



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-03200

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Organised Fights in Belfast 2014 - 2015

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many organised fights between groups of young people have police stopped/broke up this year in Belfast, from January 1 2015 until October 7, 2015?

Question 2

Please break down into area, north, south, east and west Belfast?

Question 3

Please state age of youngest involved in fighting?

Question 4

Please state if possible, how many were organised on social media?

Question 5

Please state how many young people were arrested, charged, cautioned etc.

Question 6

How many of the fights so far this year are believed to have been sectarian groups of young catholic and protestants gathering to fight?

Question 7

How many organised fights between groups of young people did police stop/break up last year in Belfast, from January 1 2014 until December 31, 2014?

Question 8

Please break down into area, north, south, east and west Belfast?

Question 9

Please state age of youngest involved in fighting?

Question 10

Please state if possible, how many were organised on social media?

Question 11

Please state how many young people were arrested, cautioned etc.

Question 12

Please state how many of the fights last year are believed to have been sectarian groups of young catholic and protestants gathering to fight.

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.

The information you have requested is not held centrally within the PSNI and to check for the relevant information for your request would require a manual examination of all relevant records held on the PSNI crime recording system. There is no identifier on the PSNI system which would enable us to identify which records would relate to 'organised fights', such incidents would instead be recorded as 'assaults', 'disorderly behaviour' and 'public order incidents' and to obtain the requested information it would be necessary for each of these incidents to be opened and inspected to determine if they relate to an 'organised fight'. A preliminary check of our systems for the requested time period indicates that there are in excess of 7,600 records which may be relevant to your request and which would need to be manually inspected. With it taking approximately 3 minutes to examine each record it would therefore take approximately 380 hours to complete your request, which would exceed the legislative limit of 18 hours.

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. Unfortunately due to the way the information is recorded on the PSNI system no refinement is possible in this case.

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.