



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-00020

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: POLICE OFFICERS CONVICTED OF DRINK DRIVING DURING 2008

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full. The information provided to you has been taken from records held by the Professional Standards Department of PSNI which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers.

Question 1. Under the Freedom of Information Act I request information about the number of PSNI officers who were convicted of drink driving in the last calendar year (i.e. 2008).

Answer. Six officers were convicted of drink driving offences while still serving with the PSNI during 2008.

Question 2. I also request information as to each officer's sex and rank and whether they have previously been convicted of the same offence.

Answer. Of the 6 officers convicted 4 are male and 2 female. Four are Constables and 2 Constables (Part Time). In one instance an officer had previously been convicted of a similar offence.

Question 3. Furthermore I request information as to the relevant disciplinary procedures (i.e. the consequence of being convicted of drink driving) on each occasion and clarification as to whether the officer is still employed by the PSNI.

Answer. The officers have been disciplined as follows:

Requirement to resign as an alternative to dismissal – 2 officers

The remaining 4 officers left the service prior to conclusion of disciplinary proceedings. Two of the officers were regular officers and were permitted to retire prior to misconduct hearings as a consequence of mitigating personal and medical circumstances. The remaining two officers were part time and both were allowed to resign prior to misconduct hearings. All officers were suspended prior to leaving the PSNI. Regular officers who are suspended are generally suspended on full pay by virtue of Police Regulations while part time officers receive no payment whilst suspended. As a consequence it is only by exception that a regular officer would tender resignation during the process and this would only be accepted if exceptional mitigating circumstances existed. The impact of not allowing part time officers to resign is minimal.

The drink driving statistics include convictions for drink driving, excess alcohol, drunk in charge, failing to provide samples and driving while unfit.

Conviction does not necessarily occur in the same year as detection.

Whilst the PSNI takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing, the number of cases must be put into context of the overall size of the PSNI i.e. just under 9000 officers as of 5.1.09.

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 the Freedom of Information Team 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 in accordance with our complaints procedure. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of the Freedom of Information Team, Freedom of Information, and PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road Belfast BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk

If following an internal review you remain dissatisfied in anyway with the handling of the request you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner 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.psnipolice.uk.

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