Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request Number: F-2009-02726

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: STOP & SEARCH - F DISTRICT

Request and Answer:

Question 1
Please state how many aged from 10 to under 16 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Dungannon and South Tyrone between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years

Question 2
Please state how many aged under 10 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Dungannon and South Tyrone between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years. Please state, in each year, the age of the youngest person who was stopped and searched.

Question 3
Please state how many aged from 10 to under 16 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Cookstown between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years

Question 4
Please state how many aged under 10 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Cookstown between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years. Please state, in each year, the age of the youngest person who was stopped and searched.

Question 5
Please state how many aged from 10 to under 16 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Omagh between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years

Question 6
Please state how many aged under 10 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Omagh between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years. Please state, in each year, the age of the youngest person who was stopped and searched.

Question 7
Please state how many aged from 10 to under 16 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Strabane between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years

Question 8
Please state how many aged under 10 were stopped and searched by the PSNI in Strabane between April 1 2008 and March 31 2009? Please provide a comparison for the 2007/08 and 2006/07 years. Please state, in each year, the age of the youngest person who was stopped and searched.

Answer
The Police Service of Northern Ireland began centrally collating age information in relation to Stop and Searches from 1st October 2007. To retrieve the required information before this date (i.e. comparative information for 2006/07) it would be necessary to manually trawl two Districts' Stop and Search records which, I have been informed by the record holders, would take in excess of £450 (18 hours).

The cost of complying with your request for information would therefore 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, and the request has therefore been closed.

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.

Under our section 16 duty to assist we have obtained some information from Central statistics which may partially answer your questions. Data is provided below, from 1st October 2007, as this is when the stop and search spreadsheet was first collated centrally by Central Statistics Unit. **However, it should be noted that while date of birth is recorded on the stop and search form there is no obligation for a person to provide their date of birth. Therefore there are significant limitations to information held with regard to age as approximately 5 percent of stop and searches in the aggregated spreadsheet return have no age date.**

Please note that the youngest age for those stopped and searched under 10 years old has not been provided as no children under 10 years old have been recorded as being stopped in these areas.

The number of persons stopped and searched/questioned aged between 10 and 15 years old – Dungannon and South Tyrone, Cookstown, Omagh and Strabane Police Areas

Period	Q1 Dungannon	Q3 Cookstown	Q5 Omagh	Q7 Strabane
1st October 2007 – 31st March 2008	15	19	23	13
1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009	22	15	25	33

The number of persons stopped and searched/questioned aged less than 10 years old –

Dungannon and South Tyrone, Cookstown, Omagh and Strabane Police Areas

Period	Q2 Dungannon	Q4 Cookstown	Q6 Omagh	Q8 Strabane
1st October 2007 – 31st March 2008	0	0	0	0
1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009	0	0	0	0

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 @ www.psni.police.uk

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