



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-00150
Keyword: Complaints/Discipline
Subject: SACKING OF POLICE OFFICERS

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

Question

How many police officers have been sacked from their position since 2005, and can I have a breakdown of reasons please?

Answer

I would like to advise you that Student Officers are not accredited with the title of Police Officer until they are attested at the conclusion of their training at the Police College Garnerville.

I have not supplied information with regard to Police Officers who have successfully concluded their training but have been "sacked" due to misconduct during their **2-year probation period**. The cost of complying with this would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450, as to retrieve this information would involve an intensive manual search of files.

From 1.1.2005 to 15.1.09 (date of your request) a total of 44 officers were dismissed/required to resign as a consequence of appearing before misconduct panels where breaches of the PSNI's Code of Ethics/Conduct were proven.

The PSNI's Code of Ethics sets ethical standards required of police officers. Failure to comply with the Code of Ethics constitutes a misconduct breach. The current Code of Ethics came into effect on 14.3.03 by virtue of Regulation 2 of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (Conduct) Regulations 2003 and amended by Regulation 2 of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (Conduct)(Amendment) Regulations 2008. The Code of Ethics replaced the Code of Conduct which is contained within Schedule 4 of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Conduct) Regulations 2000. The legislation may be viewed by visiting website <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

The current Code of Ethics may be viewed at <http://www.psni.police.uk/>

Reasons for dismissal/requirement to resign:

CODE OF ETHICS

Integrity - 7.2 of Code of Ethics - 27 officers
Professional Duty - 1.10 of Code of Ethics - 3 officers
Equality - 6.1 of Code of Ethics - 3 officers
Professional Duty - 1.5 of Code of Ethics - 2 officers
Integrity - 7.5 of Code of Ethics - 2 officers
Professional Duty – 1.1 Code of Ethics - 1 officer
Police Investigations – 2.2 of Code of Ethics - 1 officer
Privacy and Confidentiality - 3.3 of Code of Ethics - 1 officer

CODE OF CONDUCT

Honesty and Integrity - paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 of Code of Conduct - 3 officers

General conduct - paragraph 13 of Schedule 4 of Code of Conduct - 1 officer.

It should be noted that the date on which the misconduct occurred will dictate which legislation is appropriate.

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.

Whilst the PSNI takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing and will not hesitate to take appropriate action where breaches of misconduct occur, the number of cases must be put into context of the overall size of the PSNI of just under 9000 officers as of the date of your request.

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

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