



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F2008-5481

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS RECEIVED BY PSNI

### Request:

#### Question 1

Of the 2,610 FOI requests received by the PSNI since the Act was introduced up until the third quarter of 2008 are you able to state how many of those requests (either as a figure or a percentage) were submitted by identified journalists or media organisations?

#### Question 2

Out of that total (all requests) can you tell me the number of FOI requests where the information requested was fully withheld in the public interest and the number of FOI requests where the information was partially withheld in the public interest and the exemptions used by your force to withhold the information in both categories?

#### Question 3

As a result of the Act coming into force, has your force had to take on extra personnel to deal with FOI requests and if yes how many staff and at what monetary cost to your force i.e. total salaries)?

#### Question 4

Without identifying the requester can you give me three examples of the FOI requests your force has dealt with where the information has been either fully or partially withheld in the public interest and three examples where the information has been fully disclosed in the public interest?

#### Question 5

Has your force ever received any FOI requests, which were considered vexatious or frivolous?

#### Question 6

In the first three months of the Act being implemented (Jan - March 2005) PSNI received 214 FOI requests and in the third quarter of 2008 209 FOI requests. Can you explain or comment on the reasons for this decrease?

### Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested and the answers to your questions are as follows.

#### Answer 1

The number of requests that have been recorded as being received by members of the Media are as follows

Jan 05 - Dec 05	540 requests received	111 from Media
Jan 06 - Dec 06	643 requests received	240 from Media
Jan 07 - Dec 07	760 requests received	214 from Media
Jan 08 - Dec 08	792 requests received	291 from Media

## Answer 2

For ease of reference I have supplied the information with regard to this question broken down into each year. The information was retrieved from the quarterly returns, which are submitted, to the Association of Chief Police Officers however since April 2008 the ACPO returns have been simplified and we are unable to provide a breakdown of requests where information partially/fully withheld and exemptions used from that date.

**Jan 05 - Dec 05:** 45 requests where information was fully withheld. 84 requests, where the information was partially withheld.

For requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the number in 2005, which cited each of the exemptions in sections 22 to 44 as a reason for refusal, is as follows. It should be noted these figures are not cumulative totals as a single request may have several exemptions applied.

Section 24	1	Section 40	60
Section 27	1	Section 41	6
Section 30	13	Section 43	6
Section 31	23	Section 44	1
Section 38	63		

**Jan 06 - Dec 06:** 48 requests where information was fully withheld. 59 requests where information was partially withheld.

For requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the number in 2005, which cited each of the exemptions in sections 22 to 44 as a reason for refusal, is as follows. It should be noted these figures are not cumulative totals as a single request may have several exemptions applied.

Section 21	1	Section 40	62
Section 23	2	Section 41	14
Section 24	6	Section 42	1
Section 30	39	Section 43	6
Section 31	37	Section 44	12
Section 38	75		

**Jan 07 - Dec 07:** 42 requests where information was fully withheld. 69 requests where information was partially withheld

For requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the number in 2005, which cited each of the exemptions in sections 22 to 44 as a reason for refusal, is as follows. It should be noted these figures are not cumulative totals as a single request may have several exemptions applied.

Section 21	6	Section 40	48
Section 22	1	Section 41	14
Section 23	3	Section 42	1
Section 24	5	Section 43	7
Section 27	1	Section 44	11
Section 30	34		
Section 31	44		
Section 38	56		

**Jan 08 - Mar 08:** 4 requests where information was fully withheld. 20 requests where information partially withheld

For requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the number in 2005, which cited each of the exemptions in sections 22 to 44 as a reason for refusal, is as follows. It should be noted these figures are not cumulative totals as a single request may have several exemptions applied.

Section 21	2	Section 43	4
Section 30	4	Section 44	5
Section 31	8		
Section 38	6		
Section 40	6		
Section 41	3		

## Answer 3

This information is exempt from disclosure under s21 of the Freedom of Information Act, Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means.

The information in question has been released previously under FOI and is published on the Freedom of Information Disclosure Log on the PSNI website at the following link:

[http://www.psni.police.uk/police\\_service\\_of\\_northern\\_ireland\\_freedom\\_of\\_information\\_t~1.pdf](http://www.psni.police.uk/police_service_of_northern_ireland_freedom_of_information_t~1.pdf)

**Answer 4**

As in the answer to question c this information is reasonably accessible by accessing our disclosure log at

[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/foi\\_lists\\_and\\_registers.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/foi_lists_and_registers.htm)

and examining our responses to the individual requests we have answered.

**Answer 5**

The Police Service of Northern Ireland can confirm we have received 131 requests which were considered vexatious.

**Answer 6**

Your final question above is seeking a member of the Service to express an opinion regarding any reasons for a decrease in certain quarters, and as such this is not a valid request for recorded information held by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

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](mailto: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.psni.police.uk/>

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