



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02254

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Allegations Of Sexual Abuse By Juveniles In State Care

Request and Answer:

Question

Please advise over the last complete year available for Northern Ireland ref juveniles in state care or foster care;-

- 1) The number of allegations of sexual abuse of such juveniles made to police;-
- 2) How each case was disposed of.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), 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.

The information requested is not held centrally within the PSNI and in an attempt to retrieve a response to your request I contacted the Child Abuse Investigation Units (CAIU) within the police districts.

I have been advised that CAIU do not hold an index or table that is searchable for the purposes of enquiring whether a child was in 'state' or 'foster care'. Each referral or allegation passed to the CAIU would have to be manually scrutinised to extract any information relevant to your request. One district alone has advised that for the calendar year 2009 they received 317 referrals or allegations and allowing a 10 minute period for each file this would take approximately 55 hours which is well in excess of that permitted by the legislation which is set at 18 hours.

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.