



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2015-03452

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Web Domains Owned by PSNI

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

I request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

- List of web domains controlled or owned by Police Service of Northern Ireland.

#### Answer

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Please find below a list of web domains that are either controlled or owned by the Police Service of Northern Ireland:

- [www.urzone.com](http://www.urzone.com)
- [policingcommitments.psni.police.uk](http://policingcommitments.psni.police.uk)
- [report.psni.police.uk](http://report.psni.police.uk)
- [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)
- [www.psnilocaldistricts.info](http://www.psnilocaldistricts.info)

#### Partial NCND

In addition to the above response the PSNI neither confirms nor denies (NCND) that it holds any other information relevant to your request by virtue of the following exemptions:

#### Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice based qualified exemption and this means that the public authority is required to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or denying that any other information is held as well as conducting a public interest test.

#### 'Neither Confirm nor Deny' (NCND)

There may be occasions when complying with the duty to confirm or deny under section 1(1) (a)

would in itself disclose sensitive or potentially damaging information that falls under an exemption. In these circumstances, the Act allows a public authority to respond by refusing to confirm or deny whether it holds the requested information.

The decision to issue a 'neither confirm nor deny' response is not affected by whether we do or do not hold the information but relates to the consequences of confirming or denying the information is held. The starting point and main focus in most cases will be theoretical considerations about the consequences of confirming or denying that a particular type of information is held. The decision to neither confirm nor deny is separate from a decision not to disclose information and needs to be taken entirely on its own merits.

PSNI follow the Information Commissioner's Guidance in relation to 'NCND' and you may find it helpful to refer to this at the following link:

[https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1166/when\\_to\\_refuse\\_to\\_confirm\\_or\\_deny\\_section\\_1\\_foia.pdf](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1166/when_to_refuse_to_confirm_or_deny_section_1_foia.pdf)

## **Harm**

The public expect police forces and other law enforcement agencies to use all powers and tactics available to them to aid in the prevention and detection crime and to maintain public safety.

To confirm or deny that any other information is held would prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and would identify the level of policing and resources that may or may not be assigned utilising web domains. This would compromise any tactics that may or may not be used by the PSNI, providing useful information that would enable those wishing to circumvent those arrangements, to form an assessment of the level of capability within the PSNI.

## **Public Interest Test**

### Factors favouring confirmation or denial that any other information is held

To confirm or deny that any other information is held would allow a greater understanding of where public funds are being allocated. In order for the PSNI to be fully transparent and open, it is appreciated that there is a public interest in confirming or denying whether any other information is held which may infer where public money may be spent.

### Factors against confirmation or denial that any other information is held

To confirm or deny that any other information is held would compromise the current or future law enforcement role of the PSNI. To confirm or deny any further information is held is likely to have a detrimental effect on policing resources. Policing resources and the police capability would be negatively affected and could be manipulated by those with criminal intent to obtain an advantage over any potential police tactics and capabilities. In a world where cyber crime is ever increasing it is of paramount importance to protect any further information that may or may not be held that is relevant to the request.

Irrespective of what other information is or isn't held, by applying substantive exemptions would indicate that information is held and would identify tactics. Such action would undermine the law enforcement tactics which would further undermine public safety and the repercussions that could hinder the prevention or detection of crime.

## **Balance Test**

The points above highlight the merits of neither confirming, nor denying, whether any other information pertinent to this request exists. The Police Service of Northern Ireland will never divulge whether or not any other information is held if to do so would undermine our law enforcement capabilities. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations, resources, capabilities and providing reassurance that the PSNI is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the tactics that the force may or may not employ.

The public also entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their

safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released. In this case, and irrespective of what other information is or isn't held, to merely confirm or deny that information is held would provide information which would assist those intent on causing harm. Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test upholds the decision to neither confirm nor deny that any other information is held.

However, this should not be taken as necessarily indicating that any information that would meet your request exists or does not exist.

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.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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