



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2014-02466

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Officers Suspended on Suspicion of Corruption

Request and Answer:

Question

Can you please tell me how many PSNI officers have been suspended on suspicion of corruption since the start of 2009?

Answer

Eighteen PSNI officers have been suspended on suspicion of corruption since the start of 2009.

The Police Service expects its staff to behave professionally, ethically and with the utmost integrity at all times. Any conduct, whether on or off duty, which brings or is likely to bring discredit on the Police Service will be investigated in order to establish whether or not a breach of the Code of Ethics has occurred. 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 of the individual(s), 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.

It should be noted that not all officers under suspension result in these officers facing criminal/misconduct proceedings and not all criminal/misconduct proceedings result in findings of guilt.

Whilst the PSNI takes seriously any wrongdoing by a police officer, the number of suspended officers should be put into context of the average strength of the PSNI in this time-frame, i.e. around 7,500 officers.

The information supplied has been compiled by Service Improvement Department, Discipline Branch 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.psni.police.uk

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