



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011-00937

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Offences Committed Within Police Stations

### Request and Answer:

#### Question

I would like to request the following information about the number of offences committed within your police stations:

In each year from 2008 to present, and for each police station:

- How many offences were committed in each police station?
- Please provide a breakdown of the types of offences which were committed, e.g. arson, harassment, etc.

Please confirm you have received this. Please advise in advance if you feel this request would be better answered by another department or body or if it is beyond your remit and needs to be limited in some way. If you have received similar requests, please send these to me in conjunction with this request.

Clarification returned - To clarify, by "offences committed within police stations", I meant all offences committed within police stations, whether they were by staff or members of the public. However, if it is possible to break this aggregate figure into these two categories and still be within the limits of the FOI request that would be very helpful.

#### 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 (18 hours).

The information requested is not held centrally and therefore it was necessary to canvass all districts within PSNI for retrieval. One district has advised that their recording system does not permit a

search on the offence location address, which is part of the offence report, relevant to offences occurring in Police Stations. Therefore, it would be necessary to trawl through each offence entry to determine if it occurred within the station. The district has advised that this process would take approximately 415 hours.

Professional Standards Department were also consulted as they hold records in relation to staff discipline. To retrieve the requested information would require the examination of approximately 1200 files/occurrences, to ascertain if an offence occurred within a police station. It is estimated that this process would take in excess of 20 hours and would again exceed the cost limit.

The PSNI has considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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