



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-03956

Keyword: Crime

Subject: True and False Rape Allegations

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.

Question 1

How many false rape allegations were made in your area between the years 2005-2009?

Answer

The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not have a specific crime type for 'false allegation of rape'. However, we can provide the number of rapes which were "no crime'd" in each year 2005 to 2009. These "no crimes" refer to rapes which were initially recorded and "crime'd" but were subsequently "no crime'd" under the Home Office Counting Rules. The number of "no crimes" will not represent the total number of false rape allegations made to PSNI, as it will not count those allegations established to be false before a crime could be recorded. Please see the table provided by our Central Statistics Unit below.

Question 2

How many true rape allegations were prosecuted in your area between the years 2005-2009?

Answer

The PSNI have no specific crime type for 'true rape allegation'. However, we can provide the number of rape offences cleared by means of a sanction clearance in each year 2005 to 2009. This may not exactly answer the question asked but would be a close approximation. Please see the table provided by our Central Statistics Unit below.

Question 3

How many females were prosecuted for false rape allegations between the years 2005-2009?

Answer

Searches were conducted regarding Question 3 which failed to locate records or documents to the level of detail outlined in your request and based on the information you have provided. Accordingly,

I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold all the information to which you seek access.

However the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Rape Crime Unit can confirm that there has been 1 person prosecuted for Wasteful Employment of Police Time following a false rape allegation since 2008.

The Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland may be best placed to provide a response to this part of your request. Please advise if you wish us to transfer the request on your behalf. Alternatively you can forward your request to Public Prosecution Service, Headquarters Sections and Belfast Region, Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 3JR or submit it using the link below;

<http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/default.aspx?CATID=0&page=eform&eid=1>

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.psnipolice.uk

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

Recorded and cleared rape offences

Northern Ireland

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Sanction Clearances ^{1,2}	No crimes ³
2005	383	187	74	4
2006	475	94	54	5
2007	422	71	61	3
2008	396	86	83	13
2009 ⁴	392	55	50	17

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

¹ 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 (i.e. the robbery is deemed to be 'cleared'). Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and at large, this also means that the robbery can still be deemed as 'cleared'.

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, restorative caution or prosecutorial diversion.

In addition, for the most serious offence types ('indictable only' – see recorded crime paragraph above for explanation) a non sanction clearance can be claimed if:

- The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) directs no prosecution; or
- The case cannot proceed because the offender has died.

Prior to April 2006 a variety non sanction clearances could be claimed where police took no further action, the main one being where the victim declined to prosecute. At that time these clearance types accounted for around 50% of the PSNI's total clearance rate. However, since then some major changes have been introduced which have substantially limited the clearance options open to the PSNI.

In April 2006, a higher evidential standard was adopted within the PSNI following the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland. Then in April 2007 the Home Office significantly restricted the clearance types available to the police, which meant that virtually all non sanction clearances could no longer be claimed as a valid clearance. Both of these changes had the impact of greatly reducing the number of non sanction clearances to such an extent that the PSNI overall clearance rate and its sanction clearance rate and now virtually one and the same (only a very small proportion of non sanction clearances are now claimed each year).

² Sanction clearance figures are included in the overall cleared figure.

³ No crimes refer to rapes which were initially recorded and 'crime'd' but were subsequently not 'crime'd' under the Home Office Counting Rules. These figures are not included in the overall recorded crime figures.

⁴ Figures from 1st April 2009 are provisional and will be subject to change.