



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-01649

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Officers in Probation

### Request and Answer:

Clarification received: I respectfully request that the questions be answered within the time frame of the beginning of the PSNI but if it is predicted that this is not possible under the cost constraints, can it be checked backwards to allow as much information as possible to be checked before reaching the limit and then forward the information found.

### Question 1

The number of officers who have been signed out of probation without passing the PCA.

### Question 2

The number of officers who have been signed out of probation without being required to complete the PCA.

### Question 3

The number of officers who have been signed out of probation without completing or passing one of the required elements of stage training.

### Question 4

The number of officers who remain in probation indefinitely.

### Question 5

The number of officers who did not complete or did not pass a required assessment in the student officer training program, for example, the PCA, written exams or practical assessments.

Clarification received: I have asked the question in relation to the officers who have not been able to attest as a probationer constable due to failing to complete or pass an element of the student officer training program.

### 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 (18 hours).

In relation to your initial clarification, the information requested in Questions 1 – 4 is **not** held centrally and therefore it was necessary to canvass all districts within PSNI for their estimates to retrieve information. It would not be possible to request each District to retrieve information up to the cost limit. For the purposes of your request, the PSNI commenced in November 2001. One district alone has advised that to retrieve information for the previous 10 years would firstly require identification of the officers in this category. Across the Service this could amount to thousands of officers who were in probation in the specified timeframe. As officers do not stay in District for any extended length of time, it is estimated that most of the 480 current Constables in this particular District would fall into the relevant category and indeed some Sergeants and possibly Inspectors. Estimating 5 minutes to check each officers record in this District alone, would take approximately 40 hours. This estimate, in addition to the other districts would equate to approximately 65 hours, greatly exceeding the 18 hour cost limit.

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.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved prior to realising that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

#### **Answer 5**

The Police College has advised 44 student officers.

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.