



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-01574

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Probationer Constables

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please provide details of any trainee constables and probationers who have been ever been excused from the Physical Competence Assessment or who have had any reasonable adjustments made to enable them to undertake the assessment at any stage of training or probation. If applicable please outline these adjustments.

Question 2

Please provide details on the number of trainee constables and probationers who have been facilitated with additional time or other reasonable adjustments to undertake the examination aspects of training and probation due to disability.

Question 3

Please provide details of the number of probationer constables with a recognised disability and any reasonable adjustments made to facilitate their progression to confirmation in rank.

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 question 3 of your request, this information is not held centrally and therefore it was necessary to canvass each district within PSNI for their estimates to retrieve the information. One district alone has advised that they have 123 probationers and the retrieval process would require a manual trawl of each individuals file to ascertain those where adjustments have been made. Estimating 15 minutes to examine each file, the process would take approximately 30 hours. This estimate in addition to the other districts equates to 68 hours and 40 minutes, grossly 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 1

Human Resources has advised that no student officer has ever been excused from the PCA requirement. All officers governed by Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) still have to pass all aspects of the Student Officer Training Programme including the PCA to attest. Reasonable adjustments under DDA are made as appropriate.

Answer 2

Human Resources has advised that no additional time has been given to students presenting with DDA for the Physical Competence Assessment (PCA). In respect of written examinations, those student officers diagnosed and assessed with a learning disability by an educational psychologist were afforded an additional percentage time for the reading of the questions. In respect of Student Assessment Exercises (SAE) additional time was afforded to those officers diagnosed and assessed with a learning disability by an educational psychologist for the reading of the scenario only. No extra time was afforded to student officers for the practical application of the assessment. In respect of Case Studies, no additional time was afforded to any student officer.

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.psnipolice.uk

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

