



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-01608

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Police Hospital Transport 2010 - 2014

Request and Answer:

Question

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request details of the number of occasions that police have needed to take people to hospital.

I am seeking similar information to that which was disclosed here:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/police-taking-place-of-ambulances-31212594.html>

For each year from 2010 to 2014 (or for fewer years if necessary to bring this request within the time and cost constraints of the FOI Act), and for each policing district, please disclose the following:

1. The number of occasions that police have needed to take someone to hospital.
2. If possible separately give the number of occasions police have needed to take someone to hospital specifically because ambulances have been unavailable or have not turned up in time.

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.

To provide the requested information would involve checking over 1.4 million command and control serials that cover the requested period. Unfortunately, there is no specific serial code for this type of incident and even though serials are held electronically, to ascertain if each incident was relevant to your request each serial would need to be retrieved manually, read through, assessed and then any incident containing the information requested would have to be collated. To perform this task and provide the requested information, even for one year, would be in excess of the FOI legislative costs 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. You may wish to significantly reduce the requested time period; however the PSNI are unable to provide a specific time period to suggest for any new request as all records retrieved in any new time span would still have to be viewed manually and depending on whatever timeframe is requested this may/may not still exceed the 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.