



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2008-05286

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: POLICE APPLICANTS WITH A COLOUR VISION DEFECT

Request:

Question 1 - Has the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) complied with Home Office Circular 25/2003 in respect of applicants to become a police officer with a Colour Vision Defect?

Question 2 - If yes, do you accept recruits with (a) mild, (b) moderate and (c) severe Colour Vision Defect?

Question 3 - If no, what standard do you apply for applicants to become police officers.

Question 4 - Please indicate the number of male and female officers who have been appointed by you since 2003 who have been identified as having a Colour Vision Defect.

Question 5 - What 'coping strategies' (Home Office Circular 25/2003) have you incorporated into your training/operational policies for officers who have been identified as having a Severe Colour Vision Defect.

Answer:

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

Answer 1 - No. The PSNI have unique issues relating to police use of firearms which were not covered in the Home Office circular. In addition police driving is another consideration due to the high percentage of police drivers required.

Answer 2 - As above

Answer 3 - We do accept mild to moderate colour defects. We accept applicants who correctly respond to 7 out of 10 of the plate in City University tests (edition 2).

Answer 4 - This information is not readily available. To establish the number of male and female officers who have been appointed since 2003 who have been identified as having a Colour Vision defect would exceed the £450 "appropriate limit" as set by the Secretary of State. It would require the retrieval and examination of over 2500 medical files of serving officers recruited since 2003. It is estimated that this would take 208 hours. Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act the organisation has an obligation to assist the requester in refining their request to bring it under the cost limit, unfortunately the nature and the structure of this information makes this impossible. However literature and research would suggest that 60% of colour defective individuals would pass the above standard. This would mean that 120 colour defective individuals would have been recruited, most of whom would have been male. (Low incident of colour vision defects in females makes any estimate for females invalid).

Answer 5 - By using this standard we have not needed to use any coping strategies in training scenarios to date.

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 letter.

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 @ www.psnipolice.uk

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