



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2014-04975

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Newry And Mourne DCU

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

Newry and Mourne DCU have in place 'minimum strength' numbers for Response Policing. Can you provide me with the minimum strength requirement for response Constables in Ardmore Station? Can you tell me how this figure is calculated?

#### Question 2

Student Officer graduating this year are now being allocated Districts. Can you now confirm what districts will be open to the new recruits leaving Garnerville. Will E District be available to Student Officers from 2014 squads?

#### 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 Sections 31 and 38 of the Act.

#### Question 1

Newry and Mourne DCU have in place 'minimum strength' numbers for Response Policing. Can you provide me with the minimum strength requirement for response Constables in Ardmore Station? Can you tell me how this figure is calculated?

#### 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 exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement  
Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health & Safety

Sections 31 and 38 are qualified and prejudice-based exemptions which means that the legislators have determined that the harm in release must be evidenced and that a public interest test must be conducted.

## **Harm**

### Section 31

The current level of threat from terrorism in Northern Ireland is assessed as ‘Severe’. Releasing details of police resources and how these are calculated for specific areas would be of direct use to those involved in terrorism and crime. Releasing the details would allow criminals assess any potential weaknesses and to plan their attacks accordingly.

### Section 38

Releasing details of the number of officers in a particular station would greatly increase the risk to their personal safety.

## **Public Interest Test**

### Factors Favouring Release S38

There is a public interest in providing information which could assist in an improved and factual public debate and assist the understanding of how PSNI allocate resources to protect the public.

### Factors Favouring Retention S38

The current threat from terrorism in Northern Ireland is assessed as Severe and the PSNI has a duty of care to protect officers and staff. Disclosing the information requested would increase the risk of attack from terrorist groups as can be witnessed by recent attacks on police, and also increase the risk of harm to members of the public.

### Factors Favouring Release S31

Release of this information could reassure the public that the PSNI is allocating adequate resources in the fight against terrorism and crime. It would lead to better informed public debate.

### Factors Favouring Retention S31

Disclosures of details about PSNI resources in specific areas and how they are calculated could compromise the PSNI’s law enforcement abilities providing terrorists with important information. Such information would allow criminals to plan their attacks in the knowledge that they know the strength of local resources. This could potentially lead to more crime being committed and individuals being placed at risk by important calls and information not getting through. It would hamper the law enforcement role of the PSNI

## **Decision**

In the current climate, no information which may aid a terrorist should be provided. The PSNI has a duty of care to officers and staff and the Service will not release information if to do so would increase the risk of harm to those officers and staff. The only way of reducing the risk is to be cautious and withhold information using the appropriate exemptions when it is applicable to do so.

While there is a strong public interest in releasing the information requested the PSNI must ensure that law enforcement is not adversely affected by the release of detailed resource information. As noted above the risk from terrorism is rated as ‘Severe’, and while there is a public interest in knowing that appropriate resources are being allocated by the PSNI, there is a stronger expectation that the PSNI will not release details if to do so would increase the risk to property or to individuals. The Service has also a duty to protect staff and officers who work for the PSNI and will not release

details that may increase the risk to them.

For the above reasons I believe that the exemptions quoted are engaged and the information should not be released.

### **Question 7**

Student Officers graduating this year are now being allocated Districts. Can you now confirm what districts will be open to the new recruits leaving Garnerville? Will E District be available to Student Officers from 2014 squads?

### **Answer**

At this point in time Student Officers are being allocated to Service First Districts only i.e. Belfast City Policing District and G & H Districts.

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](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.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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