



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-03098

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Sex Offender Register

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information you requested.

Question 1

On 31/03/2009, how many people living in the Northern Ireland force area who were registered on the Violent and Sex Offender Register, were categorised as Potentially Dangerous Persons, i.e. they had not been convicted of any offence for which registration on ViSOR is mandatory, but they had been placed on the Register because their behaviour gave reasonable grounds for believing that there was a risk of offending of a manner which would cause serious harm?

Question 2

How many of these Potentially Dangerous Persons had clean criminal records, i.e. no warnings, cautions or convictions, spent or unspent, against their names?

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.

To retrieve the information requested would require a manual trawl of all hard-copy files to see if on the 31/3/2009 the person was a potentially dangerous person at that stage, if they had been created on ViSOR and what their criminal history was at that time. PSNI have records of approximately 2200 cases and at an estimate of 30 minutes per case this would equate to 1100 hours.

ViSOR is no longer referred to as the "Violent and Sex Offender Register". This is to reflect the fact that ViSOR now contains individuals who are not violent offenders or sexual offenders. ViSOR is a Case Management System used by the police and other agencies to manage dangerous people, not a register, and as such a person does not need to be convicted of a particular offence for their details

to be placed on the system. Some people only remain on the system for a short while.

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 even to provide this using a current date would still be impossible within the timeframe.

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.