



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011-00912

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Special Leave Applications

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

I require information relating to all special leave applications made over the last 5 year period broken down by District Area. For each application I request the following information.

The date that the initial request for special leave was made.

#### Question 2

The date/s for which special leave was applied.

#### Question 3

The date that a decision was made to grant or deny special leave.

#### Question 4

Where Special leave was denied I would like to know whether that person subsequently took annual, sick or unpaid leave for the dates in question.

#### Question 5

Further it is stated by HR that many officers use annual leave/toil/flexi for caring responsibilities. I would like to know if HR hold information in respect of this and if they do to disclose it to me in statistical form.

I am fully aware that many of the issues for which special leave are applied are of a personal nature and have no wish to know the detail of any application.

You previously clarified that your request relates to both Police Officers and Civilian Staff within districts and departments.

### 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).

This information is not held centrally and therefore it was necessary to canvass all districts and departments within PSNI. There are several circumstances when Special Leave can be applied for i.e. compassionate, domestic leave, etc and therefore retrieval would require examination of all personnel records to identify the date of each initial request, the application date and the date a decision was made in relation to each application. One district has advised that retrieval would require a manual trawl of 665 personnel files taking an average of 10 minutes per file, equating to approximately 110 hours. This would greatly exceed the 18 hours limit.

In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, Duty to Assist, 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. Unfortunately, the nature and structure of the information 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.