



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03691

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Cost of Murder Trial

Request and Answer:

Re: Trial - Murder of Thomas English

We refer to the above matter and would be obliged if you would provide the following information to us under the Freedom of Information Act.

Can you confirm the amount of money spent by the PSNI in relation to the investigation of the murder of Thomas English. Without prejudice to the generality of this request we would anticipate the following figures to be included:-

Question 1

All Police Officers paid directly or indirectly involved in any aspect of the investigations, to include data managers, special branch officers and agent handlers.

Question 2

Money spent on computer hard systems.

Question 3

Money spent in relation to protection for any of the witnesses

Question 4

Any money spent in relation to forensic evidence in the case.

Question 5

Any other money spent directly or indirectly in connection with the investigation.

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 or 18 hours.

By way of explanation this information is not retained in an easily retrievable format and it is estimated that the time required to collate the information from Witness Protection, Computer Systems, Crime Operations Business Service, Forensic Evidence alone equates to approximately 96 hours. Each of these areas of business would need to research their paper and computer systems for such records and extract and collate the requested information. Also each officer’s duty time, overtime and travel and subsistence costs would need to be extracted and collated.

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

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 due to the nature and structure of the information requested, 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.