



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-01435

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Total Spend on Policing Northern Ireland Sex Offenders

Request and Answer:

Question 1

What has been the total spend on policing/patrolling Northern Ireland sex offenders for each of the last three complete calendar years i.e. total spend 2008 - 2009, 2009 - 2010 and 2010-2011.

Question 2

For each year please breakdown the total spend by category of sex offender.

Question 3

For each year please provide me with the number of sex offenders in each category.

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 Police Service of Northern Ireland has Offender Management Teams in each of its eight Districts' Public Protection Units whose main role is the management of sex/violent offenders. However, local Neighbourhood Policing Team officers assist in the role with Response and CID officers also involved in the patrolling and policing aspect of offender management. Some of this input is simply part of routine duties or patrolling and is not specifically recorded. There are various inputs from several departments and an accurate response to your questions would involve researching the individual duties of each officer involved with each Registered Sex Offender and determining a cost for each member of staff involved to reach a total. One District alone has estimated that this task would take an estimated 30 hours.

Even to provide costs for only the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI) Administration Unit and Public Protection Units (PPUs), the Criminal Justice Unit would have to carefully trawl 36 months of payroll reports for both police and support staff to isolate and identify all

employees associated with PPANI and PPU's and determine their costs. Any incidental costs of this work would also require trawling through all purchase ledger transactions for the three years. This task alone would take an estimated 20 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.

In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have also considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Unfortunately the nature and structure of the information requested in questions 1 and 2 makes this impossible. It may be possible to provide a response for question 3 within the time constraints. However, figures for sex offenders in categories vary on a daily basis and only live figures as of 'today' can be provided.

Please also see the following link to the Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland. This will provide statistics on the number of Registered Sex Offenders per area going back as far as 2007.

<http://www.publicprotectionni.com/>

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.