



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2010-00278

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Burglaries and Attacks on Pensioners

### Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland 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

Repeat Request: Actual Statistics for attacks generally upon Pensioners, and burglaries in their homes, (clear up ratios) and totals for all such violence.

The advice 'not to worry' in respect to crimes against the elderly, echoes the apparent inept attitude of PSNI. Why are you reported as saying that attacks and burglaries of old people are 'low!' -What are the Statistics -the justification -the Data Source. In my experience the response to Burglary is uncoordinated and palliative- the building up of files hawked around to impress the unsophisticated - closed for no reason! No clear-up information is ever published.

### Clarification:

Three year period required to establish trend.

### Answer

Please see table below detailing violent crime and domestic burglary offences for 06/07, 07/08 and 08/09.

A Strategy and Action Plan for Ensuring the Safety of Older People may be of interest to you and can be accessed by using the following link:

[http://www.nio.gov.uk/safer\\_ageing\\_a\\_strategy\\_and\\_action\\_plan\\_for\\_ensuring\\_the\\_safety\\_of\\_older\\_people.pdf](http://www.nio.gov.uk/safer_ageing_a_strategy_and_action_plan_for_ensuring_the_safety_of_older_people.pdf)

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](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 @ [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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

# Recorded violent<sup>1</sup> crime and domestic burglary offences by age of victim

## Northern Ireland

### Violent<sup>1</sup> Crime

		Under 18	18 - 64	65 +	Age Unknown	Total
2006/07	Recorded	6616	27525	479	603	35223
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	2034	9315	135	214	11698
	% Cleared	30.7%	33.8%	28.2%	35.5%	33.2%
2007/08	Recorded	5917	25447	407	774	32545
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	1186	7306	87	241	8820
	% Cleared	20.0%	28.7%	21.4%	31.1%	27.1%
2008/09	Recorded	6053	25348	506	787	32694
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	1354	8139	115	297	9905
	% Cleared	22.4%	32.1%	22.7%	37.7%	30.3%

### Domestic Burglaries

		Under 18	18 - 64	65 +	Age Unknown	Total
2006/07	Recorded	35	5679	881	236	6831
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	4	678	63	26	771
	% Cleared	11.4%	11.9%	7.2%	11.0%	11.3%
2007/08	Recorded	46	5409	901	356	6712
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	1	582	55	35	673
	% Cleared	2.2%	10.8%	6.1%	9.8%	10.0%
2008/09	Recorded	24	5941	1081	305	7351
	Cleared <sup>2</sup>	5	621	69	34	729
	% Cleared	20.8%	10.5%	6.4%	11.1%	9.9%

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

<sup>1</sup> Violent crime includes Offences against the person, Sexual offences and Robberies.

<sup>2</sup> Clearances (or detections as they may alternatively be known) are, broadly speaking, those crimes that have been 'cleared up' by the police. Crimes are counted as 'cleared or detected' in accordance with strict counting rules issued by the Home Office. They are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and are all arrested and charged, then this counts as one clearance. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and go free, this also counts as one clearance.

In this respect clearance data differs from conviction data as conviction data counts offenders while clearance data counts crimes.

In April 2006 PSNI adopted a higher evidential standard in respect of non sanction clearances (those where no further action is taken by the police, mainly due to the victim not wanting formal action taken by the police or due to no prosecution being directed). This change was introduced in order to bring these clearance types more closely into line with police services in England and Wales where they have been applying the Crown Prosecution Service evidential test since 2002. In Northern Ireland the equivalent standard only became relevant to PSNI clearances with the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in June 2005. Sanction clearances remained unaffected by this change.

The following methods of clearance involve a formal sanction:

- Charging or issuing a summons to an offender;
- Issuing a caution to the offender;
- Having the offence accepted for consideration in court;
- The offender is a juvenile who is dealt with by means of an informed warning or restorative caution.

Up to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, offences not involving a formal sanction but still regarded as 'cleared up' were those where the police took no further action for the following reasons:

- Offender, victim or essential witness is dead or too ill;
- Victim refuses or is unable to give evidence;
- Offender is under the age of criminal responsibility;
- Police or PPS decides that no useful purpose would be served by proceeding;
- Time limit of six months for commencing prosecution has been exceeded.

The Home Office significantly restricted the clearance types available to the police from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 which meant that virtually all clearances resulting in 'no further police action' (i.e. non sanction clearances) could no longer be claimed as a valid clearance. These clearance types accounted for 4 percentage points of the PSNI clearance rate in 2006/07 but only accounted for less than 0.1 of a percentage point in 2007/08 following this latest restriction. This means that the PSNI overall clearance rate and its sanction clearance rate are now virtually one and the same. This same change also applied to all police services in England and Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.