



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2009-02865

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** USE OF PRIVATE DETECTIVES / SECURITY FIRMS

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

Under the Freedom of Information Act, could you please tell me whether over the last two calendar years, your force has used private detectives. If so, could you please also state the costs involved and the nature of the work involved.

#### Answer

The cost of complying with your request for this information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450. On rare occasions the services of a private detective could be used; however such information is not separately recorded. To provide an accurate response would require a manual trawl through all files, to identify the few cases where the services of a private detective were used. This exercise would exceed the 18 hour threshold.

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.

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.

#### Question 2

Under the Freedom of Information Act, could you please tell me whether over the last two calendar years, your force has used private security firms. If so, could you please also state the costs involved and the nature of the work involved.

#### Answer

The PSNI entered into a contractual arrangement in 2003 with a private security firm for the provision of front gate security, costing £3.2 million per annum. A new contract has been agreed for this year, for the provision of front gate security, security guarding, CCTV operation, managed driving, and civilian detention officers. These additional services are reflected in the increased contract value of £12 million per annum.

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](mailto: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.