



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-01114

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Complaints/Grievances Submitted Against Human Resources

Request and Answer:

Question 1

In the last 3 years how many complaints/grievances have been submitted against Human Resources Service wide?

Question 2

In the last 3 years how many complaints/grievances have been submitted against Human Resources within 'C' District?

Question 3

Of the complaints /grievances received against Human Resources, how many have been upheld?

Question 4

Regarding question 3, what sanctions/discipline has been used to prevent the issues reoccurring?

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.

Within the PSNI 'grievances' and 'complaints' are dealt with differently. A grievance relates to an action which the employer has taken or is contemplating taking in relation to an individual and as such, grievances are not recorded on the HR system against a named individual or department. Although the G1A grievance form does include a section on the name or department whom the grievance is against, this information is not recorded centrally on the HR System. Local Human Resource Managers in Districts and Departments retain hard copies of these forms, however to retrieve the information required in each question relating to grievances would require an individual trawl of each member of staff's record.

One District alone has advised that this exercise would involve a manual trawl on 630 members of staff. Allowing 15 minutes per member of staff retrieval of the information would take an estimated 157.6 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.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. It may be possible to provide a response to question 2 within the cost restraints.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information relative to your request which was retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. Please see below;

From 2009 to 2011, five complaints have been recorded on the HR System against Human Resources service wide. Of the complaints received, 4 resulted in No Further Action and one is still ongoing.

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.psnipolice.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.