



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02321

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Police Officers or Civilian employees selling information

Request and Answer:

Question

How many allegations have been made about police officers or civilian employees selling information to unauthorised third parties in the last 5 years?

Question

How many of these allegations were investigated?

Question

How many of these investigations are closed? How many are ongoing?

Question

How many allegations were upheld?

Question

How many police or civilian employees were sacked as a result of the allegations? How many were disciplined?

Question

How many people subject to these allegations left the force before the investigation was complete?

Question

How many of these investigations found that officers or civilian employees had sold information? For each of these cases, please disclose

- a. the position/rank of the individual
- b. what disciplinary action was taken
- c. how much the individual was offered/paid for the information
- d. the nature of the information

e. any recorded details about the payer i.e. were they a known member of the media or a convicted criminal.

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.

The information requested is not held in a central location within the PSNI but is held within the District Command Units and Professional Standards Department (PSD). Each of the Districts were asked to provide time estimates as to how long it would take to retrieve this information for civilian staff from their separate systems. One District alone advised that individual research would take an estimated 50 hours to retrieve the information. This would involve a manual search of over 200 staff files as no details of this query are held on the SAP computer system. Professional Standards Department would have to manually search an estimated 200 files for this time-frame which should be contained within files categorised by Article 3 breach of Privacy and Confidentiality. The search within PSD would involve 6 hours to retrieve these files, 13hours 30 minutes to extract the information which totals 19 hours 30 minutes. It is therefore estimated that the total time for all Districts and Professional Standards Department to locate and extract the information requested would take an estimated 143 hours.

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'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. It may be possible to provide the information, subject to the relevant exemptions, for police officers within a shorter time frame i.e. from July 2009 to July 2011.

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.