



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02331

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: COMPLAINTS MADE BY FEMALE OFFICERS AGAINST MALE OFFICERS

Request and Answer:

The cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit & Fees) Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450. To retrieve all the information requested would involve examination of files to manually extract any data required in relation to complaints of a disciplinary nature. Whilst our electronic database would capture certain details it will not indicate whether the complaint was as a result of one officer complaining about the action of another. It is estimated that it would take a minimum of 172 hours to provide details of complaints of a disciplinary nature.

A grievance is defined as '...a complaint by a police officer or member of police staff about action which their employer has taken or is contemplating in relation to them and that action could form the basis of a complaint to either an Industrial or Fair Employment Tribunal'. Grievances are therefore only analysed against the name and rank of the complainant and the nature of the complaint and not against the individual taking/ contemplating the action on behalf of the organisation. A manual review of the files held within Districts and Departments will show the gender of the individual taking the action on behalf of the organisation; however this would take approximately 189 hours to retrieve the information from the existing 284 grievance files. Pre-12 January 2005, grievance/bullying and harassment complaints were managed centrally under the Resolution Procedure. These complaints were not recorded electronically, therefore, we would need to locate and search the manual files to determine the overall number of files before we could start to determine how long it would take to find the year of the complaint, the gender of the complainant and the gender of the person complained against. This would also be a labour intensive and time consuming exercise.

However under our Section 16 duty to assist I have been able to provide the following information within the appropriate limit.

Question 1

Please provide statistics on the number of complaints registered by female PSNI officers against male PSNI officers over the last seven years.

Answer

Since 12 January 2005, 18 Cases of Bullying & Harassment have been lodged by female officers against male officers.

Question 2

Provide detail on the category of such complaints i.e. sexual harassment, assault, other, and the number made in each category if detail is available, relevant to that period.

Answer

The complaints lodged were a combination of 1 or more of the list below:

- Gender - 8
- Religion - 1
- Dependants - 2
- Previous Complaint made - 2

Other - 10

Question 3

Provide detail on the outcome of such investigations arising out of the complaints made by female officers against male PSNI officers i.e. reprimands, fines, demotion, dismissal, or other, including criminal charges if preferred.

Answer

The outcomes of the complaints lodged were a combination of 1 or more of the list below:

Advice & Guidance - 7

Training - 2

Supt Warning - 1

No Action - 5

5 complaints remain ongoing.

This response is based on data held on the Human Resource Management System in relation to Bullying and Harassment cases.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

The PSNI have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information makes this extremely difficult.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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 @ www.psni.police.uk

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