



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02843

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Forensic Medical Examiners

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question 1

The British Medical Association's (BMA) Forensic Medicine Committee (FMC) is seeking information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would be grateful if you could assist with providing information on the following points:

Is the forensic medical service (including sexual assault service) run directly by the Force or has it been contracted out to a private provider?

Answer

This service is contracted to a group of Forensic Medical Officers (FMOs) at present including the sexual assault service. This will change in the future with amended legislation. The sexual assault service will be moving towards a regional SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) and will be jointly run by Health and Police (FMO provision).

Question 2

What official or external standards does the service strive to meet?

Answer

Professional Practice of the FMOs is currently managed by the Association of Forensic Officers within Northern Ireland. The Chairperson for this group is Professor Farnan (Senior FMO). All FMOs are registered general practitioners who have undertaken additional training in this area.

Question 3

Does the Force or contracted provider give entry-level training to Forensic Medical Examiners (FMEs) prior to deployment?

Answer

No.

Question 4

Does the Force or contracted provider carry out an appraisal of FMEs?

Answer

Until recently this has not happened, however we have had a number of external bodies review the provision. A review is due to commence into the expenditure and management of the FMOs.

Question 5

Does the Force or contracted provider have a programme of Continuing Medical Education (CME) or Continuing Professional Education (CPD) for FMEs?

Answer

The Association of Forensic Medical Examiners has this responsibility. PSNI do not hold this information.

Question 6

Are newly recruited FMEs "signed off" by a senior FME before beginning unsupervised work?

Answer

PSNI are informed by the Association of FME's that this is the practice. PSNI do not hold this information.

Question 7

Do nurses conduct sexual assault examinations?

Answer

No

If you have any queries regarding your request or the 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.