



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2013-01294

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Officers Disciplined/Convicted Assault/Domestic/Firearm offences

Request and Answer:

Question 1

The number of officers formally disciplined for assault, domestic violence, and misuse of firearm since 1st January 2010

Clarification sent: you seek officers currently under investigation for allegations of domestic violence, assault and misuse of firearm and the outcome. If an investigation is current and ongoing, the outcome would not be known until the conclusion of these cases. Subject to any exemptions that may apply, would you be content with the outcome (i.e formal disciplinary sanction or criminal conviction) of officers investigated for domestic violence, assault and misuse of firearm, and if they were suspended during investigation. Discipline Branch has estimated that the time-frame of 2010 to present can be provided within legislative cost limits.

Clarification received: Yes that is fine. I realise there may not be an outcome in some cases.

Answer

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

The table below outlines the number of officers who were formally disciplined for incidents relating to assault, domestic violence and misuse of firearms between 1st January 2010 and 1st April 2013.

Offence	Number of officers formally disciplined
Assault cases	7
Domestic Incidents	3
Misuse of Firearm	2

Question 2

The number of officers criminally convicted for assault, domestic violence, and misuse of firearm

since 1st January 2010

Answer

Of the twelve officers formally disciplined in the table above, one officer received a conviction for assault and one officer received a conviction for breach of non-molestation order. A further three officers received adult cautions for aggravated assault and common assault.

Question 3

How many of these officers were suspended during investigation?

Answer

Three officers were suspended during investigations.

The decision to suspend an officer is only taken in exceptional circumstances after all other options, including 'alternative duties', have been considered.

Considerations include:

- (i) The nature and seriousness of the alleged action, including any apparent aggravating or mitigating factors;
- (ii) The strength of evidence or nature of the investigation;
- (iii) The public interest and that of the Police Service;
- (iv) The reputation of the PSNI and the effect on public confidence;
- (v) Whether effective investigation of the allegation may be compromised if the officer remains in post;
- (vi) The nature of the current post held, and alternative posts, and the potential risk to the individual, public, colleagues or operations if the officer is not suspended;
- (vii) The likely outcome of a conviction in court or of a finding against the officer at a disciplinary hearing;
- (viii) The impact on organisational efficiency.

Whilst the PSNI expect its officers to behave with the highest standards of integrity and professionalism at all times, the number of cases specific to your request should be placed into context with the average strength of the PSNI in this time-frame, i.e. around 7500 officers.

The information supplied has been compiled by Discipline Branch, Service Improvement Department, which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers

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.

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.psnj.police.uk

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