



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02364

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Security Alerts in West Belfast and Lisburn

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many security alerts have there been in West Belfast area of A District and the Lisburn area of D District since January 1, 2010?

Question 2

Of these Security alerts how many had ATO Teams tasked to them?

Question 3

How many were declared as hoax devices?

Question 4

How much did it cost the PSNI to attend?

Question 5

Of the security alerts that have taken place in West Belfast area of A District and the Lisburn area of D District since January 1, 2010, that were declared as 'hoax devices', how much did this cost the PSNI to attend?

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, 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.

The information required to answer questions 4 and 5 is not held in an easily retrievable format. PSNI computer systems would require to be searched firstly to identify the incidents. A further trawl would then be needed to determine how many officers were deployed and identify whether further resources were utilised. Each of the above would require an officer to manually trawl and filter the occurrences to determine the number of hours used before any costs could be identified. I have

been advised that it would take in excess of 54 hours to retrieve this information.

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 how your request may be refined in order to bring it under the cost limit. However, the nature and structure of the information required unfortunately makes this impossible.

Although excess cost removes PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

Answer to Question 1

There have been a total of 36 security alerts in the West Belfast area of A District and the Lisburn area of D District since January 1, 2010.

Answer to Question 2

All 36 of these alerts had Army Technical Officers tasked to them.

Answer to Question 3

32 of these alerts have been declared as hoax devices.

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.psni.police.uk

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