



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-01482

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Incidents of Reported Violence at Schools

Request and Answer:

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

I have today decided to:

- disclose records in answer to questions 7 to 11 in full; and
- disclose records in answer to questions 1, 4 and 6 subject to the deletion of information pursuant to the provisions of section 40 of the Freedom of Information 2000 (the Act);

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

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

Question 1

Under the provision of the Freedom of Information Act, Beatbullying and the News of the World kindly requests that you provide the following information:

For each month over the past two years, how many times did officers in your police authority attend a school to deal with an incident of reported violence?

Answer

Please see the answer to question 6 below.

Question 2

For each month, how many of these attendances were made at the request of the school or a school staff member, how many at the request of a pupil, and how many at the request of a parent or carer?

Answer

Technical staff were asked to estimate how long it would take to retrieve this information from our systems. The estimated retrieval time would have placed this request well over the 'appropriate fees limit' as contained in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 as some manual searching was involved, but other issues were also identified. Searches would be likely to return incidents that did not occur at schools, for example where an incident occurred at an address like "School Road". There would also be a strong reliance on free text fields where there would be no guarantee that the relevant information had been entered in the first place. Whilst under normal circumstances, for the purpose of Freedom of Information, the accuracy of recorded information is not a factor that would be considered, I have decided that it would be unfair to place the whole request 'over cost' based on a retrieval estimate for parts of it, that if proceeded with, despite cost, would be likely to retrieve inaccurate information anyway.

Question 3

For each month and for each of the above categories of request, how many attendances were as the result of responding to an emergency (999) call?

Answer

Please see answer to question 2 above.

Question 4

For each month, what proportion of all incidents where you attended involved a child as both the victim and perpetrator, an adult as victim and child as perpetrator, an adult as perpetrator and a child as victim, and an adult as both perpetrator and victim? In clarification you agreed that for the purpose of the request "adults" and "children" should be classified as aged 18 years and over, and under 18 years respectively.

Answer

The decision has been taken to refuse access to some of the requested information. The exemption considered is listed below:

Section 40(2)(a) and (b) by virtue of Section 40(3)(a)(i) – Personal Information

Some of the requested information has resulted in the retrieval of low cell value statistics. The statistics are on a 'per month' time scale and whilst they do relate to the whole of Northern Ireland, they only involve the school population, a relatively small population size. Given these factors it is likely that the identification of individuals, victims or perpetrators, would be possible. This would therefore amount to releasing sensitive personal information relating to these individuals, i.e., that they were involved in some way in a violent crime at school during a particular month. This would be a breach of the Data Protection Act and is catered for within Freedom of Information by the exemptions under Section 40(2).

Section 40(2) is a Class-based exemption, therefore it is not necessary to evidence the harm caused by disclosure. Section 40(2) is also an Absolute exemption and a Public Interest Test is not necessary.

Please see attached table showing the proportion of all violent offences occurring in a school that have since been detected by month and age of victim and offender. Cells where the value equals three individuals or less have been redacted.

Question 5

In what proportion of incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) did medics also attend?

Answer

Please see answer to question 2 above.

Question 6

For incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) how many were recorded as crimes?

Answer

The decision has been taken to refuse access to some of the requested information. The exemption considered is listed below:

Section 40(2)(a) and (b) by virtue of Section 40(3)(a)(i) – Personal Information

Some of the requested information has resulted in the retrieval of low cell value statistics. The statistics are on a 'per month' time scale and whilst they do relate to the whole of Northern Ireland, they only involve the school population, a relatively small population size. Given these factors it is likely that the identification of individuals, victims or perpetrators, would be possible. This would therefore amount to releasing sensitive personal information relating to these individuals, ie., that they were involved in some way in a violent crime at school during a particular month. This would be a breach of the Data Protection Act and is catered for within Freedom of Information by the exemptions under Section 40(2).

Section 40(2) is a Class-based exemption, therefore it is not necessary to evidence the harm caused by disclosure. Section 40(2) is also an Absolute exemption and a Public Interest Test is not necessary.

Please see attached table of recorded violent crime reported to the police where MO locational information indicates occurrence to have taken place at a school by month. Some cells have been banded where a cell value equals three individuals or less.

Question 7

For incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) how many resulted in charges being brought?

Answer

Of the violent offences recorded as occurring at schools in 2008/09 and 2009/10, 169 have since been detected. Of which, 17 by means of person/s charged. The figures for the number of recorded crimes since detected may change as undetected offences may still be subject to investigation.

Question 8

In what proportion of incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) was a weapon reported to be involved?

Answer

Of the 169 detected offences, 9% were noted as having a weapon involved. The figures relate to crimes where a weapon was involved in the incident – it is not known how the weapon was actually used.

Question 9

For incidents where a weapon was reported to be involved, what was the weapon?

Answer

Of the detected violent offences involving a weapon, the weapon types were classified as being knife/sharp instrument, bottle/glass and other.

