



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02081

Keyword: Crime

Subject: BROTHELS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

In a written reply to myself on the 15/6/09 the District Commander for B Division revealed that between 2-11 brothels are operating in B Division. Could you provide me with the number of brothels the PSNI believe are operating in the whole of Belfast?

Answer

The "whole of Belfast" consists of A District (North and West Belfast) and B District (East and South Belfast). The majority of brothels in Belfast are in residential areas of South Belfast, but as they are so transient and move so quickly it is impossible to quantify the actual number operating. It is estimated that between 2 and 11 brothels are operating in Belfast. This estimate is based partly on police research into advertising of such services in locally-available media.

Question 2

What powers do the PSNI have with regards to property used as a brothel? The District Commander again at the same meeting as above said "there are historic powers of search but these are limited" what are those powers?

Answer

The historic legislation referred to is the power of search under Section 38 Criminal Justice Act (NI) 1945 for offences contained in Section 13 Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. This confers a power of search for offences of brothel keeping etc. More information on these Acts is available by accessing the attached links below:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/apni/1945/capni_19450015_en_1

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/apni/1923/capni_19230008_en_1

Question 3

How many brothels did the PSNI raid/close or disrupt in 2008 and from the 1/01/09 to 1/6/09.

Answer

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has conducted searches in relation to Human Trafficking offences in South Belfast. A total of 11 premises were searched last year and 8 this year in relation to these Investigations. Some of these premises were brothels and some were found not to be. The PSNI are not empowered to close premises. Police search premises to obtain evidence of offences or locate victims if there are reasonable grounds for believing that offences are being committed.

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.psni.police.uk

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