



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011- 03253

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Consultancy Expenditure

### Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- disclose information in response to question 1 in full;
- disclose information in response to question 2 subject to the deletion of information pursuant to the provisions of Section 38 of the Freedom of Information 2000 (the Act); and

### Question 1

I would like to know how much the PSNI has spent on external consultants in each of the last three full calendar years - 2008-2010?

### Answer

The Consultancy expenditure for financial years 2007/08 – 2009/10 is detailed below:

Category	Financial Year		
	2009/10 £k	2008/09 £k	2007/08 £k
Consultancy Cost	1,414	3,030	168

Please note this information can only be provided by financial year. Financial data is on a resource basis.

### Question 2

If possible, I would also like to know the breakdown of the costs by company or individual in each of the three years.

### Answer

All consultants engaged are subject to specific business case in each instance, rationale for engagement and value for money must be established prior to contracts being let.

Primary spend across these categories relates to IS Strategy Implementation and management and control of new build projects.

Please see the tables at the end of this correspondence detailing the Consultancy Costs for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, is listed below:

The information you have requested would require disclosing the names of consultants and companies who provide a service to the PSNI and has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 38 (1)(a)(b) – Health & Safety is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption, this means that it is the Public Authority's responsibility to evidence the Harm and carry out a Public Interest Test.

A summary of the Harm and the Public Interest Test is provided below:

### **HARM**

Releasing the names of consultants engaged by PSNI would be likely to bring the company to the attention of terrorists. The terrorist threat can take a number of forms, as terrorists may use a variety of methods of attack to achieve their objectives. By identifying specific individuals or companies working for the Police Service under the current level of security threat, their personal safety and that of their families and/ or property could be put at risk of terrorist attack.

### **Public Interest Test**

#### **Factors Favouring Release**

Releasing the information would promote openness and transparency. The public would be better informed about the companies engaged by the PSNI in providing a service and it would assist the understanding of how PSNI spend funds for services provided by outside agencies.

#### **Factors Favouring Retention**

Terrorist activity is a real and current threat and the PSNI has a duty of care to protect anyone working for the Service. The PSNI will not disclose any information which may increase the risk of harm to any individual providing a service to the PSNI. To highlight these companies could endanger their employees and that of their families.

### **Decision**

Whilst accountability surrounding the use of public funds is always a strong argument in favour of releasing information, the balance will always favour retention where there is a significant risk to the safety of individuals. Any outside agencies providing services for the PSNI entrust that appropriate decisions are taken with regard to their protection. At this time, the Service is under severe dissident threat and to release the names of companies providing a service to the PSNI could assist terrorists in targeting these individuals. The safety of individuals is of paramount importance and the PSNI will

not divulge any information which could put lives or property at risk. I believe the prejudice caused by disclosure outweighs the likely benefit to the wider public. At this time, in these circumstances, it is undesirable to provide the names of companies providing a service for PSNI.

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](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.

Consultant/Firm	Actual Expenditure 2007/08 £K
A	6
B	138
C	98
D	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>

Consultant/Firm	Actual Expenditure 2008/09 £K
E	47
F	1
G	15
H	31
I	2
G	9
C	239
B	897
J	58
K	23
L	3
M	33
N	1,609
O	55
P	24
Q	99
R	9
S	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,225</b>

Consultant/Firm	Actual Expenditure 2009/10 £K
T	19
U	23
V	13
W	8
X	5
Y	5
C	113
B	310
J	22
Z	3
AA	1
N	382
S	237
BB	60
Q	196
CC	66
S	20
R	33
M	25
DD	16
EE	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,572</b>