



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-00868

Keyword: Crime

Subject: MLA's Cautioned Or Arrested for Child Abuse Crimes

Request and Answer:

Question

I am requesting information as per the following:

How many Members of the Legislative Assembly (Northern Ireland) for the past 3 years have been:

- a) cautioned for questioning regarding child abuse crimes (emotional, sexual, physical, neglect)
- b) arrested for child abuse crimes (emotional, sexual, physical, neglect)

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.

In an attempt to retrieve the information to respond to your request I contacted Information and Communications Services Branch (ICS) who hold the information centrally. ICS have advised that searches were conducted however 'MLA' is not listed as an occupation on the database. ICS therefore would be required to conduct a manual trawl of all incidents over the last three years from 01/01/2009 to 31/12/2011. ICS have advised that there are approximately 2,086,725 incidents. It is estimated that it would take 15 minutes to research each incident which would involve 521,681 hours, this would take well in excess of the time permitted under legislation (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 however the nature and

structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.