



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2014-05421

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Number Of Murders - 2003-2013

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Under the Freedom of Information Act I would like to be provided with the following information for every year from 2003-2013:

- Number of murders (broken down by year)
- Number of murders solved (broken down by year)

Note: Can you please include your definition of solved (i.e. someone charged or convicted).

Question 2

Also, can you let me know if the solved figure refers to the year the murder was committed (i.e. the murder was committed in 2004, but solved in 2008) or the year it was solved.

Answer

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- disclose information in response to question 2 in full; and
- fully exempt information in response to question 1 pursuant to the provisions of Section 21 of the Act.

Question 1

Under the Freedom of Information Act I would like to be provided with the following information for every year from 2003-2013:

- Number of murders (broken down by year)
- Number of murders solved (broken down by year)

Note: Can you please include your definition of solved (i.e. someone charged or convicted).

Answer

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption has been applied:

Section 21 - Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means

The information you request is located on the PSNI website and to be of assistance I have provided a link for each data set you have requested.

The number of murders for each financial year 1998/99 to 2013/14 is available in the publication 'Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2013/14' and can be found in table 2.2 in the spreadsheet at the following link (the number of murders in each calendar year can be found in Table 2.3):

http://www.psni.police.uk/police_recorded_crime_in_northern_ireland_1998-99_to_2013-14.xls

The number of murders detected in each financial year 2007/08 to 2013/14 can be found in table 5.2 (numbers) through the link provided above. The number of murders detected in the financial years prior to 2007/08 can be found in table 5.2 (numbers) of the publication 'Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2012/13', through the following link (the number of detections or outcomes is not published on a calendar year basis):

http://www.psni.police.uk/police_recorded_crime_in_northern_ireland_1998-99_to_2012-13.xls

Explanations of the detections (or outcomes as they are alternatively known) can be found in the Notes to accompany Table 5.2, available in both spreadsheets (outcomes are recorded according to the guidance provided in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>).

The outcome is recorded or counted in the year in which it was obtained, rather than the year the murder occurred.

Question 2

Also, can you let me know if the solved figure refers to the year the murder was committed (i.e. the murder was committed in 2004, but solved in 2008) or the year it was solved.

Answer

A murder is counted as detected once a person has been charged/summonsed for the offence, or where the offender died before proceedings. Further details on crime recording processes and definitions are available in the user guide on the PSNI website:

http://www.psni.police.uk/user_guide.pdf.

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.