



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-03064

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Hoax Calls Made to PSNI

Request and Answer:

Question

Please release the following information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

How many nuisance calls have been made to the PSNI 999 emergency service in each of the last 5 years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015?

How much does it cost the force to deal with these calls per year?

Clarification Request: In your recent FOI request you have asked for information on the number of nuisance calls which have been made to the PSNI in the last 5 years. I have been informed by the record keeper that the PSNI does not use the identifying code 'nuisance call' in relation to calls made to the PSNI, however calls of this nature can be classified as a 'hoax call'. Bearing this in mind would you be content for your FOI request to be amended to change the wording from 'nuisance' to 'hoax'?

Clarification Response: Please release the following information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

How many hoax calls have been made to the PSNI 999 emergency service in each of the last 5 years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015?

How much does it cost the force to deal with these calls per year?

Question 1

How many hoax calls have been made to the PSNI 999 emergency service in each of the last 5 years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015?

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.

Please find a table below which shows the number of calls for service made to the PSNI 999 emergency number for the years 2011 to 2015 and which have been classified on the PSNI system as being a 'Hoax call', the definition of what constitutes a 'Hoax Call' is provided after the table below.

Please be aware that prior to April 2011 'Hoax Calls' were recorded under the Anti-Social Behaviour category, but from April 2011 onwards these are now recorded under the Public Safety/Welfare category. This has been captured in the information below with the figure for 2011 being the total of all incidents recorded using the two separate Hoax Call codes.

The information provided for the year 2015 covers the period from the 1st January 2015 to the 24th September 2015 and figures for the current financial year (i.e. from 1st April 2015) are provisional in nature and may be subject to change.

Please note that this information is based on data extracted from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records that are relevant.

Year	Hoax Call Incidents (call source 999)
2011	1,248
2012	1,477
2013	1,771
2014	1,560
2015	1,481

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

Hoax Call Definition:

This category is under Public Safety/Welfare as the main impact of hoax calls is on other people with genuine concerns who cannot get through to the police or get assistance as a result of the hoax call. This category also includes false calls made to emergency services. These are calls that convey information that is false and is known or believed to be false for the purpose of causing distress, anxiety or the wasteful misdirection of emergency services. In this context "Emergency Services" should be viewed in its widest sense and may include Coast Guards, Mountain Rescue etc. Certain calls, e.g. Hoax Bomb calls are notifiable crimes and should be recorded as such e.g. hoaxes involving noxious substances under Section 114 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 are on the notifiable crime offence list.

Notes

- Hoax calls received directly by the police will be recorded.
- Notification of hoax calls received from emergency services, in general, should be recorded in accordance with the Other Agency Rule.
- This category does not include calls made with good intent where the information given turns out to be incorrect. These could be closed with the relevant log closure and a qualifier: 'Call made with good intent'.
- This category will also include those calls made by people with mental health problems or delusion disorders who report incidents that have not occurred. Forces are reminded of the need to ensure an appropriate risk assessment has been undertaken in respect of these calls.
- Staff should not assume that callers have mental health issues simply on the basis that the caller fails to respond or gives unexpected responses. The caller may have difficulty hearing or understanding English. Where staff are uncertain it is suggested that they seek the advice of a supervisor.

Question 2

How much does it cost the force to deal with these calls per year?

Answer

The PSNI does not record the cost required to deal with these hoax calls and therefore there is no information held to answer this question.

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.