



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-03398

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: British Army Back Up to Policing Operations

Request and Answer:

Question

Under the FOI Act can I find the following:

1. How many times in the past 12 months has the British Army been asked to provide back up to policing operations in the Strabane district area?
2. Where and when were these operations?
3. How many soldiers attended on each occasion?
4. How much of the PSNI budget was spent on receiving back up from the British Army?

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 record keeper has informed us that the requested information is not recorded centrally and that in order to determine the number of times the British Army has been requested to provide back up to PSNI policing operations within the past 12 months would require a manual inspection of each incident on the PSNI's crime recording system and to do so would put this request over the legislative cost limit. On a daily basis the Strabane district area deals with approximately 120 incidents and it has been estimated that to review an incident to establish if assistance was sought from the British Army would take approximately 2 minutes per incident. This means that in order to provide the requested information for a 12 month period would take approximately 1460 hours which would greatly exceed the legislative time limit.

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 large number of incidents which would need to be manually examined and the length of time which this would take, as previously explained, no refinement is possible in this case as to answer question 1 for even a period of one month would still be in excess of the legislative cost limit.

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.