



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F 2010 01151

Keyword: Crime

Subject: CANNABIS FACTORIES

Request and Answer:

Request

1. Please advise for the past three years the date and location by PSNI of all cannabis factories in NI.
2. For each find, please advise the number of arrests and whether or not those arrested were foreign nationals.
3. Please advise in each case how those arrested were disposed of, and in particular whether they were deported or jailed and for what period.
4. In each case please advise whether the PSNI helicopter was used in discovering the location.

Response

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), 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 **Question 3** of your request would require a manual trawl of the past 3 years records, through Niche, matching the arrested suspect with the incident, then collating whether the subject was charged or reported as a result. Subsequently, this information would then require further analysis, to ascertain if the subject had been deported or jailed and what was the correlating time period. This 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.

Additionally, it is also estimated that the cost of complying with **Question 4** of your request would require a manual trawl through in excess of 5400 incident records, flown by the helicopter in the last 3 years, in order to determine which incidents, if any, relate to the PSNI helicopter being used in discovering the location of cannabis factories. This 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.

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.

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. The PSNI 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 due to the nature and structure of the information requested, this is not possible within the appropriate limit.

Section 16 Duty to provide Advice and Assistance

In relation to **question 1**, PSNI can statistically analyse the available data in such a way that would be able to retrieve the relevant information to respond within the cost limit for a significant find (i.e. 50 plants and over).

From this information, PSNI could also provide information in relation to **question 2** i.e. the number of people arrested and whether or not those arrested were foreign nationals.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this decision please do not hesitate to contact 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.psnj.police.uk

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