



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-00558

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Officers Under Investigation For Assault

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many officers are currently under investigation for assault?

Question 2

How many of the alleged victims are white, black or other ethnic minority?

Question 3

Of the officers under investigation have any restrictions been placed on them?

Request for Clarification:

The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland provides an independent police complaints system under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 and investigates allegations of assault made by members of the public against officers, and would therefore hold information regarding these cases.

By way of further information, the attached link to the Police Ombudsman's website outlines complaint statistics, broken down by type;

<http://www.policeombudsman.org/PONI/files/6e/6e035614-ca3a-4111-9bfa-eab2280379f3.pdf>

Discipline Branch would hold information in relation to police officers who are being investigated for assault whilst off duty. No information would be held in relation to the ethnic background of the alleged victims.

Please confirm how you wish your FOI request to proceed.

Clarification received:

Thank you for the link. While it does show some information I am looking for, it does not show the ethnicity of the complainants nor does it show whether the officers under investigation for assault have had their duties restricted in any way so I would like to continue with my request as written below:

Question 1

How many officers are currently under investigation for assault?

Question 2

How many of the alleged victims are white, black or other ethnic minority?

Question 3

Of the officers under investigation have any restrictions been placed on them?

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 as follows:

Answer 1

The PSNI's Discipline Branch is currently investigating a total of seven officers for alleged assault related incidents.

Answer 2

Discipline Branch does not record ethnic background, therefore no information is held.

Answer 3

Three of these officers have been repositioned to other duties and one officer has been suspended from duty pending the conclusion of investigations.

The Police Service for Northern Ireland expects its staff to behave professionally, ethically and with the utmost integrity at all times. Any conduct which brings or is likely to bring discredit on the Police Service will be investigated robustly. Consistent with the seriousness of an allegation and the circumstances surrounding its commission, an officer may be suspended or repositioned to other duties pending the outcome of both a criminal or misconduct investigation.

The information supplied here has been compiled by Discipline Branch, Service Improvement Department which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers. The strength of the PSNI is currently around 7300 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.