



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2015-01521

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** Taser Incidents With Mentally Ill People 2014-2015

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

In the financial year 2014-5 the total number of incidents of Taser firing or stunning (of any type, e.g. drivestun, anglestun) against a mentally ill person (e.g. either known/suspected to have mental health issues, or detained under any section of the Mental Health Act, e.g. 135 or 136.)

#### 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 to you in full.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 there were 19 incidents in which a Taser was fired or stun driven on 13 individuals (i.e. more than one officer may have tasered the same individual) in which the incident involved what an officer perceived to be a mental health issue.

**N.B.** The PSNI use of force report asks officers to give their 'perception' of the behavioural factors involved in any incident where a Taser has been deployed in any way and gives officers the following choices: mental health, alcohol, drugs or other. It is common for multiple behavioural issues to be selected as being an influencing factor in any such incident.

The information in the table below is only based on the 'perception' of the police officer. PSNI officers are not required to determine if an individual is suffering from a mental health disorder, this should only be done by a qualified Mental Health professional.

#### Question 2

If possible, please provide some information on each incident. I.e. the age and sex of the person stunned, the circumstances which gave rise to the stunning and the location of the stunning.

NB: If number 2 will be too costly to execute, please ignore it. In addition, if you do not divide data by years, can you simply provide me with the total number of times your force has ever used Tasers against mentally ill people.

#### Answer

Please see the table on page numbered 1 below.

**N.B.** Data is provisional and subject to minor change. Data will be validated for 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 when the end of 14/15 year Use Of Force report will be published.

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.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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

Use of Force	Age	Gender	Circumstances	Location
Taser Fired	43	Female	Subject attempted to cut her throat with a knife.	Hospital
Taser Fired	16	Male	Subject was self-harming with a broken bottle and standing in a threatening position with a hurling stick.	Dwelling
Taser Fired	22	Male	Subject in possession of an iron bar. Attacked police with a wine bottle and kettle bell.	Dwelling
Taser Fired	19	Male	Subject attacked and injured a family member with a knife and then advanced on police with a knife.	Dwelling
Taser Fired	58	Male	Subject had a large kitchen knife with which he threatened self-harm and harm against police.	Dwelling
Taser Fired	30	Male	Subject stated he had a gun and was going to shoot police.	Roadway
Taser Fired	20	Male	Subject attempted to charge at police, who believed he had a knife.	Garden/Drive way
Taser Fired	43	Male	Subject moved aggressively towards police with 2 swords in his hands.	Roadway
Taser Fired	51	Male	Subject had a blade with which he threatened self-harm.	Roadway
Taser Fired	43	Male	Subject had an 18 inch knife with which he threatened self-harm and harm against police	Dwelling
Taser Fired	21	Male	Subject had stabbed a number of people in a house, was holding a knife to his own throat and another against a female's throat and was threatening to kill both.	Dwelling
Taser Fired	28	Male	Subject was self-harming with a knife.	Roadway
Taser Fired & Stun Drive	38	Male	Subject threatened his mother with a knife and threatened to kill her partner. Also pressed knife against his own throat and threatened to take his own life.	Dwelling

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