



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2013-05254

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: How PSNI Record Findings

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Also, how do you record the work that you do, its cost and your findings. In this question I am referring to the work of the police as a peace-keeping and safe-guarding unit and I was hoping for some clarification on how the details of what the police service do in respect of investigations, the costs of its day-to-day work and the outcomes of that work are kept i.e. - in paper files, on a computer database - is everything centralised in one system so that the dots are easily joined in cases, their costs and outcomes.

Question 2

Do you keep only paper records of crimes, what you spend covering crime and covering events - or is this information all kept in an up-to-date computer database?" In this question I was referring to the PSNI as a whole body, I am hoping that you would explain how your recorded information is held as this has a serious impact on whether freedom of information requests are answered.

Answer

The Freedom of Information Act assists individuals to access **recorded information** held by public authorities. Your request does not ask for **recorded information** and Under Section 8 (1)(c) of the FOI Act is not considered a valid question.

However, as an overview of the Service, the PSNI exists to make Northern Ireland safer for everyone through professional, progressive policing. It aims to be a service of which everyone can be proud. It values, as an organisation, honesty and openness, fairness and courtesy, partnerships, performance and professionalism and respect for rights for all.

History

The PSNI came into being on 4th November 2001 following the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland (the Patten Report). The Patten report as it became widely known was the most ambitious review programmes in modern policing history.

In recent years we have also carried out an in depth review of our most valuable resource – our people - to ensure that the right people are in the right place, doing the right job. This has resulted in over 600 warranted officers returning to frontline operational policing duties from back office support functions. This was an important step to take, given our decreasing establishment.

Policing and the Criminal Justice System

The Criminal Justice System within Northern Ireland, whilst similar in the most part to the rest of the United Kingdom, does display some unique features. Following the devolution of policing and justice to the NI Assembly in April 2010 the Northern Ireland Court Service was rebranded as the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, establishing a new unified administration for courts and tribunals. Designed to -

- provide administrative support to the Northern Ireland's courts, i.e. the Court of Appeal, High Court, Crown Court, County Courts, Magistrates' Courts and Coroner's Courts;
- provide administrative support for tribunals;
- enforce civil court judgments through the Enforcement of Judgments Office; and
- Sponsor the work of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

Our court structure is somewhat unique, and the decision making process in criminal cases is now led by the Public Prosecution Service, where as in the past the police service itself would have directed on prosecutions.

Northern Ireland Policing Board

The Chief Constable and the PSNI are held to account by a Policing Board, which is fully representative of the community we serve. The Policing Board is an independent public body made up of 19 Political and Independent Members established to ensure for all the people of Northern Ireland an effective, efficient, impartial, representative and accountable police service which will secure the confidence of the whole community, by reducing crime and the fear of crime. The Board was established under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement within the confines of the Patten Report and came in to being on the 4th November 2001.

As part of its statutory duty, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) monitors and reviews the PSNI's performance against the measures and indicators the Board has set out in the Northern Ireland Policing Plan. Reporting in this way provides an opportunity for the Chief Constable and members of his Senior Executive Team to highlight good practice, commend pieces of work which have been particularly noteworthy, and indicate areas of concern or underperformance.

The Chief Constable submits this Annual Report to the NIPB following the end of the financial year 2012/2013, and the report is then sent to the Minister of Justice who lays it before the Northern Ireland Assembly. A copy of the report and further information about PSNI can be accessed via the PSNI website using the link provided below:

www.psni.police.uk

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.psni.police.uk

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