



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-02784

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Child Abuse Statistics

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

In each of the last ten years how many people have been arrested for an offence of child abuse?

#### Question 2

If known the age and gender of the victim?

#### Question 3

What is the definition of child abuse, (where found in statute or case law)?

#### Question 4

If known the court outcome?

#### Question 5

If known the time of the offence (i.e. what the abuse recent i.e. the victim at the time of the arrest of the abuser was a child or an adult. If known the profession of the abuser?

#### Question 6

If the abuser was a minister of religion what the faith community is?

I am researching whether abuse is focused in specific professions or a problem that cuts across communities.

### 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.

The information requested is held by Information and Communication Services (ICS), however to retrieve the information for question 1 for a 10 year period, I have been advised by ICS, custody records commenced being stored electronically from 2006 and any custody records created prior to

this date, would be paper based. To retrieve the information would involve manually trawling each paper custody record. With reference to question 2 regarding the age and gender of the victim I have again been advised by ICS that this would require a manual trawl of each arrest record to check each offence and any associated charges. After this information is obtained it would then require a further manual search of these records to check each victim that is linked to the charge. This is because there may be several victims involved in the offence. To retrieve the information for question 5 would also require a manual search of the records as each arrest record can be linked to multiple occurrences, each of which can have multiple offences and some which may not relate to child abuse. Thus obtaining the time of the specific offence that was the primary reason for arrest would involve a manual trawl of each arrest record and associated charges and manually checking each associated offence. It is estimated that to provide a response would take an estimated 237 hours, which would take well in excess of the time permitted under legislation of 18 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 the information, subject to exemptions, for question 1 although this information is only available from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 onwards and question 3.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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