



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F 2011 00945

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Money paid to CHIS

Request and Answer:

Please provide the following information:

1. Please state the amount of money paid to covert human intelligence sources (CHIS)/informants in the last year (2010/11).
2. Provide comparison figures for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10.
3. Provide comparison figures for 2004/05 and 1999/2000.
4. During 2010/11, please state the number of CHIS/informants on the PSNI payroll. Please state the amount paid to the highest CHIS/informant. Please provide comparison figures for 2009/10.

Answer question 3

Under Section 17 (5) Section 12 has been considered and the cost of complying with this part of your request for information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450. If this cost applies to one or more questions, then it applies to the entire request.

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.

In relation to the financial years 1999/2000 and 2004/2005 the PSNI does not retain this information in an easily retrievable format. The financial information relating to this aspect of your request was pre computerisation and therefore was recorded manually. A case-by-case search would have to be carried out to ascertain the amount paid to Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) for the above years. To conduct this search would involve a disproportionate amount of resources, which could impact, on the PSNI's ability to deliver a professional service to the community.

For the reasons already outlined above, 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.

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 – Duty to provide 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. Although PSNI would hold information regarding CHIS cost, these records as mentioned previously were pre computerisation and therefore were recorded manually. Such a search would involve a case-by-case search. 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.

Although excess cost removes the service's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this will be helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

Questions 1 and 2

The decision has been taken to disclose the crime figures per financial year below as requested. This information is provided in keeping with the spirit of openness and transparency.

2007/2008 £194,671.00
2008/2009 £299,000.00
2009/2010 £405,115.00
2010/2011 £395,800.00

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.psnipolice.uk

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

