



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2008-04738

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: FORENSIC MEDICAL OFFICER SCHEME

Request:

We would be obliged if you could provide us with a copy of the Protocol under which the forensic medical officer scheme in Belfast operates, specifically we are interested in whether there are any provisions in relation to how promptly the FMO's (Forensic Medical Officer's) are required to attend at Police Stations.

Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested and we have been advised that as such there is no protocol under which the forensic medical officer scheme in Belfast operates. For your information please find below 2 paragraphs extracted from the existing contract for the services of Forensic Medical Officers that relates specifically to attendance response time.

- 5.4 You, in consultation with each other FMO within your group (such expression including Forensic Medical Officer; Deputy Forensic Medical Officer must devise (if Administrative FMO), follow and revise as necessary from time to time, a roster under which at least one FMO is on duty at any time (24 hours a day and all days of the year) and agree to participate in effective backup procedures. "On duty" means immediately contactable if required and available to attend as soon as reasonably practicable on being requested to attend any police station or other place within the area described in clause 5.1 above. It is your responsibility to either follow the roster drawn up by the FMOA or as FMOA in addition to following the roster is also ensure a fair distribution of work, between all Forensic Medical Officers in the group.**
- 5.5 In the event of dispute regarding attendance as "reasonably practicable", the definition will remain the responsibility of the custody officer (or officer making the request) to identify to the FMO what attendance response time is required.**

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 all PSNI replies under Freedom of Information will be released simultaneously into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk.

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