



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-03157

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Arrests re Forced Labour and Human Trafficking

Request and Answer:

I would like information on the following:

Question 1

Number of arrests since 2010 for offences of forced labour and human trafficking.

Question 2

Number of arrests which led to charges.

Question 3

Number of arrests which led to prosecutions (successful and unsuccessful).

Question 4

Nature of the trafficking/exploitation in these arrests.

Question 5

Ethnic/national origin and gender of those arrested.

Question 6

Number of those arrested considered by the PSNI to be members of an organised crime gang or linked to such a group.

Question 7

Any monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Blue Blindfold Campaign for instance an increase in intelligence leading to arrests etc.

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 or 18 hours work.

Question 7 alone would exceed the cost threshold as a case by case review would have to be completed in order to gauge whether the Blue Blindfold Campaign had impacted on the investigations. Headquarter Branches and Districts, who carried out arrest operations, would require detailed investigation in each case to answer all the questions plus liaison with other parties ie the Public Prosecution Service and Court Service. Please note that when one part of a request exceeds the cost and Section 12 applies the whole request is considered over the cost. In addition this would involve creating information which we are not obliged to do under the Act.

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.

Section 16

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. You may wish to refine question 1 to, "how many people have been arrested in relation to Human Trafficking since 2010" and for question 2, "how many people have been charged with Human Trafficking since 2012".

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.psni.police.uk

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