



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-02623

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** Olympic Torch Visits

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered and the decision has been taken not to supply the information you have requested.

### Question

How many people have been visited at their home by officers to ask about their intentions with regards to the Olympic Torch.

### Answer

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemptions, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 24(1) - National Security  
Section 31(1) (a)(b) - Law Enforcement

Sections 24 and 31 are prejudice based, qualified exemptions and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused as well as carrying out a Public Interest Test.

A summary of the Harm for Sections 24 and 31 along with the Public Interest Test are provided below:

### Harm

Disclosure of this information would likely cause operational harm and affect PSNI's ability to fulfil its law enforcement role. Divulging information of this nature could identify the strengths and weaknesses of resources and prejudice future high profile events. Those intent on causing harm or disruption could use this operational information to their advantage impacting on PSNI's ability to prevent and detect crime. The disclosure of information that undermines operational integrity will

adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on national security. This harm would extend nationally as the Olympic Torch Relay passes through the whole of the UK.

## **Public Interest Test**

### Factors Favouring Release – Section 24

National and international threat of terrorism is ever present and the public are entitled to know how resources are allocated and public funds are spent. Disclosure of this information would promote openness and transparency.

### Factors Favouring Retention – Section 24

Security measures are put in place to protect the community we serve. Disclosure would have an impact on certain intelligence operations which could have implications for safeguarding national security.

### Factors Favouring Release – Section 31

PSNI must be accountable for their procedures and disclosure would reinforce their commitment to openness and transparency. The public would be better informed about the measures put in place for high profile events.

### Factors Favouring Retention – Section 31

Individuals' intent on causing disruption at such an event could use this information to circumvent police methods to avoid detection. Disclosure could hinder the PSNI's ability to prevent and detect crime when planning future events, greatly impacting on the law enforcement role of the Service.

## **Decision**

Releasing information on this occasion could divulge intelligence, capabilities and resources involved in the planning of such events. Disclosing this information could aid those intent on causing harm or disruption, impacting on PSNI's ability to prevent and detect crime at future similar events. Disclosure would have an impact on certain intelligence operations which could have implications for safeguarding national security. This harm would extend nationally as the Olympic Torch Relay passes through the whole of the UK. At this time of increased threat of terrorism I have determined that the release of operational information into the public domain is not in the public interest.

**A disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not to an individual applicant.**

For your information, a post Olympic Report will be published after the Games conclude and should be available to the general public by the end of 2012.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice and has therefore been closed.

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](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.