



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-00078

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Custody Healthcare Services

Request and Answer:

Question 1

For provision of your constabulary/force/service total costs for the provision of custody healthcare services (sometimes known as "forensic medical services") in the years 2008/2009, 2009/2010, and 2010/2011 (or the most recent complete financial year data).

Question 2

For each of those years a breakdown of the numbers of examinations/assessments undertaken in this setting;

Question 3

For each of those years a breakdown of what type of healthcare professional has undertaken the examination (eg doctor, nurse, paramedic, emergency care practitioner or other).

Question 4

For each of those years the total number of detainees processed through custody.

Question 5

For each of those years, the name and details of the provider of custody healthcare services/forensic medical services (if contracted to an independent provider).

Question 6

The numbers of deaths in custody (or deaths that have been investigated as deaths in custody, excluding police firearms and road traffic collision deaths).

For the avoidance of doubt these figures should include:

* the detail of costs for healthcare of detainees (the need for whose assessment is determined by PACE Codes of Practice) provided by healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses or paramedics or others) employed by yourselves and/or any outsourced provider (this figure to include all costs of locum healthcare professionals covering sickness, maternity or other leave);

* examinations of complainants of assault (to include the cost of infrastructure and examination of

sexual assault complainants);

* examination of injured police officers or examination of police officers against whom a complaint has been made;

* administrative costs (to include infrastructure, personnel and any other relevant resources) to manage the custody healthcare/forensic medical service (and in the case of outsourced providers, the cost to the constabulary to manage that contract).

Answer

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.

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 (18hrs).

The information to provide a response to your Freedom of Information request is not held centrally within the PSNI and in an attempt to retrieve this I had to contact all 8 Districts and ask them to respond with regard to the custody suites in their areas. Unfortunately to obtain a comprehensive response would entail a manual search of the custody records for each area for the years in question. One district alone had approximately 4000 detainees per year and allowing 5 minutes to review each custody record equates to some 300 plus hours which is well in excess of that permitted by legislation which is set at 18 hours.

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.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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 before it was realised 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.

The PSNI total costs for the provision of custody healthcare services (sometimes known as "forensic medical services") in the years 2008/2009, 2009/2010, and 2010/2011 (or the most recent complete financial year data) were as follows

2008/09 - £3.4m

2009/10 - £3.6m

2010/11 - £3.9m

New crime recording systems within the PSNI has enabled me to provide figures regarding the

number of detained persons (DP's) required to be seen by Force Medical Officers (FMO's) in the year 2010/2011 and these are illustrated in the table below:

District	Grand Total FMO	Total Book in count (NICHE 2010/11)	No of DPs required to be seen by FMO
A&B	9	9299	5867 (63%)
C	5	3638	1,862 (51%)
CARE	7	N/A	N/K
D	9	5396	2692 (50%)
E	5	5193	2082 (40%)
F	12	5466	1060 (19%)
G	6	5690	1660 (29%)
H	13	4214	1538 (36%)
	66	38896	16761 (43%)

I have been advised that all custody healthcare services in the PSNI have been provided by members of the Association of Forensic Medical Officers Northern Ireland.

The number of persons detained in custody under PACE for the last 3 financial years is available in the PSNI Chief Constable's Annual Report and these can be viewed at the link below

http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/about-us/chief_constables_annual_report.htm

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.