



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02669

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: PHOTOGRAPHIC / FILM MATERIAL

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many requests were made to media organisations for photographic or film material, both transmitted and untransmitted, for the purpose of assisting PSNI investigations? Please provide a breakdown of requests per organisation and the incidents to which the request relates?

Comment

There is no method in place for recording this information centrally within the PSNI. This search for information involved the Freedom of Information Team canvassing each of the PSNI's eight Districts and the Crime Department for information. It was found that some Districts/Departments responded differently according to what information was or was not held, and the how information was held. One common thread across all districts and departments was that there is also no central method of recording this information at District/Department level. To retrieve the requested information it would be necessary to manually trawl all investigation files held over the period to which your request relates. One Department estimated that it would take in the region of 58 hours to carry out that work for that Department alone, therefore taking the request over the 'Appropriate Limit' as contained in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

*Some Districts/Departments did provide information relevant to your request and the following is based on this information; however **these figures do not represent total figures for the PSNI.***

Answer

Two requests were made to UTV, one to BBC and one to the Derry News. These related to one incident of rioting and one paramilitary/firearms incident.

Question 2

How many of these requests were adhered to without the necessity of a court order or action?

Answer

All of the requests referred to in question 1 were adhered to without the necessity of a court order or action.

Question 3

Of those that necessitated Court action, what were the outcomes? (i.e. six court orders sought and six orders granted).

Answer

Records retrieved indicate that six Court Orders were sought and six were granted.

Question 4

What was the volume of material received in terms of the number of photographic images and film tapes?

Answer

In relation to five of the Court Orders granted, 15 hours of unedited footage was received. The volume of material is not recorded in relation to the sixth Court Order or any of the material received on request as referred to in questions 1 and 2.

Question 5

How many individuals were positively identified from the material for arrest and prosecution?

Answer

No records have been retrieved to indicate that anyone has been identified. Investigations are ongoing.

Question 6

What happened to the material?

Answer

Of the records that have been retrieved, none contain information relevant to this question. In relation to the Court Orders, the Court has directed that material is to be returned to the media groups.

Question 7

Internal guidelines or correspondence covered why such material should be pursued.

Answer

Photographic or film material would be regarded as evidence in relation to an investigation and pursued under legislative provisions and guidelines.

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.