



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03486

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Number of arrests for child abuse 2008 -2011

Request and Answer:

Question

How many males and females were arrested for child abuse for the years, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 (as far as records can show), each case to state the type of child abuse involved.

Question

How many arrests were made via referrals from social workers, judges and other court officials regarding events that happened in the Family Law Courts?

Clarification was sought to determine what you the requester referred to as 'child abuse' in the request. The clarification provided was: child abuse as cited by the DHSSPS, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. Child abuse to include: grooming and stalking.

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 relation to the service is not held in a central location within the PSNI but is held within each of the 8 Districts and Information and Communications Services Branch (ICS). I contacted each of the Districts and ICS Branch who were asked to provide times estimates as to how long it would take to retrieve the information from their systems. One District alone estimated that the search for the information requested would take an estimated 160 hours to retrieve. To retrieve the information involves a manual search for all arrests from 2008 – 2011, and then establish the offence which the person was arrested for. Once this information would be retrieved only then could it be ascertained where any referrals originated from. It is therefore estimated that the total time required for the 8 Districts and ICS to locate, and extract the information requested would take an estimated 810 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.

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 however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately 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.

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.