



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012 -00277

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Undetected Homicides

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please provide a breakdown of Undetected Homicides from the 01.01.1999 to present. Please include:

Question 2

Date recorded

Question 3

Name of Individual

Question 4

Age (or apparent age)

Question 5

Gender, if available within the crime recording information system

Question 6

Ethnic appearance, if available.

Answer

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.

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), 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.

By way of explanation, these questions have very wide parameters and, it would be extremely difficult, even with IT intervention, to pull together the statistics requested. Staff would have to complete a manual case by case search. This would involve looking at each murder file individually, carrying out various checks, which would for example include, checking if someone has ever been

charged and subsequently found not guilty at court etc which clearly would be very labour intensive and in excess of the 18 hour limit.

Under the FOI Act 2000 a public authority is not obliged to create information in order to answer a request. The above explanation demonstrates the process of the individual steps that would need to be taken to compile the information you have requested.

In addition the term “undetected” is not as clear cut as you may imagine. For example, where 3 gunmen carried out an attack and only one is convicted the case is statistically considered to be ‘cleared’. Obviously, in this example 2 suspects are outstanding and from one point of view could also be designated as “undetected”. This does not even begin to consider suspects who may have assisted the gunmen in any capacity either before or after the murder. Police may also have detected suspects for a murder but have insufficient evidence to secure a prosecution. In this example, this could be interpreted statistically as “undetected” yet to the police this is not the situation.

For your information investigations into murders are currently being carried out by the following:-

Historical Enquiries Team (HET) 1968 to 1998

Re Murder Investigation Team (ReMIT) 10.4.1998 to 1.3.2004

Crime Operations (MIT) 1.3.2004 to date.

Current and live investigations, arrests etc are taking place on a daily basis and the information you requested would therefore be subject to change accordingly. Hence the need for a case by case search.

Statistics Branch publishes numerous murder statistics on line which you may also be interested in. See Table 2.2, Table 2.3 and Table 2.4, at the following web link:

http://www.psni.police.uk/police_recorded_crime_in_northern_ireland_1998-99_to_2010-11.pdf

I trust this will assist to help you understand the complex nature of the investigation of all murders by PSNI.

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.

Section 16 – Duty to provide advice and assistance:

You may wish to refine your request to a specific time span, however due to the complex nature of the information which you have requested, this search may still prove to be labour and time intensive, as the information would be embedded in different systems and would entail a manual search of each record and therefore may still be over the cost.

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.