



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01202

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: POLICE OFFICERS CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENCE SINCE 2000

Request and 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.

Question 1

Numbers of police officers from 2000 who have been convicted of any offence via the courts. This has been clarified as relating to convictions reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI since the inception of the PSNI in 2001.

Answer

Please refer to table 1 attached. Statistics for the calendar year of 2000 can now be provided within cost and details are contained within the table. The statistics have been provided to the end of the 2008 calendar year.

It should be noted from table 1 that the figures in column 2 are lower than those stated in column 1. Not all officers who are convicted of a criminal offence face formal misconduct proceedings i.e. appear before Misconduct Hearings. Officers convicted of minor motoring offences can be dealt with by the imposition of informal sanctions without recourse to Misconduct Hearings. A small number of officers also left the Organisation prior to the completion of the formal misconduct process.

Question 2

Of the officers convicted how many were also the subject of disciplinary proceedings?

Answer

Please refer to Document below. The statistics provided relate to formal disciplinary proceedings, i.e. where officers have appeared before Misconduct Panels.

Question 3

Of the officers subject to disciplinary proceedings how many were sacked/forced to resign?

Answer

Please refer to table 1 attached. The statistics provided relate to officers who have received a sanction of dismissal or a requirement to resign as an alternative to dismissal as a consequence of appearing before Misconduct Panels.

The figures supplied have been compiled by the PSNI's Professional Standards Department which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers. All the details requested are not recorded centrally and were obtained from the interrogation of several databases and the manual examination of a number of files. Information extracted in this manner may not be as accurate as that extracted from a single central database.

It should be noted that each case is examined on an individual basis to determine the level and nature of misconduct of the officer and the extent to which the PSNI's Code of Ethics has been breached. The seriousness of the offence, the circumstances surrounding its commission and its potential impact will dictate the level of action to be pursued and the misconduct sanction ultimately imposed consequently what appear to be similar infractions attract different misconduct sanctions.

Whilst the Service takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing, the number of cases must be put into context of the overall number of PSNI officers i.e. over 13000 in 2000 to just less than 9000 in 2008.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason PSNI's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other Police Service.

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 @ www.psnipolice.uk

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

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TABLE 1

PSNI OFFICERS CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENCE AND REPORTED TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT INCLUDING (1) WHETHER FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION WAS INITIATED AND (2) WHETHER THE OUTCOME RESULTED IN DISMISSAL OR REQUIREMENT TO RESIGN

YEAR	NO OF OFFICERS CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENCE AND REPORTED TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT	NO OF OFFICERS CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENCE AND REPORTED TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT AND WERE SUBJECT TO FORMAL DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS	NO. OF OFFICERS WHO WERE SACKED/FORCED TO RESIGN AS A CONSEQUENCE OF SUCH PROCEEDINGS
2000	55 OFFICERS	28 OFFICERS	4 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 3 REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2001	30 OFFICERS	17 OFFICERS	4 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 1 REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2002	29 OFFICERS	17 OFFICERS	NO OFFICER DISMISSED OR REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2003	35 OFFICERS	18 OFFICERS	NO OFFICER DISMISSED. 3 OFFICERS REQUIRED TO RESIGN.
2004	36 OFFICERS	18 OFFICERS	3 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 3 REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2005	34 OFFICERS	14 OFFICERS	2 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 1 REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2006	54 OFFICERS	32 OFFICERS	3 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 6 REQUIRED TO RESIGN. NOTE: 1 MISCONDUCT HEARING PENDING
2007	27 OFFICERS	12 OFFICERS	3 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 4 REQUIRED TO RESIGN
2008	36 OFFICERS	12 OFFICERS	2 OFFICERS DISMISSED AND 5 REQUIRED TO RESIGN. NOTE: 4 MISCONDUCT HEARINGS ARE PENDING

NOTE 1. THE FIGURES REPRESENT THE NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS CONVICTED AND NOT THE NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS. AN OFFICER MAY HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF A NUMBER OF OFFENCES RELATING TO THE SAME INCIDENT AND/OR MAY HAVE BEEN CONVICTED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF BEING INVOLVED IN MORE THAN ONE INCIDENT. SIMILARLY OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN FORMALLY DISCIPLINED MAY HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF A NUMBER OF BREACHED OF THE CODE OF ETHICS RELATING TO THE SAME INCIDENT AND/OR MAY HAVE BEEN CONVICTED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF BEING INVOLVED IN MORE THAN ONE INCIDENT.

NOTE 2. THE FIGURES REPRESENT THE INCIDENTS REPORTED TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT AND DO NOT INCLUDE ANY MINOR OFFENCE THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH AT LOCAL MANAGEMENT LEVEL.

NOTE 3. THE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE STUDENT OFFICERS WHO ARE NOT CLASSED AS POLICE OFFICERS UNTIL ATTESTED.

NOTE 4. CONVICTION DO NOT NECESSARILY FALL INTO THE SAME YEAR AS DETECTION.

NOTE 5. THE FIGURES INCLUDE THE ISSUE OF AN ADULT CAUTION.

NOTE 6. FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE THE ISSUE OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES. THE PSNI DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY RECORD THE ISSUE OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES TO POLICE OFFICERS.

NOTE 7. THE STATISTICS REFER TO THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS WHO WERE SERVING AT THE TIME OF CONVICTION. THEY MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE SERVING NOW.

NOTE 8. OFFICERS CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES, IN ADDITION TO BEING DEALT WITH THROUGH THE NORMAL CRIMINAL PROCESS, ARE ALSO SUBJECT TO INTERNAL MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS, WHICH MAY LEAD TO MISCONDUCT HEARINGS AND SANCTIONS.

NOTE 9. EACH CASE IS EXAMINED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL AND NATURE OF MISCONDUCT OF THE OFFICER AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PSNI'S CODE OF ETHICS HAS BEEN BREACHED. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENCE, THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ITS COMMISSION AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT WILL DICTATE THE LEVEL OF ACTION TO BE PURSUED AND THE MISCONDUCT SANCTION ULTIMATELY IMPOSED.

NOTE 10. THE FIGURES ON DISMISSAL/REQUIREMENT TO RESIGN REPRESENT THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS WHO RECEIVED SUCH A SANCTION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF APPEARING BEFORE A MISCONDUCT PANEL. THE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE OFFICERS WHO WERE CONVICTED AND DISMISSED UNDER OTHER REGULATIONS PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS.