



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-00562

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Suspension of Officers

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

How many Police Officers including PCSO's were suspended on full pay in the calendar year 2009.

The following clarification was sought:

Please clarify if you require the number of police officers who suspension was effected in 2009.

The following clarification was received:

Yes, please treat it as those officers whose suspensions were effected in the calendar year 2009.

Answer

In the calendar year 2009, a total of fourteen officers were suspended on full pay. The PSNI do not employ PCSO's.

Question 2

For each suspension please detail the rank of the officer and the reason for suspension.

Answer

The ranks of the officers are as follows:

Superintending rank x 1

Sergeant x 1

Constable x 12

The reasons for suspension are as follows:

Alleged Drink Driving x 4

Alleged Dangerous Driving x 1

Alleged misuse of Drugs x 2

Alleged AOABH x 2

Alleged Sexual Offences x 2

Alleged -Fraud x 1

Alleged inconsistencies in evidence x 1

Alleged pervert the course of justice x 1

Part time officers receive no salary during suspension.

Question 3

How much has been paid in salaries to those suspended on full pay in that period.

Answer

The amount paid to suspended officers during this period was £195,323.21.

Pay and allowances of suspended officers is governed by either Regulation 36(5), 59 and Schedule 7 of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Regulations 1996 or Regulations 23(4), 36 and Schedule 3 of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Regulations 2005 depending when the suspension was effected. In summary, a suspended officer receives full salary and allowance entitlement while suspended unless detained, in pursuance of a sentence of a court, in a prison or other institution to which the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 applies or is in custody (whether in prison or elsewhere) between conviction by a court and sentence, or has absented himself/herself from duty and whose whereabouts are unknown to the Chief Constable. Full details of the Regulations may be viewed by visiting website www.ppsi.gov.uk.

It should be noted that the decision to suspend an officer is only taken in exceptional circumstances after all other options, including 'alternative duties', have been considered.

Considerations include:

(i) The nature and seriousness of the alleged action of the individual(s), including any apparent aggravating or mitigating factors;

(ii) The strength of evidence or nature of the investigation;

(iii) The public interest and that of the Police Service;

(iv) The reputation of the PSNI and the effect on public confidence;

(v) Whether effective investigation of the allegation may be compromised if the officer remains in post;

(vi) The nature of the current post held, and alternative posts, and the potential risk to the individual, public, colleagues or operations if the officer is not suspended;

(vii) The likely outcome of a conviction in court or of a finding against the officer at a disciplinary hearing;

(viii) The impact on organisational efficiency.

The information supplied has been compiled by the PSNI's Professional Standards Department which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers and by PSNI Central Pay Branch.

Whilst the PSNI takes seriously any wrongdoing by a police officer, the number of suspensions must be put into context of the overall size of the PSNI i.e. around 8000 officers at date of request.

The criminal and misconduct allegations reflect the more serious behaviour against each officer. Some officers will have been or are currently being investigated for other less serious offences associated with the same incident. The suspensions reflect those effected in 2009 and have been calculated from the date of their suspension to 31 December 2009.

In each case where the officer is currently under suspension, that officer is either awaiting termination of criminal/internal misconduct proceedings or the subject of a criminal/internal misconduct investigation. It should be noted that not all allegations result in criminal and/or internal misconduct proceedings and those that do are not always proven.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason PSNI's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other Police Service.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Team 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.psnipolice.uk

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