



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-00399

Keyword: Finance

Subject: SPEND ON POLICE INFORMANTS

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the PSNI has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to disclose information in relation to the financial years 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008 to February 17 2009;

Question

Please provide details of the total amount spent on informants registered by your force for each year since 2001, providing the total for each year up until the most recent available.

Please note that this follows a Decision Notice (FS50123912) by the Information Commissioner issued to Northumbria Police in relation to this matter, following an original request from me to all police forces in 2005 for this information.

The Commissioner stated that the public authority was required to disclose this information.

Answer

The figures provided below reflect financial years:

2005/2006	£104,326.00
2006/2007	£160,164.00
2007/2008	£194,671.00
2008 to date (February 17 2009)	£261,368.00

The use of CHIS by the police service is well known and is governed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, 2000. In relation to your request, PSNI can disclose that the above amounts are recorded as being spent in the specified financial years by PSNI on the obtaining of information to combat crime.

The above amounts do not include any payments made to CHIS where funding may have been supplied by exempt bodies.

However, in relation to the financial years 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 the PSNI does not retain this information in an easily retrievable format. The financial information relating to this aspect of your request was pre computerisation and therefore was recorded manually. A case-by-case search would have to be carried out to ascertain the amount paid to Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) for the above years. To conduct this search would involve a disproportionate amount of resources, which could impact, on the PSNI's ability to deliver a professional service to the community.

It is therefore considered the cost of complying with this part 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.

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'.

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 the nature and structure of the information, even for one of the years, is still estimated to be over the cost.

In relation to any additional information, this notice acts as a refusal notice, under the provisions of S17 (1) of the Freedom of information Act 2000, by virtue of the listed exemption Section 23 Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters.

The PSNI works in partnership with other agencies in order to combat issues such as terrorism and organised crime. As such, funding may sometimes be provided by bodies listed at section 23(3). In this case, I am unable to confirm or deny whether such funding has been provided to PSNI within the time periods specified above, by virtue of section 23 (5) of the act.

Section 23(5) is an absolute exemption and does not require the public interest to be considered. This should not be taken as confirmation or denial that PSNI did or did not receive such funding during the time period specified by your request.

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.psnipolice.uk

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