



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02153

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Identity Theft

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many crimes classified as 'identity theft', and associated crimes, have been recorded by the PSNI between the period 1 August 2000 and 31 July 2010?

Question 2

What action was taken subsequently to such crimes being investigated - are they still under investigation or have the perpetrators been found? I would like this information provided for each of the crimes recorded in the period stated above, wherever possible.

Question 3

Any other details held relating to these crimes of 'identity theft', and associated crimes, including date of the incident, related incidents, etc.

Answer

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 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.

I contacted the PSNI Central Statistics Unit to ascertain if they held information that could provide a response to your request. They advised that they have no easy way of identifying Fraud and Forgery offences that relate to "identity theft". They could possibly provide statistics with regard to Fraud and Forgery – Deception offences however to identify if these are "identity theft" related would require each incident to be checked. There are approximately 1100 of these a year and allowing 5 minutes per offence would take in the region of 917 hours for the period requested which is well in excess of the 18 hours permitted by legislation.

Crime Operations Branch were also contacted, however they advised that cost implications would apply as they would, like Central Statistics need to firstly identify any records that may contain

information relevant to the request and then manually search these for references to “identity theft”.

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 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 because of the nature and structure of the information to search for one year alone would take some 91 hours unfortunately making this impossible.

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.psnj.police.uk

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