



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02668

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Officers convicted for breach of Code of Ethics

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. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question 1

I request the total number of officers convicted for breach of the PSNI Code of Ethics Article 3, Privacy and Confidentiality and as a result how many were dismissed or required to resign (clarified as officers who appeared before a formal misconduct hearing in the last two years and found guilty of Breach of Article 3 of the PSNI Code of Ethics)

Answer

From 1st July 2009 to 1st August 2011, two PSNI officers appeared before a formal misconduct hearing and were found to have breached Article 3 (Privacy and Confidentiality) of the PSNI Code of Ethics. Both officers received a disciplinary sanction of reduction in pay, therefore no officer was dismissed or required to resign.

Question 2

Of the total amount of officers convicted of breach of the PSNI Code of Ethics Article 3 how many were convicted of breaching the data protection act?

Answer

Neither of the two officers who were found to have breached PSNI Code of Ethics, Article 3, was criminally convicted of breach of the data protection act. However one PSNI Officer was criminally convicted of Breach of the Data Protection Act in the last two years. At a formal misconduct hearing this officer received a disciplinary sanction of reduction in pay.

Whilst the Service takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing, the number of cases should be put into context of the overall number of PSNI officers i.e. around 8000 officers.

It should be noted that every disciplinary case is examined on an individual basis to determine the

level and nature of the misconduct and the extent to which the PSNI's Code of Ethics has been breached. The seriousness of the offence, the circumstances surrounding its commission and its potential impact will dictate the misconduct sanction ultimately imposed.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason PSNI's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other Police Service.

The PSNI Code of Ethics may be viewed at www.psni.police.uk/code_of_ethics_2008.

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.