



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-03173

Keyword: Crime

Subject: DRUG OFFENCES

Request and Answer:

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information in relation to questions 1,2,3,4 and 5 however in relation to question 6 it is considered the cost of complying with this question of your request for information 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.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice in relation to question 6 only.

Question 1

The age of the youngest person arrested for possession of illegal drugs including the type of drug.

NB: Questions 1 – 6: I would like the figures for all of Northern Ireland, and city specific figures if possible (Derry, Belfast, Lisburn, Newry, Armagh)

Answer 1

The age of the youngest person arrested for possession of a controlled drug for all of Northern Ireland is 12 years old.

The age of the youngest person arrested for possession of a controlled drug in the Foyle, Belfast, Lisburn, Newry & Mourne and Armagh Policing Areas is 12 years old and the type of drug is Cannabis Resin.

Question 2

The age of the youngest person arrested for supplying illegal drugs including the type of drug.

Answer 2

The age of the youngest person arrested for supply of a controlled drug in Northern Ireland is 11 years old.

The age of the youngest person arrested for supply of a controlled drug in the Foyle, Belfast, Lisburn, Newry & Mourne and Armagh Policing Areas is 11 years old and the type of drug is Cocaine Powder.

Question 3

The age of the oldest person arrested for possession of illegal drugs including the type of drug.

Answer 3

The age of the oldest person arrested for possession of a controlled drug in Northern Ireland is 64 years old.

The age of the oldest person arrested for possession of a controlled drug in the Foyle, Belfast, Lisburn, Newry & Mourne and Armagh Policing Areas is 62 years old and the type of drug is Cannabis Resin.

Question 4

The age of the oldest person arrested for supplying illegal drugs including the type of drug.

Answer 4

The age of the oldest person arrested for supply of a controlled drug in Northern Ireland is 72 years old.

The age of the oldest person arrested for supply of a controlled drug in the Foyle, Belfast, Lisburn, Newry & Mourne and Armagh Policing Areas is 72 years old and the type of drug is Cannabis Resin.

Question 5

The number of people under 18 who have been arrested for either possession or supply of illegal drugs - year on year figures in order to detect any increase/ decrease since 2004/5 until present day.

Answer 5

Please see attached table below.

Question 6

The number of people arrested for supply and possession of cocaine year on year, since 2004/5.

Answer 6

The number of people arrested for supply and possession of cocaine year on year, since 2004/5 cannot be supplied as our drug arrests have no link to the drug type seized and to properly answer this question would involve a manual trawl which would exceed the appropriate limit of £450.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request in question 6 may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions. The PSNI have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however due to the nature and structure of the information requested, this is not possible within the appropriate limit.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact 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.

F2009 3173

Q5.

The number of people under 18 years of age arrested for a possession or supply offence – Northern Ireland

1st April 2004 – 31st March 2009

Year	Number of persons arrested for a possession offence	Number of persons arrested for a supply offence	Total*
2004/05	198	32	225
2005/06	195	27	219
2006/07	172	33	202
2007/08 ³	136	44	152
2008/09 ³	177	46	190

* As a person can be arrested for both a possession and a supply offence, the total persons arrested for a possession offence cannot be added to the total persons arrested for a supply offence to get the total number of persons arrested.

Note that from 2007/08 drug arrest figures were taken from a more integrated system than those arrests in 2004/05-2006/07.

Source: Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Lisnasharragh