



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F 2011 01350

Keyword: Crime

Subject: PSNI Helicopter

Request and Answer:

Question 1

The total number of sorties flown by PSNI helicopters in each of the last 5 years, broken down by each month of each year.

Question 2

Pursuant to the above provide a frequency summary and breakdown of the reasons for scrambling the helicopter for each year.

Question 3

The average cost of scrambling a PSNI helicopter for one sortie.

Question 4

The total costs incurred operating the helicopters owned by the PSNI in each of the last five years and to provide a breakdown of how these costs were incurred.

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 question 4 of 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.

The cost is divided between various separate departments within the PSNI. To compile and collate the requested information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

It is therefore considered the cost of complying with this part of your request for information would exceed the appropriate limit as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, 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.

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'.

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.

Section 16 – Duty to provide advice and assistance

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 the costs, these would be embedded in different budgets and departments. 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.

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.

Answer 1

Sorties/Flights

2006/2007 1051

2007/2008 1273

2008/2009 1619

2009/2010 http://www.psnipolice.uk/new_police_helicopter

Answer 2

Information relevant to a general breakdown of the reasons for scrambling the helicopter can be found by accessing the below link:

http://www.psnipolice.uk/new_police_helicopter

Answer 3

Although there is no average cost for one sortie as each are different PSNI can advise that depending on what airframe, the hourly deployment cost can be from £1500.00 to £2100.00 per hour.

Answer 4

2008

The maintenance costs for the police helicopter in 2008 were £682,547.98

The fuel costs for the police helicopter in 2008 were £149,547.54.

The pilotage service costs in 2008 were £325,944.84.

2010

The maintenance costs for the police helicopters in 2010 were £937,979.57.

The fuel costs for the police helicopters in 2010 were £301,856.57.

Salary costs are calculated over a financial year and for 2010/2011 the piloting cost was £331,455.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the 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.psni.police.uk

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