



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01228

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY INVESTIGATIONS

Request and Answer:

I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information and I have decided to release the information sought in full.

Question 1

The number of occasions since 01.01.2005, modified to occasions since 1.1.2007, where a formal investigation by Professional Standards Department into "Privacy and Confidentiality" matters concluded with any result, (including no further action), beneath the threshold at which it would result in the outcome being published on Weekly Order.

Question 2

If the results could be broken down as follows please: -

- a. Date of commencement of investigation.
- b. Date of resolution.
- c. Was member suspended during investigation?
- d. Rank of member investigated.
- e. Brief précis of alleged breach or breaches investigated in each case.
- f. Resolution.

Answer

Please refer to table1 below.

Investigation commenced	RANK	OFFENCE	Date of resolution	MISCONDUCT SANCTION	Suspended
01/05/2007	Reserve Constable (Part time)	Obtained personal details and that of partner from police computer	11/06/2007	Advice and Guidance	No
11/09/2007	Sergeant	Obtained details of relative from police computer	01/10/2008	Managerial discussion	No
27/04/2007	Constable	Obtained details of partner from police computer	26/06/2007	Advice & guidance	No
25/10/2007	Constable	Obtained details of partner from police computer	30/12/2008	Written warning	No
28/11/2007	Constable	Obtained details of criminal in relationship with relative from police computer	13/06/2008	Written warning	No
06/04/2007	Reserve Constable (Full time)	Passed on police information to member of the public	14/11/2007	Written warning	No
19/04/2007	Constable	Accessed police computer for incident involving partner	15/05/2007	Advice and Guidance	No
26/11/2008	Constable	Loss of list of priority offenders (recovered 2 weeks later)	02/03/2009	Advice and Guidance	No
26/11/2008	Constable	Accessed police computer using another officer's login	02/03/2009	Management discussion	No
12/07/2008	Sergeant	Accessed police computer for details of relative's allegations.	17/07/2008	Advice and Guidance	No
27/08/2008	Sergeant	Passed on police information to relative	26/11/2008	Advice and Guidance	No

It should be noted that only formal misconduct hearing results are published via Weekly Order. Details provided relate to those cases where a formal hearing was not directed.

As you have only requested investigations by Professional Standards Department, details relating to investigations conducted by the Police Ombudsman have not been included.

The figures do not include the loss of police notebooks and statements which it is assumed would contain third party data.

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 across a number of different categories 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. just under 9000.

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 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 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 @ <http://www.psni.police.uk/>

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