



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-00803

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Members Of Ethnic Minorities Being Encouraged To Join The PSNI

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information you requested and the answers to your questions are as follows.

Question

As part of the PSNI's equality and diversity initiatives what positive steps are being taken to encourage members of ethnic minorities to join the PSNI?

Answer

The PSNI are keen to engage, whenever and wherever possible, with community leaders and representatives from ethnic minority groups, with a view to promoting career opportunities within the policing environment and addressing cultural differences and/or perceptions. In addition the PSNI attend a wide variety of careers events and fairs, including the Chinese New Year, Indian Mela, Polish Picnic, Belfast Pride etc, and representatives from the Ethnic Minority Police Association are in attendance at these and other local community events.

The PSNI have ran, and continue to run, a programme with Belfast Metropolitan College, focusing on individuals whose first language is not English yet are interested in pursuing a career in policing. The purpose of this is to attain a level of understanding of English to allow them to compete in the PSNI application process on more equal terms.

The PSNI recruitment literature is distributed directly to some 500 organisations, many representing minority communities, and this literature is often translated into their first language. Recruitment advertisements are carried in a wide range of media, with the intention of reaching all groups.

There is a Polish and a Chinese Advocacy Scheme which will raise the profile of PSNI and hopefully encourage more applications from these communities.

Question

What are the current guidelines on members of the PSNI wishing to wear religious headgear, eg: turban, burkha, while on duty?

Answer

For your information the following is an excerpt from the PSNI Style Guide.

“Police officers from an ethnic minority community may wish to wear uniform items which have cultural, traditional or religious significance. In these cases specific items will be consulted upon by the Uniform and Protective Measures Committee (who will seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Unit, Lisnasharragh).

For individuals who may wish to wear specific jewellery on duty for religious/cultural purposes, the Service will always aim to support these practices as long as the safety of the individual is not put at risk and that health and safety regulations are not breached.”

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.