



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-02535

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Domestic Abuse

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information below has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold the information you have requested however 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.

### Request 1

I am requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

How many reports of domestic abuse has your force responded to since January 1, 2013? I mean any incident reported on your 101, 999 and other reporting methods such as online. It is fine to include incidents responded to by chance while on routine patrol.

### Request 2

How many victims did not support prosecution?

### Request 3

In how many cases did you seek to press charges despite the fact the victim did not support further action? Please break the data down year-by-year.

### 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. Section 12 of FOIA allows a public authority to refuse to deal with a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to either comply with the request in its entirety or confirm or deny whether the requested information is held. The estimate must be reasonable in the circumstances of the case. The ‘appropriate limit’ is currently £600 for central government and £450 for all other public authorities including PSNI. The relevant Regulations which define the appropriate limit for section 12 purposes are The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004 SI 2004 No 3244. These are known as the ‘Fees Regulations’ for brevity.

Regulation 4(3) of the Fees Regulations states that a public authority can take into account the costs it reasonably expects to incur in carrying out the following permitted activities in complying with the request:

- (i) determining whether the information is held;
- (ii) locating the information, or a document containing it;
- (iii) retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- (iv) extracting the information from a document containing it.

Under those regulations PSNI can calculate the time spent on each of these permitted activities at £25 per hour (thus if the activity(s) takes more than 18 hours PSNI will be in excess of the 'appropriate limit').

Enquiries made in relation to your request has identified that retrieval of information would exceed the 18 hour cost limit set by the Secretary of State under the FOI Act. PSNI Urban Contact Management Centre has stated that in relation to Request 1 a search for a months' statistics on domestic abuse was carried out for June to July 2017 and 2018. Those two periods returned 1326 and 1455 incidents respectively. If the average monthly returns over 1000 incidents which need to be manually checked it would mean there would be at least 12,000 a year and that would be over 60,000 for the last 5 years putting the request well over cost of 18 hours as stipulated in the FOI Act.

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. Unfortunately I am unable to offer you any refinement.

***I can advise that statistics on domestic abuse incidents and crimes records by the police are published on the PSNI website (<https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/>). While this does not provide the number of reports responded to, it may be of interest to you. Statistics on the outcomes of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police are published on the PSNI website, <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/> section 3.4 in the publication outcomes of crimes recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2017/2018 outlines the distribution of outcomes for crimes with a domestic abuse motivation, which includes outcomes around evidential difficulties (victim does not support) this also may be of interest to you. I can advise that information is not readily available prior to 2015/16.***

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

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