



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-04253

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Outstanding Arrest Warrants

Request and Answer:

Question 1

The number of outstanding arrest warrants currently in force by the constabulary.

Question 2

For each case, please disclose the name of the individual.

As it is in the public interest for the police to apprehend alleged criminals, we believe the public interest in disclosure of the individual's name outweighs any potential Section 40 exemption.

Question 3

The date the warrant was issued.

Question 4

The reason for the arrest eg nature of the alleged offence.

Question 5

Why the warrant is outstanding eg individual failed to attend court/failed to turn up at police station to answer police bail.

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.

The information requested in questions 4 and 5 is not held in an easily retrievable format and to provide a response would involve a manual trawl of each warrant record. The Information Communication Service Department have advised that it would take around 20 minutes to manually

check each arrest warrant and retrieve the information. With 3225 arrest warrants to check, this task would take an estimated 1075 hours, greatly exceeding the cost threshold.

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.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Unfortunately, the nature and structure of the information requested makes this impossible.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I can advise that there are currently 3225 arrest warrants. This information was retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

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.