



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-03344

Keyword: Finance

Subject: Chief Officers Travel

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Under FOIA I am requesting all recorded information held by you concerning; PSNI's policy on Chief Officers travel while funded by taxpayer.

Answer

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

PSNI Chief Officers travel arrangements are conducted in compliance with NICS Guidelines. There are no formal Policy Directives or Service Procedures on issue to the Service to address the issue of Chief Officers Travel. PSNI Policy on this particular subject would therefore be in compliance with existing agreements and regulations governing Chief Officers pay and allowances. This is not unusual in that the PSNI Policy Framework is not designed to be all encompassing and where separate legislation, regulations or guidance exist, we would seek to adopt those and not issue any additional directions or procedures.

Furthermore, we seek to ensure that the PSNI body of policy documents maintains a strategic focus and does not deal with the detail of day to day management. This is appropriate to an organisation of the size, complexity and geographic spread of the Police Service.

Question 2

Please supply list/breakdown of all/any individual travel costs (if any), those that relate to individual trip/s, travel, by PSNI Chief Officers, and those, again individual trip/s, which cost over £500.00. I would like this information to cover past 12 months. Please also include details for each, including reasons for each individual trip as well as amounts involved.

Answer

The Chief Officers expenses including travel costs are published on the PSNI website and can be accessed via the link provided below:

[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/what we spend and how we spend it/chief-officers-expenses.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/what%20we%20spend%20and%20how%20we%20spend%20it/chief-officers-expenses.htm)

Question 3

Have any PSNI Chief Officers travelled via business class, for whatever reason, during the past 12 months. If so, please supply full details, reason/s as well as cost of each trip (if any).

Answer

There has been 2 occasions in the last 12 months where Chief Officers have availed of Business Class travel. Please see the table provided below:

Travel Details	Cost	Reason
Dublin to Newark to Halifax Canada (Economy) & return to Belfast. Guest speaker at a conference. All accommodation paid in full by host.	£3,135.83	Length of journey, unsociable travel times and security issue.
Belfast to USA to Canada & return to Belfast. Guest speaker at a conference. All accommodation paid in full by host.	£2,676.62 of which £1,624 is being refunded by the host.	Length of journey and unsociable travel times.

Question 4

Do PSNI Chief Officers travel by first class rail? If so, can you explain reason/s for this? Please also explain why Chief Officers do not travel by the most economic methods available to them.

Answer

Chief Officers within PSNI may be entitled under contract to use business class travel; however they choose not to do so unless there are exceptional circumstances. Whilst it will ultimately be for the individual to justify their own expenses, it is important that officers are consistent in their choice of travel and particularly so in the current financial climate. It is practice therefore that unless there are exceptional and compelling reasons to do otherwise, which the individual officer feels he/she can justify publicly, they continue to travel in the most cost-efficient manner possible.

This is in line with the policy issued by the NIO in 2009 which brought the practice in line with Whitehall and all other NICS Departments. This policy stated that from 1 January 2009 all air travel journeys of less than two and half hours duration will be economy class. However, PSNI has gone beyond the scope of the policy insofar that we do not apply the time factor as outlined but rather seek justification on an individual and indeed specific basis.

Question 5

What was the total amount spent by PSNI on travel, relating to Chief Officers, during the past 12 months. Please also include breakdown of costs relating to the methods of such travel, air, train and or car. If other, please supply full details.

Answer

The Chief Officers expenses including travel costs are published on the PSNI website and can be accessed via the link provided below:

[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/what we spend and how we spend it/chief-officers-expenses.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/about-us/publications/publications-by-category/what-we-spend-and-how-we-spend-it/chief-officers-expenses.htm)

If you have any queries regarding your request or the 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.