



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02101

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Cases where PSNI involve Public Protection Unit

Request and Answer:

Question

I am journalist for The Detail- part of Below the Radar production company based in Belfast. I had been in touch with RQIA in relation to a story that I was looking into regarding abuse in care homes. They recommended that I contact the PSNI in regards to some of the statistics I was after. I had put in a previous FOI request but the time period was too broad and I would like to refine it.

It's my understanding that where an alleged instance of abuse of a vulnerable adult takes place the primary responsibility for protection lies with the 'host' health and social care trust - i.e. the trust area where the alleged incident took place. In addition, the placing trust also has a responsibility and indeed this trust would lead any investigation into the alleged incident. However if it is a serious or criminal issue the PSNI take the lead involving the Public Protection Unit.

Could you outline for me for the period of six months:

- a) How many cases of this nature have there been where PSNI take the lead involving the Public Protection Unit?
- b) How may led to criminal convictions?

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.

I would refer you to your previous response F-2011-01434, in which you were informed that the information is not held centrally but is held within the Public Protection Units (PPU) in each of the eight Districts.

Each of the Districts were again approached to provide time estimates as to how long this request

would take to retrieve this information from their separate systems. Two Districts alone estimated that individual research would take an estimated 8 hours to retrieve. The information is recorded on a spreadsheet which would have to be manually trawled through for the six month period of referrals to establish which of them progressed to a PSNI investigation. These individual cases would then require to be examined to establish, if any of them led to prosecution and what their current status is within the judicial system. It is estimated that the time alone for all eight Districts to locate and extract the information requested would take an estimated 29 hours 30 minutes.

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 - if your request was refined to '6 out of the 8 Districts' for a six month period, we should be able to retrieve any information available within cost.

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.psnipolice.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.