



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2010-02076

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Registered Paedophiles in Donagh and Sex Offenders in Lisnaskea

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

Apart from the McDermott brothers convicted of sex abuse in Donagh, Co Fermanagh, how other many registered paedophiles are living in the area?

#### Question 2

How many convicted sex offenders live in Lisnaskea?

#### Answer

In answering your request I have taken the terms used in your questions, “convicted of sex abuse”, registered paedophiles” and “convicted sex offenders” all to refer to ‘Registered Sex Offenders’ as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you have requested.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in the request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which

- a) states that fact,
- b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland can Neither Confirm Nor Deny that it holds the information relevant to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

## Section 40(5)(b)(i) – Personal Information

The release of information under Freedom of Information is a release into the public domain, and not just to an individual. To confirm that the PSNI hold the requested information, whether or not other Registered Sex Offenders are resident in the Donagh or Lisnaskea areas would in fact confirm personal information about the McDermott brothers and also about any other Registered Sex Offenders resident in the areas, whether or not there are any. This would amount to a release into the public domain, of personal information about any such individuals. The individuals would have no expectation that these details would be released into the public domain, therefore their data protection rights would be breached by release.

Although Section 40 is an absolute class-based exemption, a Public Interest Test is required for the purposes of NCND

### **Public Interest Test**

#### Factors Favouring Confirmation Or Denial

Confirming or denying whether the PSNI hold this information would aid accountability in that the public could see what action is or is not taken by police in connection with the management of Registered Sex Offenders

#### Factors Against Confirmation Or Denial

The breach of individuals' data protection rights would be caused by confirmation or denial.

#### Balance Test

Confirmation or denial of whether the PSNI hold information of this nature would amount to a release of personal information in circumstances where the individual(s) concerned would have no expectation of such a release. Whilst the PSNI would always wish to be transparent and accountable, no release under FOI should be made where an individuals data protection rights would be breached. The Public Interest therefore must favour neither confirming nor denying that the information is held.

However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you requested exists or does not exist.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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