



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03195

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Flights For Family Members of Sir Hugh Orde

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

Question

The Belfast Telegraph on April 27, 2011, published a report concerning flights taken by the former PSNI Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde and his family, and paid for by the taxpayer.

The article reported that his contract with the PSNI allowed his family to travel at taxpayers' expense on business class flights for five years.

It added that almost £30,000 was spent for flights for Sir Hugh's then wife and son from 2002 until 2007 under a provision within his contract that was supposed to be reviewed after 12 months.

It claimed: "An 'oversight' by the Policing Board saw the practice continue without review for an additional four years."

The report further stated: "It was agreed that flights claimed for from October 2004 to April 2007 would be reimbursed by Sir Hugh and the Policing Board. The amount reimbursed was £11,346."

I have contacted the Policing Board, asking them to supply details of all the flights taken by Sir Hugh's family which led to the reimbursement of the £11,346.

They say they do not have the information. They say the amount arrived at was calculated by an auditor on behalf of the PSNI.

They say the PSNI has the relevant information.

I am therefore requesting that information, which should be readily available according to the Policing Board, from the PSNI under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

Answer

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 the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption has been applied:

Section 21 - Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means

The information you request may be located on the PSNI website and can be accessed using the following link; http://www.psni.police.uk/flights_family_hugh_orde.pdf

The total amount reimbursed by Sir Hugh Orde and the Policing Board was £11,346. The total cost of the flights was £11,088.60

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 email.

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.