



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-01279

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Random Drug Testing

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question 1

Could you please tell me whether your force has introduced random drug testing as part of the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales recommendations adopted by the Home Office in 2005 and in what ways you follow it (how many people are tested? how often? any other self-imposed guidelines?) (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/home-office-circulars/circulars-2005/045-2005>)

Answer

In accordance with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) recommendations, legislation was introduced for Police Services in England and Wales authorising the introduction of drugs screening in prescribed circumstances. PSNI Policy now brings PSNI into line with other UK Services.

Please follow the link below to PSNI's Policy Directive on substance misuse for more information. This policy was implemented in August 2008.

http://www.psni.police.uk/policy_directive_1108_substance_misuse.pdf

Question 2

Could you let me know how many officers have been tested since this was introduced, broken down year by year until the most recent data?

Answer

In 2008 - 71 officers were tested. 408 were tested in 2009 and 95 have been tested in 2010 to date.

Question 3

Could you tell me how many tested positive for illegal substances?

Answer

4 Officers have tested positive for illegal substances .

Question 4

What were the drugs they tested positive for (ecstasy, cocaine etc)?

Answer

The drugs they tested positive for were Cocaine and Cannabis.

Question 5

If applicable: could you tell me what happened to the individual officers who tested positive - were they suspended, sacked, disciplined and remained in their job or something else?

Answer

All of the officers who tested positive were suspended. Two of the suspended officers resigned prior to the conclusion of the internal disciplinary process, one suspended officer appeared before a Formal Misconduct Hearing and was required to resign, and one suspended officer is awaiting to appear a Formal Misconduct Hearing.

Question 6

For those testing positive, please tell me the position they held on the force, or if not the position they held, then the section they worked in.

Answer

All of the four officers held or hold the rank of Constable.

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 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.