



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-01989

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Missing Persons

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

Under the Freedom of Information act, please provide full details of reports of missing people received and investigated by the force in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

I would like the response to include, for each year during the period,

the number of reports

#### Question 2

The ages of the missing individuals

#### Question 3

The number of cases resolved without investigation

#### Question 4

The number of cases resolved within i) six months ii) 12 months iii) 18 months iv) 24 months v) 30 months vi) 36 months

#### Question 5

The number of cases, from the period in question, that remain unresolved

#### Question 6

The number of cases overall that remain unresolved.

### 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).

Previously PSNI recorded Missing Person information on the ICIS Recording System; however this

system is no longer used and has been replaced with the Niche Recording System and the information is not easily accessible. There are various methods of recording Missing Persons e.g. via 'word' document. These documents cannot be searched via automated scripts and therefore the retrieval process would require a manual trawl of each recorded incident. In the 3 year time-frame requested there were in excess of 2 million incidents recorded. Estimating 15 minutes to examine each record, the retrieval process would take approximately 500,000 hours, grossly exceeding the 18 hour cost limit.

I also contacted the Missing Persons Officers in the districts and one district has advised that they have maintained a spreadsheet since 2010 and have since logged 4,600 missing person reports. However, dates of birth of missing persons are recorded, not ages and therefore to retrieve the ages and details of investigations etc would require a manual trawl of all 4,600 reports via the Niche recording system. To retrieve information from June 2009 would require a further manual trawl of Niche, as there is no spreadsheet for this period. It is estimated that the retrieval process for this district alone would take days to complete and in addition to the other 7 districts within PSNI, the total estimate would therefore greatly exceed 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 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.

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.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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