



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-00138

Keyword: Crime

Subject: OFF LICENCES DETECTED SELLING DRINK TO MINORS - 2008

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information requested and the answers to your questions are provided below -

Question 1

The number of off licences caught selling drink to underage children in 2008 broken down to nearest town/village. If this is not possible could they be broken down by county?

Question 2

The number of off licences caught selling drink to underage children in 2007 broken down to nearest town/village. If this is not possible could they be broken down by county?

Question 3

The number of fines handed to off licenses in 2008 for selling alcohol to underage children and the value of each fine.

Question 4

The number of fines handed to off licenses in 2007 for selling alcohol to underage children and the value of each fine.

Answer 1-4

On receipt of your request I initially contacted our Information Communication Services department to ascertain if they were able to provide answers to the questions but was advised that they could not supply any information as the information you have requested is not listed as a specific offence. However they advised that each District Intelligence or Crime Management Unit may be better placed to provide answers.

I contacted each of the 8 Districts, as they would have an input regarding the element of local knowledge, however I have been advised that it would take an average of 8 hours per district (64 hours in total) to be able to retrieve information which would answer your questions. The work involved in the 8 hours consists of interrogating our Interim Case prep computer system for 07 and the new Niche system for 08 to ascertain numbers of incidents or nil returns. With regard to questions 3 and 4 any incident that was highlighted from an original search would then have to be checked on the ICIS system for the result of any proceedings.

An estimated time for each district would be 8 hours and as there are 8 districts this would amount to approximately 64 hours which would mean the cost of complying with your request for information exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland 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 the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible however you may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit' by referring to a couple of specific districts. 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.

Question 5

The methods police use for catching off licenses selling alcohol to underage children.

Answer

I have been advised that the following measures may be used relative to question 5:

- Overt High Visibility patrols around Off Licences
- Stopping to enquire of under age drinkers where they have got alcohol from
- Visiting off sales in area and liaising with the staff in these premises
- Viewing CCTV footage to identify if there are any offences in relation to off licences selling alcohol to children
- If offences are disclosed then we will progress this through the Youth Diversion Scheme if appropriate or by other means of prosecution
- Members of the Public are encouraged to report breaches of the Licensing Laws
- Licensees are encouraged to colour code their bags
- Use initiatives i.e. Chill Out and Proof 18 to promote responsible alcohol consumption especially in the case of minors
- Refusal Registers held at off sales to capture incidents when young persons are refused alcohol on those premises
- Use of RIPA legislation relating to covert surveillance

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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.