



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2010-03083  
**Keyword:** Finance  
**Subject:** Travel and Expense Management

### 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 1- 8 in full and;
- fully exempt records in answer to question 9 pursuant to the provisions of Section 38 (1)(a)(b) of the Act.

### Question 1

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act

Could you please supply me with details regarding your current travel and expense management process and VAT recovery.

Namely:

How do individuals claim for their expenses and mileage?

### Answer

Police Officers claim via a self service, on-line process and Civilian Staff currently claim via a paper based claim form but is currently in the process of moving to the on-line process.

### Question 2

Is it a manual or automated process?

### Answer

The Police system is fully automated and the Civilian system is paper based/automated.

### Question 3

What system is currently used?

**Answer**

The PSNI currently use SAP - Human Resource Management System.

**Question 4**

How many claims annually are processed and what is the value of the expenses processed?

**Answer**

On average there are 43,620 claims annually. In 2009/2010 this totalled £1,571,756.80. These figures incorporate both Police Officer and Civilian Staff claims.

**Question 5**

How is travel and expense (T&E) VAT recovered?

**Answer**

The VAT element is included on the monthly VAT return to Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs.

**Question 6**

Is any foreign VAT incurred and if so what is the process for recovering it?

**Answer**

No foreign VAT is incurred.

**Question 7**

What area(s) of the entire T & E process could be improved?

**Answer**

Under the Freedom of Information Act, this question is deemed invalid as it is not a request for recorded information.

**Question 8**

Are there any plans to improve or change the current process?

**Answer**

No

**Question 9**

Please advise the name of the person who would be responsible for any changes to the current process?

**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, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, is listed below:

Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health & Safety, is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption, this means that it is the Public Authority's responsibility to evidence the Harm and carry out a Public Interest Test.

A summary of the Harm for Section 38 along with the Public Interest Test is provided below:

## **HARM**

### **Section 38**

The information you have requested would require disclosing the name of a member of PSNI staff into the public domain.

Disclosure of PSNI staff names could put individuals at risk and impact on their safety. The Service is currently under threat from Dissident Republicans and releasing names of personnel could assist terrorists in targeting individuals. The Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) in its 23<sup>rd</sup> report have stated that the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA were continuing to recruit and train members, acquire weapons and target potential victims, with police officers/staff the main focus of their activities.

## **PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

### **Factors Favouring Release - Section 38**

Releasing the information would promote openness and transparency. The public would be better informed about the decision making process and the personnel involved.

### **Factors Favouring Retention - Section 38**

Releasing the names of police staff into the public domain would assist terrorists and criminal elements to use a mosaic approach and link all information available to them to carry out attacks on PSNI personnel on or off duty.

### **Decision**

I have determined that the release of PSNI staff names, into the public domain would not be in the public interest. The Service is currently under severe threat from Dissident Republicans and disclosure of this information has the potential to assist those criminal elements seeking to carry out attacks against police officers/ staff and police premises. The safety of individuals is of paramount importance and the PSNI will not divulge any information which could put lives or property at risk.

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

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