Question 10

How many incidents involving children involved a girl as a victim, a girl as the perpetrator, a boy as the victim, and a boy as the perpetrator?

Answer

Of all violent offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 years noted as being the victim 95 were male and 56 were female.

Of all detected violent offences occurring at a school and a person/s under 18 years noted as being the offender/s 92 were male and 44 were female.

Question 11

How many of the reported incidents involving children also involved a report of sexual violence, and how many involved theft from the person?

Answer

Of the violent offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 was either the victim or offender/s 63 were sexual offences.

Of all offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 was either the victim or offender/s, 7 were offences of theft from the person. Theft offences occurring at a school are not included in any other figures quoted in this request as they are not classified as violent crimes.

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.psni.police.uk

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

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

1 For each month over the past two years, how many times did officers in your police authority attend a school to deal with an incident of reported violence?

6 For incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) how many were recorded as crimes?

Recorded violent¹ crime reported to the police where MO locational information indicates occurrence to have taken place at a school² by month

Northern Ireland

		Violent Crime ¹
2008/09	Apr	25
	May	33
	Jun	18
	Jul	7*
	Aug	
	Sep	34
	Oct	35
	Nov	34
	Dec	11
	Jan	23
	Feb	19
	Mar	46
	Total	285
2009/10	Apr	23
	May	18
	Jun	29
	Jul	8
	Aug	5
	Sep	21
	Oct	24
	Nov	37
	Dec	17
	Jan	23
	Feb	28
	Mar	42
	Total	275

**s.F40
s.F40(2)
s.F40(2)(a)
s.F40(2)(b)
s.F40(3)(a)
s.F40(3)(ai)**

Source: Central Statistics unit, PSNI

* Disclosure control applied (cells merged) to those cells relating to 3 or fewer individuals.

These figures are based on operational information taken from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change.



4 For each month, what proportion of all incidents where you attended involved a child as both the victim and perpetrator, an adult as victim and child as perpetrator, an adult as perpetrator and a child as victim, and an adult as both perpetrator and victim?

Proportion of all violent offences occurring in a school that have since been detected by month and age³ of victim and offender

		Child Victim, Child Offender	Adult Victim, Child Offender	Child Victim, Adult Offender	Adult Victim, Adult Offender	
2008/09	Apr	24%				
	May	18%			15%	
	Jun					
	Jul					s.F40
	Aug					s.F40(2)
	Sep		12%			s.F40(2)(a)
	Oct	29%				s.F40(2)(b)
	Nov	21%				s.F40(3)(a)
	Dec					s.F40(3)(ai)
	Jan	30%				
	Feb	21%				
	Mar	22%	11%			
	Total	21%	5%	2%	5%	
2009/10	Apr	30%				s.F40
	May	28%				s.F40(2)
	Jun	28%				s.F40(2)(a)
	Jul					s.F40(2)(b)
	Aug					s.F40(3)(a)
	Sep	33%				s.F40(3)(ai)
	Oct					
	Nov	16%				
	Dec					
	Jan					
	Feb	14%				
	Mar					
	Total	17%	5%	1%	4%	

Source: Central Statistics unit, PSNI

7 For incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) how many resulted in charges being brought?

Of the violent offences recorded as occurring at schools in 2008/09 and 2009/10, 169 have since been detected⁴. Of which, 17 by means of person/s charged.

8 In what proportion of incidents in the categories mentioned in question (4) was a weapon reported to be involved?

Of the 169 detected offences, 9% were noted as having a weapon involved⁵.

These figures are based on operational information taken from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change.



9 For incidents where a weapon was reported to be involved, what was the weapon?

Of the detected violent offences involving a weapon, the weapon types were classified as being *knife/sharp instrument, bottle/glass and other*.

10. How many incidents involving children involved a girl as a victim, a girl as the perpetrator, a boy as the victim, and a boy as the perpetrator?

Of all violent offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 years noted as being the victim 95 were male and 56 were female.

Of all detected violent offences occurring at a school and a person/s under 18 years noted as being the offender/s 92 were male and 44 were female.

11 How many of the reported incidents involving children also involved a report of sexual violence, and how many involved theft from the person?

Of the violent offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 was either the victim or offender/s 63 were sexual offences.

Of all offences occurring at a school and a person under 18 was either the victim or offender/s, 7 were offences of theft from the person⁶.

¹ Violent crime includes offences against the person, sexual offences and robberies.

² While the offence may have taken place on school premises, it may have occurred outside school hours.

³ Age categories in the table are defined as persons 18 years and over being adult and persons under 18 years being a child.

⁴ The figures for the number of recorded crimes since detected may change as undetected offences may still be subject to investigation.

⁵ The figures relate to crimes where a weapon was involved in the incident – it is not known how the weapon was actually used.

⁶ Theft offences occurring at a school are not included in any other figures quoted in this request as they are not classified as violent crimes.

These figures are based on operational information taken from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change.