



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02412

Keyword: Crime

Subject: BROTHELS / SEX WORKERS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

The current figure held by the force as the number, or estimated number, of brothels operating in the force area, and the recorded location of each. The definition of brothel in this sense is where two or more people are working together to provide sexual services.

Question 2

The current figure held by the force as the number, or estimated number, of sex workers operating in the force area.

Question 3

A copy of any audits/assessments/reports (or similar) prepared (for both internal and external use) by the force detailing the number of brothels and sex workers operating in the force area, prepared since January 1, 2008.

Answer

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1 (1) (a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in the request is held. The second duty at s1 (1) (b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions relied upon section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which a) states that fact, b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) state (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) can Neither Confirm Nor Deny that it holds the information relevant to your request, as the duty in Section 1(1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

- Section 40 (5) Personal Information
- Section 44 (2) Information Covered by Prohibitions on Disclosure
- Section 23 (5) Information supplied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies
- Section 30 (3) Investigations
- Section 31 (3) Law Enforcement
- Section 38 (2) Health and Safety

This refusal should not be taken to mean that the information you have requested exists or does not exist.

In line with Section 17 (1) of the FOIA it is required that we articulate the public interest considerations for the use of NCND within the qualified exemptions, 30, 31 and 38.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case this illegal activity will be subject to police surveillance or intelligence, and any form of information that is disclosed to the public would highlight or undermine the variety of policing sources available, which would in turn hinder the investigation, future law enforcement

and the health and safety of those involved.

The following website may also assist you as it publishes National Data quarterly: <http://www.ukhtc.org/>

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.