



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2017-00571

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Class A Drugs Involving Young People

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please can I request the following information, all relating to the calendar year 2016?

Age and gender of the youngest person arrested by your force in connection with either possession of a Class A drug with intent to supply or supplying or offering to supply a Class A drug. Please also state the type and quantity of the drug involved, all the offences for which they were arrested, the month and location (town or village) of the arrest, and what action was taken with regard to the young person.

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.

The PSNI Central Statistics branch has confirmed that the youngest person arrested for a 'Class A' related drug offence in the 2016 calendar year was a 14-year-old male. In the course of the incident, against which the arrest was recorded, suspected Cocaine Powder (1g) was seized. The arrest took place in Belfast in July 2016 and the arrest offences were, 'Possession of a Class A Controlled Drug', 'Possession of a Class C Controlled Drug' and 'Possessing Offensive Weapon In Public Place'. No prosecution resulted from this incident.

Please Note: This information is based on data extracted from a live 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.

Question 2

Age and gender of the youngest person arrested by your force in connection with either possession of any controlled drug with intent to supply or supplying or offering to supply any controlled drug. Please also state the type and quantity of the drug involved, all the offences for which they were arrested, the month and location (town or village) of the arrest, and what action was taken with regard to the young person.

Answer

The youngest person arrested for a drug related offence in the 2016 calendar year was a 12-year-old

male and the arrest took place in Cookstown in November 2016 and the arrest offences were, 'Possession Of A Class B Controlled Drug' and 'Theft'. Suspected Cannabis Herbal, weight information not available, was seized in the course of this incident against and there are no outcomes to any recorded crimes against this incident to date.

Question 3

Age and gender of the youngest person who has come to the attention of your force (without necessarily having been arrested) for suspected participation in illegal drug supply activities. Please supply details of what that young person's suspected involvement was, the type of drugs involved, and any action taken involving that young person. (NB This action need not necessarily have been punitive, it may have involved for example helping the young person under Modern Slavery provisions).

Answer

Searches by the Central Statistics branch, Crime Operations department, and the Public Protection Unit have confirmed that the PSNI would not hold the requested information, on those individuals that have come to the attention of the PSNI, in a searchable format and so it is not possible to retrieve the requested information. In order to attempt to retrieve the requested information it would be necessary to manually examine the details of every drug related incident recorded on the PSNI system to determine the age of every person who had a suspected involvement. To perform such an examination would greatly exceed the legislative cost limit of 18 hours and so cannot be provided in this instance.

Question 4

The number of under-16s arrested by your force in 2016 in connection with either possession of a Class A drug with intent to supply or supplying or offering to supply a Class A drug.

Answer

There were four persons aged 15 and under (at the time of arrest) arrested for such class A related drug offences in the course of the 2016 calendar year.

Question 5

The number of under-16s arrested by your force in 2016 in connection with either possession of any controlled drug with intent to supply or supplying or offering to supply any controlled drug.

Answer

There were 29 persons aged 15 and under (at the time of arrest) arrested for drug related offences in the course of the 2016 calendar year. Please note that those people enumerated in Question 4 are also included within the statistics for Question 5.

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.psnipolice.uk

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