



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2010-01855  
**Keyword:** Finance  
**Subject:** Invoicing Procedures

### Request and Answer:

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

### Question 1

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2002.

It relates to the performance of your police force when processing payment to suppliers, contractors and any other party supplying a service or product during the last financial year (09/10).

The request is comprised of four questions:

### Question 1

Under its standard payment terms, how quickly, in days, does your force aim to pay invoices from suppliers and contractors.

### Question 2

During 2009/10, what percentage of invoices did your force settle in 10 days or less, from the invoice date.

### Question 3

During 2009/10, what percentage of invoices did your force settle in 30 days or less, from the invoice date.

### Question 4

If possible, please also supply me with the mean average of the amount of time, in days your force took to settle bills in 2009/10.

### Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is therefore 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 (18 hours).

The information requested in question 4 is not readily accessible by the PSNI. The current finance system cannot provide the information and would require the creation of a specific program to make retrieval possible. The time taken to create a program and then run a report would exceed the 18 hrs limit.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has 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 the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice in relation to question 4 and has therefore been closed.

Although excess cost removes the 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 your request.

#### **Answer 1**

The PSNI aim to pay invoices in 10 working days.

#### **Answer 2**

During 2009/10 the percentage of invoices settled in 10 days or less was 82.6%.

#### **Answer 3**

During 2009/10 the percentage of invoices settled in 30 days or less was 98.5%.

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.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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