



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03103

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Brothels Investigated by Police

Request and Answer:

Question 1

For each year from 2008 to present, I would like information on the number of brothels that have been raided by police

Question 2

For each brothel, I would like to know:

- a. Its address
- b. Details of the items recovered or confiscated from the brothel
- c. The number of men arrested in connection with the brothel, and their ages
- d. The number of women arrested in connection with the brothel, and their ages
- e. Details of the outcome of each arrest, e.g. caution, conviction, details of sentencing, etc

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 information requested in question 1 is not held in a central location within the PSNI and there is no separate procedure currently in place for recording the number of raids on brothels. Retrieval would involve input from each of our eight District Command Units. As such, each District was asked to provide an estimate of the time it would take to retrieve the number of brothels raided by Police during the required period. One District alone has advised that retrieval would involve checking every serial on their Command and Control system during the time period you are interested in. The District has an average of 150 incidents per 24 hour period and they have estimated that to trawl every one would take well in excess of the 18 hour cost threshold.

To respond to question 2 would involve the examination and detailing of each search exhibit seized from brothels. One recent example resulted in the seizure of 169 exhibits. To complete this task alone would take an estimated 32 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. Unfortunately the nature and structure of the information requested makes this impossible.

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.