



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2011-00309

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** PSNI Contracts for Interpreters and Translators

### 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 questions 1, 3 and 4 in full; and
- fully exempt information in response to questions 2 and 5 pursuant to the provisions of Section 43 of the Act.

Section 17 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/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

### Question 1

I would like to check about the contract PSNI have with Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) for Interpreters. When does the contract expire?

### Answer

The contract with NICEM expires in 2014.

### Question 2

What are the current fees NICEM charge for interpreters?

### Answer

Please see answer to question 5.

### **Question 3**

Do Language Line Services provide translations for Police NI?

### **Question 4**

When does the contract expire?

### **Answer**

Language Line Services provided translations for PSNI up until the end of February 2011. The contract for text and translation was awarded to a new company on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and will run for 4 years.

### **Question 5**

What does the company (LLS) charge?

### **Answer**

Section 17 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:

- (d) states that fact,
- (e) specifies the exemption in question and
- (f) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

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

#### Section 43 (2) Commercial Interests

This part of the exemption is prejudice based and qualified which means the information is subject to the harm test and public interest test prior to disclosure.

#### **Harm Test**

This information was provided during a tendering process and includes details of fees offered to PSNI by the two successful companies of that tender; NICEM and LLS. The fees are unique to PSNI and therefore not advertised by the companies. Release would allow rivals to be privy to the price at which they can deliver goods and services – information which is not readily available. This would prejudice their ability to compete in future tenders for other contracts. Subsequently this could be detrimental to the PSNI's relationship with future service providers.

#### **Public Interest Test**

##### **For Release**

Transparency of details of how public funds have been spent will generate confidence in the integrity of the procedures involved and in the fact that PSNI are getting value for money when purchasing goods and services.

##### **For Retention**

Disclosure of the pricing information offered to PSNI by these particular companies would make it less likely that they would be able to compete fairly with their rivals in future competitive tenders. Release would also undermine the ability of the PSNI to fulfil its role of running fair tender competitions. There is a public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector contracts which would be undermined if this information were to be disclosed.

## **Decision**

Although there are valid arguments for disclosure of the fees charged for interpretation and translation by companies who won previous contracts within the PSNI, I have determined that the public interest at this time is not best served by the release of this information. Disclosure of prices included in tenders would not be in the public interest as it would harm the ability of NICEM and LLS to compete in future tenders and damage the PSNI's ability to secure good value for money in future procurement competitions.

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.