



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-01089

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Dangerous Dog Act

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Regarding the Dangerous Dogs Act and numbers of dogs seized and subsequent action, I request the following information.

Covering a 12 month period, ideally 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010 (if different, please say what and why).

The number of dogs reported to you under the DDA in the period, their breed/cross and which section they were reported under.

Question 2

The number of dogs in that number needing no action (if possible, please clarify why).

Question 3

The number of dogs seized as "type" and the number seized for aggressive behaviour.

Question 4

The number that subsequently went to court and the outcomes.

Question 5

The number put down from the figure in (1). Please clarify how many were signed over to you and subsequently destroyed, how many rehomed/passed to rescue, how many put down after court cases.

Question 6

Please give details of any other dogs destroyed as "type" such as those picked up as strays and unclaimed after statutory 7 days in pound.

Question 7

Any other information you feel is relevant.

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).

In relation to question 1 of your request, animal related calls received by PSNI for the period April – August 2010 need to be categorised giving details of a dangerous dog. This would require analysing approximately 3200 calls and would take 3 months to process. This would greatly exceed the cost limit of 18 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.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved prior to realising that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of this request.

Answer

Between January 2010 – March 2010 and September – December 2010 there were a total of 80 calls received by PSNI in relation to dangerous dogs. As previously advised, the information for April – August 2010 has not yet been analysed and would exceed the 18 hours cost limit.

The remainder of the questions in your request cannot be answered by PSNI. Accordingly, I have determined that the PSNI do not hold the information to which you seek access. The Dangerous Dogs Act is enforced by the local councils and all calls received by police are subsequently referred on to the local dog warden.

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.