



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2008-05285
Keyword: Crime
Subject: GAY PRIDE PARADE 2006 - 2008

Request:

"Reverend McIlveen said on radio this morning that a placard was carried in the Gay Pride Parade in 2007 which said, "Jesus is a fag".

He also said members of the parade had exposed themselves".
Please can you advise today: -

Question 1 - How many complaints did police receive about these matters during the past three parades i.e. 2006, 2007 and 2008?

Question 2 - How have the investigations into these complaints been concluded?

Question 3 - Please list any other complaints made to police about the gay pride parades for the last 3 years, please detail the nature of each complaint and how investigations were concluded.

Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

Answers 1 & 2 - Complaints received by the Police Service of Northern Ireland about the above matters during the past 3 parades are as follows: -

2006 - No record of any complaints received.

2007- 1 Complaint received. Information regarding this is in the public domain and can be viewed at <http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/No-prosecution-over-gay-parade.4824669.jp>

2008 - No complaints received however for your information please see

http://www.psnipolice.uk/gay_pride_parade.pdf#xml=http://www.psnipolice.uk/scripts/teaxis.exe/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=gay+pride&pr=internet&order=r&cq=&id=495b25a21d

I have today decided to exempt further information pursuant to the provisions of section 30 (1) Investigations and proceedings conducted by the public authority of the Act.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 30 (1) Investigations and proceedings conducted by the public authority of the Act.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Factors favouring disclosure

Accountability

The information you have requested relates directly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and it's officers when investigating complaints.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

Investigations

The information you have requested falling within the scope of this exemption could cause harm if disclosed, release of this documentation could potentially impact on any ongoing / future investigation. Information held for purpose of a specific investigation.

Interests of third parties

Where third party interests might be jeopardised by the release of information that relates to their identity or personal affairs.

Flow of Information to the Service

A decrease in public confidence may lead to a reduction in support for the police service and would deter the public from reporting matters to the police. This would have a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the PSNI.

BALANCE TEST

On balance the requirement to withhold information relating to investigations, must take precedence over the important issues of accountability. At this time, it would not be in the Public Interest to release this information.

Answer 3- The Police Service of Northern Ireland have had 1 further complaint about an incident that occurred during one of the parades. As above the detail of the complaint and how investigations were concluded are exempt.

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

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office 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 PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.psnipolice.uk/>

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