the PSNI's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other Police Service.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Team on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review in accordance with our complaints procedure. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information Team, Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road Belfast BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.police.uk).

If following an internal review you remain dissatisfied in anyway with the handling of the request you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that all PSNI replies under Freedom of Information will be released simultaneously into the public domain via our website @ [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk).

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.