



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-03521

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Arrests for Drink Driving and Drugs

Request and Answer:

Question

I would like to submit an FOI asking for the number of arrests that have been made by the PSNI for drink driving and/or driving under the influence of drugs from 1st April 2007- 31st March 2012.

If you could provide me the breakdown of the figures in an excel format and include:

Some sort of Geographical reference to where the arrest was made. The more specific it can be the better e.g. street or postcode

The date and time of arrest

Age and gender of those arrested

Whether it was in relation to drugs or alcohol

If there is a brief description of why the individual was pulled over e.g. dangerous driving or cause of an accident.

If there is data or a scale that relates to how far over the limit an individual was.

Please advise me if there are any problems with this request or if there are any categories in terms of a breakdown that I have not included.

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).

Information Communication Services (ICS) has advised that between 01/04/2007 and 31/03/2012 there were approximately 19,844 arrests made in relation to driving whilst unfit. Estimating it would take 15 minutes to examine each record and note the circumstances of the arrest, the total retrieval process would take approximately 4,961 hours, grossly exceeding the 18 hour cost limit.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, if any part of the request exceeds the cost threshold, then the whole request will be excess costs and there is no obligation to answer any part of the request.

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 the number of arrests, date, time, age and gender, where the reason for arrest was excess alcohol, or unfit due to drink/drugs.

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.

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.