



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-00345

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Dangerous Dogs

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many people have been bitten by dangerous dogs in last 5 years in Northern Ireland for which you have data?

Question 2

How many incidents involving dangerous dogs and humans were reported in the last 5 years for which you have data?

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 data required to be able to respond to your request would be stored in the free text fields of the [PSNI and](#) cannot be researched using software alone. To perform the search with reasonable accuracy would require a 2-phase approach: firstly, using PSNI software to run generalised searches to identify incidents that may match. Then, manually reading the log and/or description fields for each suggested incident.

To get some idea of a time estimate for this request, our Information Communication Services team ran a test programme. The search revealed that for the last 5 years there are 23,505 incidents where the incident log contains the word “DOG”. 10 incidents were selected at random and examined. This took 18 minutes in total. Based on this it would take approximately 690 hours to check the 23,000 incidents.

For your information I have been advised that dog wardens operate in many of the Northern Ireland Council Areas and it is Local Councils who undertake to investigate dangerous dog cases. Your Local Council may be able to provide you with information regarding dog attacks and dangerous dogs.

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.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.