



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01243

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: STAFFING OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION

Request and Answer:

What I'd like to know is the structure and effectiveness of whatever department in your own constabulary deals with requests for information under the freedom of information act, environmental information regulations, re-use of public sector information regulations and the data protection act.

Specifically I hope you can easily answer the following questions:

Question 1

What staff (numbers, positions or ranks if police officers) currently deal with these request?

Answer

The Freedom of Information Central Team presently consists of 9 Staff.

1x FOI Manager (Staff Officer)
7x Decision Makers (2 Sergeants) (5 EO2)
1x Publications Officer (EOI)

The Data Protection Team presently consists of 10 staff.

1x Data Protection Officer (Sergeant)
2.5x Administrative Assistant
0.5x Administrative Officer
2x Executive Officer 2
4x Constables

Question 2

What relevant experience and professional qualifications do they each have? If unqualified, the length of time in the roles.

Answer

The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Sections 40(2)(a)(b) - Personal Information Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt), to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

Section 40(2)(a) Personal Information is an absolute exemption, which means there is no requirement on the Public Authority to consider whether there is a public interest in disclosure.

Section 40(2) Personal Information - This exemption is engaged if the personal data is about someone other than the applicant. Where someone makes an application for information other than the data subject, disclosure of that information will often constitute a breach of Principle (1) of the Data Protection Act.

Principle (1) states that personal data should be processed lawfully and fairly. Personal data imparted and recorded for administration and legal purposes will be confidential and any public disclosure would be unlawful if there would be a breach of that law of confidentiality. Persons who give their data to the PSNI for the purpose of record management have the expectation that it will be treated fairly and it would be unfair to an individual concerned to disclose his/her personal data into the public domain.

All staff are required upon appointment to attend the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Initial Decision Maker and Reviewers Course followed by the Advanced Decision Makers Course. Further training is provided by ACPO. Staff are also expected subject to experience to complete the Information Systems Examinations Board Certificate in Freedom of Information.

Question 3

What pay scales are they in (actual money scale, e.g. "£37000 to £47000" not "ST1" or the like)?

Answer

The information you have requested with regards to Sergeants and Constable's pay scales is exempt under: S21 - Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means

The information you have requested with regards to Sergeants and Constable's pay scales is accessible from the following website.

<http://www.police-information.co.uk/policepay.htm#constables>

Administrative Assistant	13,130 - 14,420
Administrative Officer	14,890 - 17,099
Executive Officer 2	17,668 - 21,132
Executive Officer 1	20,801 - 26,086
Staff Officer	24,089 - 30,520

Question 4

And some performance information for the last three years (calendar or financial – whichever suits) please (numbers received per month, quarter or year, and in the same time frames the mean time for completion and the number of those not completed within legal (or recommended where appropriate) time-scales) in the following areas:

Freedom of information requests?

Answer

Requests 2006 643 of which 301 where not completed within 20 day time frame
Requests 2007 760 of which 269 where not completed within 20 day time frame
Requests 2008 792 of which 371 where not completed within 20 day time frame

These figures include requests that have been the subject of appropriate extension under the Act to facilitate the completion of a public interest test. It also evidences not only the increasing number but also complexity of requests being received by the PSNI on a daily basis. This has very recently given rise to the appointment of additional staff to the business area to support and improve performance.

Question 5

Environmental information requests?

Answer

Requests 2006 Nil
Requests 2007 1
Requests 2008 Nil

The request in 2007 was completed within the recommended time frame.

Question 6

Re-use public sector information requests?

Answer

No information held

Question 7

Data protection subject access requests for conviction details?

Answer

Total Requests 2006 = 6067. Late requests = 52

Conviction requests = 5733

Total requests for 2007 = 6973. Late requests = 61

Conviction requests = 6518

Total requests for 2008 = 4669. Late requests = 58

Conviction requests = 4305

Question 8

Other data protection subject access requests?

Answer

2006 - 334

2007 - 455

2008 - 364

Question 9

Reviews on complaint or appeal?

Answer

2006 Complaints/Reviews Freedom of Information 34 of which 23 were not completed within the recommended time frame

2007 Complaints/Reviews Freedom of Information 34 of which 25 were not completed within the recommended time frame

2008 Complaints/Reviews Freedom of Information 23 of which 7 were not completed within the recommended time frame.

2006 Complaints Data Protection received and completed 13

2007 Complaints Data Protection received and completed 7

2008 Complaints Data Protection received and completed 6

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.