



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02588

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Foreign Languages Learnt by Police Officers

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 and the answers to your questions are as follows.

Question 1

Can you tell me how many officers have learnt a foreign language each year for the past five years in each district?

Question 2

Can you also give details of what the languages were in those districts?

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 information you have requested is not held centrally and therefore it was necessary to canvass each district within the PSNI for their responses. Officers are in a position to undertake the learning of a foreign language or any other subject on their own initiative without informing their district. Therefore, any records held would not reflect the exact number of officers who have learnt a foreign language. However, one district has advised that the retrieval of this information would require a manual trawl of approximately 600 officers' files and it would take 5 minutes to examine each one. For one district alone, this process would take approximately 50 hours, exceeding the overall limit of 18 hours.

The PSNI has also considered if it can assist to help you refine your request, to bring it under the cost limit, however the nature and the 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, 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.