



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-03637
Keyword: Finance
Subject: Special Bonus Payments

Request and Answer:

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

I have today decided to:

- disclose information in response to questions 1 and 3 in full; and
- disclose information in response to question 2 subject to the deletion of information pursuant to the provisions of Section 40 of the Freedom of Information 2000 (the Act);

Question 1

How many persons within the PSNI were paid a Special Bonus Payment during 2009 and 2010?

Answer

In 2009, 172 Police Officers and Police Staff were paid a Special Bonus Payment. In 2010, 112 Police Officers and Police Staff were paid a Special Bonus Payment.

Question 2

What rank and grades were these persons? (i.e. 15 Constables, 10 EO1's etc)

Answer

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.

The exemption is as follows:

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

This is an absolute and class based exemption. The information sought must fall within the class of information covered by the exemption. In this instance the information must be personal i.e. information from which a person could be identified. Releasing that information must breach at least one of the data protection principles. As this is an absolute exemption the legislators have assumed that harm will be caused should the information be released.

The ranks and grades of officers and staff awarded Special Bonus Payments and the total amounts of Special Bonus Payments paid to each rank or grade is recorded by the PSNI's Finance Department. However, to provide a full breakdown of the more specific Police Staff grades, along with the total amount received by persons within that grade would amount to releasing personal information relating to the individuals involved.

A decision was taken to limit the level of information released and this was to ensure the personal data of anyone who received a bonus payment would not be identified.

Police staff who receive bonus payments will have the expectation that their personal data will be processed in a confidential manner and only used for a staff administration purpose within the police service and not released to any other person.

This specific information requested by you will relate to serving police staff and it is data that if released can be used to learn or decide something about those individuals. Additionally and importantly there is the potential to identify someone from the data either through a comparison of what is already available or as an incidental consequence. There is a risk that information released as part of this request could be compared with what is already known or available about police bonus payments.

This element of the exemption is engaged if the request is for personal data about someone other than the applicant and in this instance this is exactly the case.

Your request relates to the personal data of small numbers of police staff. Personal Data is regulated under the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and when information contains personal data about a third party, release can be refused if disclosure would breach any of the data protection principles.

Any disclosure under FOIA that could highlight data relating to bonus payments of serving police staff will breach principles 1 & 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Principle (1), that personal data is processed lawfully and fairly. Personal data of this nature is initially imparted and recorded for the purpose of staff administration including payments. It must be treated in a highly confidential manner and any public disclosure would be unlawful if there is a breach of that law of confidentiality.

Police staff provide personal data to the PSNI with an expectation that it will be treated fairly. Any disclosure of this type of data into the public domain that relates to or could be used to identify staff who have received a bonus payment will be unfair to any individual concerned.

Principle (2), that personal data is processed for a specific purpose and not further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose. As previously mentioned, personal data in this instance was gathered and is processed for a specific purpose. Once personal data has been publicly disclosed, it will in most cases be used for a purpose other than it was initially obtained. Police staff who receive a bonus payment will not expect their personal data to be used for another purpose.

This has been addressed by redacting the specific grades of staff members. Analogous grade have been provided.

<u>Number of Police Officers who received a Special Bonus payment in each rank</u>
<u>2009</u>
Constables = 15
Sergeants = 3
Inspectors = 7
Chief Inspectors = 1
Superintendents = 3
<u>2010</u>
Constables = 8
Sergeants = 1
Acting Inspectors = 1

Question 3

How much was paid in total to each rank or grade? (i.e. Constables £7000, EO1's £3000 etc).

Answer

Please see the table below which details the total amount paid in Special Bonus Payments to each grade of Police Staff.

The total paid to each rank of Police Officer was as follows;

2009

Constables = £1800
Sergeants = £1500.00
Inspectors = £1900.00
Chief Inspectors = £500.00
Superintendents = £1500.00

2010

Constables = £1600.00
Sergeants = £50.00
Acting Inspectors = £250.00

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.

Grade	Analogous Grade	No paid bonus at each grade for 2009	Total bonus paid to each grade in 2009	No paid bonus at each grade for 2010	Total bonus paid to each grade in 2010
	AA	15	£11,000	10	£3,550
	AO	32	£17,600	25	£12,050
	DP	3	£2,000	4	£1,600
	EO1	2	£1,000	0	£0
	EO1	5	£2,750	9	£3,850
	EO11	10	£6,100	11	£5,500
	G6	8	£3,850	0	£0
	G7	3	£3,500	2	£2,000
	AO	1	£500	0	£0
	EO1	2	£2,000	0	£0
	SO	2	£1,750	0	£0
	DP	1	£1,000	0	£0
	Personal Secretary	2	£1,500	2	£1,250
	EO1	13	£5,250	10	£3,100
	SO	8	£5,300	5	£2,050
	AA	9	£5,200	11	£4,250
	AO	1	£500	3	£750
	EO1	12	£5,700	0	£0
	SO	1	£500	0	£0
	SO	1	£750	4	£1,350
	EO1	6	£1,050	1	£1,000
	DP	4	£750	0	£0
	DP	2	£350	0	£0
	EO1			1	£1,000
	DP			1	£500
	Industrial Band 6			1	£500
	AA			2	£500

s.F4
s.F40(
s.F40(2)
s.F40(2)
s.F40(3)
s.F40(3)