



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-00031

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Police Officers Charged or Convicted of a Criminal Offence

Request and Answer:

Question 1

In the past 5 years how many people who have gone on to be student officers passed the vetting panel with a criminal conviction.

Question 2

In the past 5 years how many police officers have been charged/convicted of a criminal offence.

Question 3

Of those convicted/charged how many were dismissed from PSNI.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 or 18 hours.

Discipline Branch and Vetting Branch, Service Improvement Department, hold all of the information in relation to your request.

Vetting Branch has estimated that there are around 250 files relating to question 1 of your request. It is estimated that to retrieve these files from storage and to extract the information sought would take around 21 hours (estimated at 1 hour to retrieve 30 files, and extraction of information at 2 minutes per file).

Information sought in questions 2 and 3 is held at Discipline Branch, within NICHE, an 'occurrence and case' electronic system, and also within files. A brief sentence outlining the investigation is inputted on the NICHE system, with further reports and information added to NICHE as an investigation progresses.

It is estimated that around 1000 internal investigations were initiated in the time-frame requested. A cursory check of the outline of these investigations on NICHE would not indicate if an officer faced

criminal proceedings, so a further examination of the reports contained in NICHE and within files would be required. A conservative estimate of three minutes to locate, extract and retrieve information from each investigation equates to 50 hours, (along with 21 hours for question 1) massively exceeds the “appropriate costs limit” under Section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information 2000.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the ‘appropriate limit’. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit.

Subject to any exemptions that may apply, Discipline Branch, Service Improvement Department, has stated that it can supply the number of PSNI officers who were convicted of a criminal offence whilst serving and the number of these officers who were dismissed as a result. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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.