



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-02625

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Domestic Violence Statistics 2014 - 2018

### 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

How many domestic violence cases have been reported to your police force in each of the last five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and records so far in 2018?

### Request 2

How many domestic violence cases have been reported to your police force involving a victim with a disability in each of the last five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and records so far in 2018?

### 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').

PSNI Statistics Branch has advised to respond to request 2 the information although held on the NICHE computer system electronically it also requires manual intervention. The disability information from the person record which may be included in the crime victim details, relates to the **current** disability information available on the NICHE computer system and therefore it is not possible from the record to indicate whether the person had the identified disability at the time the offence occurred. In addition, the disability information is a multi-select field and there are records that indicate disability as both 'none' and 'physical / long term illness / sensory / learning / mental health etc.' An additional point is that PSNI Statistics Branch would only have person information in relation to victims of domestic abuse crimes, and therefore this would not include a search of person information in relation to those involved in domestic abuse incidents that do not result in a crime being recorded.

To assess each domestic abuse crime for a recorded disability would require a search of more than a total of 70,000 offences which have been recorded since January 2014. To assess those domestic abuse crimes where disability has been completed (excluding those records where the option 'none' is the only one selected) and to take into account the issues described above with more than 6,000 records identified to provide this alone is estimated to take in excess of 1000 hours. Therefore this request grossly exceeds the legislative cost of 18 hours.

Section 16 'Duty to Assist' for request 1 - the number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded since 2014 can be obtained from the PSNI website, if you look at the Domestic abuse annual trends 2004/005 to 2017/18 summary tables excel spreadsheet – Pivot Table 1-by month for assistance the link is provided below:

[\(https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/\)](https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/)

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 on this occasion due to the PSNI recording system refinement cannot be offered.

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.