



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03100

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Public Confidence Survey

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question

During the public meeting of the Northern Ireland Policing Board on 01 September 2011 questions were put to the Chief Constable regarding falling levels of public confidence specifically in republican and loyalist communities. The Chief Constable responded by disagreeing and noting that there is 'rising confidence' in those areas according to 'his' surveys, that his surveys indicate a "high level of satisfaction" and that on the basis of these surveys he does not accept that "confidence is waning".

This is a request for the surveys the Chief Constable referred to which specifically demonstrate an increase in public confidence in republican and loyalist communities.

Answer

The Chief Constable was responding to a statement by a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Debbie Watters, who stated,

"Personally I feel that community confidence in policing currently, both within republican and loyalist communities is at an all time low."

The Chief Constable responded by stating,

"I don't agree with you that policing and confidence is at an all time low. The immense survey work that I do shows that policing and confidence is rising significantly and I accept that in some areas that have been subject to intense violence, there is a real fear and a real concern. But we are not the cause of that. We are the protective people that go in and try and keep communities apart, often at great cost and it is right that we do that and we accept our duties. But I do not accept that the outbreak of disorder in historical places where communities are still unable to live together, for a variety of reasons which are not mine to make judgement upon, is a problem that rests at the police's door."

“A recent survey we have done of victims for example shows incredibly high levels of satisfaction, both with the impartiality of policing and the solutions we are providing and the criminal justice process. But I do understand what you are saying around the specific neighbourhoods and we have got to redouble our efforts in relation to the confidence in policing.”

The survey to which the Chief Constable referred is the PSNI User Satisfaction Survey, initiated by us as part of our commitment to improve the quality of service provided to all communities. The survey commenced earlier this year, and it is our intention to share the data with the Northern Ireland Policing Board once the survey has run for long enough to ensure adequate statistical validity. It is not yet ready for publication.

In his response, the Chief Constable did not state that the survey related specifically to republican or loyalist communities. In fact, the survey reflects levels of confidence and satisfaction amongst victims of crime and/or anti social behaviour, who had personal contact with the police.

Whilst the survey remains a work in progress, current satisfaction levels are as follows:

- Overall satisfaction for victims of crime - 76-84% satisfied
- Overall satisfaction for victims of anti social behaviour - 72-75% satisfied

The Northern Ireland Crime Survey overall confidence rating in policing currently sits at 79.5% (an increase of 1.0% since 2009/10), with the single confidence measure (Police and other agencies are dealing with antisocial behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area) currently sitting at 38.4% for the year, compared to 38.0% in 2008/09. Whilst we are working hard with partners to improve this level of confidence, these figures do not support the assertion that confidence levels were at an all time low.

The latest Perceptions of Policing, Justice and Anti Social Behaviour bulletin from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey can be accessed via the Department of Justice website by using the link provided below:

http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research/publications/nics_quarterly_update_to_june_2011.pdf

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.

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.