



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02274

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Domestic Abuse

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please state the number of reports of domestic abuse in Dungannon sector in each of the years 2010, 2009 and 2008. Please provide a comparison for Cookstown, Northern Ireland and F-District in the same periods.

Question 2

Please state where the highest number of domestic abuse reports in Northern Ireland has occurred in each of the years 2010, 2009 and 2008.

Question 3

Please state the number of prosecutions resulting from domestic abuse in Dungannon sector in each of the years 2010, 2009 and 2008. Please provide comparison for Cookstown, Northern Ireland and F-District in the same periods.

Question 4

Please state the number of complaint retractions in domestic abuse cases in Dungannon sector in each of the years 2010, 2009 and 2008. Please provide comparison for Cookstown, Northern Ireland and F-District in the same periods.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18 hours).

Information in relation to question 3 and 4 is not recorded centrally and so each of our 8 District Command Units were asked to provide estimated times for retrieving the number of prosecutions and complaint retractions in relation to Domestic Abuse cases for the years requested.

I have been advised that the only method of retrieving the number of complaint retractions would be to trawl each of the reports of the crimes reported in each of the individual Districts. One District alone has advised that over the three year period in question more than 4000 crimes have been reported within their area. Allowing 5 minutes to read each file would equate to 333 hours which greatly exceeds the appropriate limit set by the Secretary of State.

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 has also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine this part of your request to bring it under the cost limit. It may be possible to retrieve only the information required in question 3 within the cost limit. However the nature and structure of the information required to answer question 4 makes it impossible to refine.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided a table below containing the information in relation to questions 1 and 2 which was retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

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 letter.

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.

Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation¹ by Policing District and Area

	1 Jan to 31 Dec 2008	1 Jan to 31 Dec 2009	1 Jan to 13 Aug 2010 ²
A District	1247	1132	694
West Belfast	467	428	236
North Belfast	780	704	458
B District	891	785	462
South Belfast	405	345	195
East Belfast	486	440	267
C District	1022	1209	692
Down	232	343	176
Ards	303	338	208
North Down	322	331	199
Castlereagh	165	197	109
D District	1400	1513	970
Antrim	243	335	178
Newtownabbey	390	401	244
Carrickfergus	209	183	113
Lisburn	558	594	435
E District	1357	1558	870
Newry & Mourne	411	541	288
Armagh	166	272	126
Banbridge	157	160	100
Craigavon	623	585	356
F District	755	883	499
Dungannon&S Tyrone	129	229	129
Fermanagh	260	226	154
Omagh	234	236	116
Cookstown	132	192	100
G District	1433	1395	986
Magherafelt	128	100	75
Strabane	203	196	117
Foyle	818	837	631
Limavady	284	262	163
H District	1042	1208	596
Moyle	55	77	38
Ballymena	331	426	212
Ballymoney	123	147	65
Coleraine	381	377	179
Larne	152	181	102
No Assigned DCU	0	0	44
Total – Northern Ireland	9147	9683	5813

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

¹Domestic motivation definition: Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) by one family member against another or adults who are or have been intimate partners, regardless of gender, and whether a crime has occurred or not, will be recorded as domestic abuse.

Recorded Crimes

- Recorded crimes (sometimes referred to as notifiable offences) are those which are deemed to be indictable or triable-either-way.

- A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime.
- Domestic abuse crimes are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall recorded crime figures.

²Figures for the current financial year (1 Apr 2010 onwards) are highly provisional as they are based on a live crime recording system and are therefore subject to change.

Data Quality: The PSNI's statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are derived from a motivation 'tick box' contained in the Occurrence Management Form which has to be completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident/crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Central Statistics Branch, but quarterly audits are conducted to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.