



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-03029

Keyword: Finance

Subject: Supplier Costs

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested.

Question 1

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For the financial year 09/10, how much the force paid in total to private companies offering staff and support for police forces. Such companies would include, for example, but not be limited to: G4S Policing, RIG Police Recruit, RIG ESR.

Question 2

A breakdown showing which companies were paid, and how much in the year.

Question 3

For each company paid, please also provide a breakdown of individual 'jobs', investigations or contracts paid for during the year, showing the amount paid for each job, investigation or individual contract, how many staff were provided for the job, investigation or contract, the role of each staff member, and a summary of the task they were asked to assist with.

Question 4

Please also provide a copy of all invoices related to each company paid during the year.

I would also like the same information for the financial years 08/09, 07/08 and 06/07.

Some parts of this request may be easier to answer than others, and should this prove to be the case I would ask that you release available data as soon as possible rather than hold up the entire request. Please also contact me with any concerns or problems as soon as possible.

I would prefer to receive this information electronically. If the decision is made to withhold some of this data using exemptions in Act, please inform me of that fact and cite the exemptions used.

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 (18 hours).

The PSNI currently employ several hundred agency staff performing a wide variety of roles across the organisation. To provide the information requested in question 3 would take on average, 1 hour per employee. For 2009/2010 alone this would equate to 500 employees x 1 hour, totalling 500 hours per year. For the 4 years requested this would take 2,000 hours to complete.

The PSNI process approximately 500 invoices per month. To retrieve a copy of each invoice would take an estimated 3 minutes. To provide this information for each of the 4 financial years would take a further 300 hours. To retrieve the information requested, would greatly exceed the limit of 18 hours and therefore it cannot be provided within cost.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act 2000, the PSNI has a duty to provide advice and assistance to you, the requester. The PSNI has considered if it can help you to refine your request to bring it under the cost limit. It may be possible to provide how much was paid for agency staff services over the 4 financial years and also the average number of agency staff per year.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of any relevant exemptions.

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.

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.