



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01049

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: CHILDREN UNDER 10 YEARS QUESTIONED BY POLICE

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested and the answer to your question is as follows.

Question

I would like details of the numbers of children under 10 years old questioned by the force in the following periods: 2006, 2007, 2008 and 1 January to 23 March 2009.

I would like the figures to be broken down into annual totals, with a break down of the alleged offence and age of the child suspect in each instance.

For example:

2006

Total under of crimes children under 10 were questioned for: 10

6 burglary (all aged 9)

4 racial harassment (one aged 8, three aged 9)

Answer

With regard to your question concerning children under 10 being questioned/formally interviewed, I contacted the Police Service of Northern Ireland Community Safety Branch and they have advised that we hold no searchable records of any children under 10 interviewed as potential suspects outside custody other than in officers' notebooks when an officer may have spoken to a child for example in the street during the course of their duties. The current size of the PSNI is over 6000 officers and therefore the cost of providing you with any information obtained would be above the amount to which we are legally required to respond i.e. the cost of retrieving the information exceeds the 'appropriate level' as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) regulations 2004.

To ascertain any numbers of under 10s interviewed in custody would also exceed the cost limit mentioned above, as this would require a manual search of each record on our force system along with the records held by our Juvenile Liaison Offices.

The PSNI Community Safety Branch have advised that they have, since March 08, recorded on their systems figures relating to young people under the age of 10 years identified for being involved in offending behaviour and this is provided for your information in the attached document. It should be noted that these figures do **not** relate to any form of formal interviewing.

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.psnipolice.uk/>

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

Incidents involving Children Under 10

From : 01 March 2008 to 01 March 2009

Age	Gender	Offence Type	Number of Children
4	Male	Sexual Offences	1
		Theft	1
5	Female	Criminal Damage	1
		Hoax Calls	1
	Male	Criminal Damage	2
		Hoax Calls	2
		Theft	1
6	Male	Common Assault	1
		Criminal Damage	3
		Hoax Calls	1
		Sexual Offences	1
		Theft	2
7	Female	Hoax Calls	1
		Theft	2
	Male	Common Assault	2
		Criminal Damage	4
		Motoring	1
		Sexual Offences	1
		Theft	4
8	Female	Common Assault	2
	Male	Arson	1
		Common Assault	1
		Criminal Damage	8
		Disorderly Behaviour	1
		GBH	1
		Public Order Related	1
		Sexual Offences	1
Theft	4		
9	Female	Alcohol Related	1
		Common Assault	3
		Criminal Damage	3
		Sexual Offences	1
		Theft	3
	Male	Alcohol Related	1
		Common Assault	6
		Criminal Damage	4
		Disorderly Behaviour	1
		Hoax Calls	1
		Motoring	1
		Theft	1
		Total Number of Children	

