



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F 2011 00907

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Information regarding Cold Cases

Request and Answer:

I am interested to know what cold case success rates you have had using DNA testing.

By cold cases, I am thinking of crimes which had been committed before DNA testing was in use for criminal investigations.

For example, I would be grateful if you could advise;-

1) In how many such cold cases (where DNA evidence was later found) have people subsequently been;-

- arrested?
- charged?
- convicted?

2) I would be grateful if you could give the above information individually for each case, in addition to;-

- The year of the original offence
- The type of crime eg rape / murder etc.

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 (18 hours) £450. If this cost applies to one or more questions, then it applies to the entire request.

In relation to answering question 1 alone. In order to obtain this information would require a case by case search, as it embedded into many different records and systems. Therefore to even locate and extract the information would be over the appropriate fee as this information is not held in an easily

retrievable format.

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.

Section 16 – Advice and Assistance

No investigation case relies on DNA alone, but also on many other forms of evidence. Hence, the need for a case by case search to be carried out in order to answer your questions.

In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Although PSNI would hold information regarding cold cases these records, as mentioned previously, would be embedded in different records and systems. Therefore, due to the nature and structure of the information requested this would make it extremely difficult for the PSNI to advise you how to refine your request to a point below the £450 cost limit.

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 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.psnj.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.