



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-00193

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Domestic Incidents

### Request and 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 some information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We further consider some of the information you seek is exempt by virtue of Section 22 of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

### Request 1

Could you please give me a breakdown of the number of reports of domestic abuse by year by year for the past five years (Q1-Q4 including ) up to January 2018, including: 2017/18, 2016/17, 2015/16, 2014/15, 2013/14 broken down by the gender of the perpetrator/accused?

### Request 2

And, if possible, a break down by the age of the alleged perpetrator/accused?

### Clarification From You The Requester:

Q1-Q4 refers to Quarter 1 to Quarter 4. It is a statistical breakdown used by some forces to cover four quarters of the year. If your force does not use such a break down please just send me the annual figures up to January 2018. Equally if your force does use a Q1-Q4 breakdown please send me the figures up to and including January 2018.

I've been told some forces refer to domestic violence and some to domestic abuse. Where possible I would like to broadest category available. If your force records abuse and violence please break the figures down i.e. figures for abuse and figures for violence accordingly by year.

And please break the figures down in your response between recorded incidents (and or reports) and recorded crimes of domestic abuse/violence.

As per the original email the main breakdown I am looking for is the gender of the perpetrator.

### Answer

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the

applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

## **Section 22- Information Intended For Future Publication**

Section 22 is a qualified exemption so therefore the PSNI is obliged to carry out a Public Interest Test.

The full text of exemptions can be found at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it has been decided to refuse access to some of the information you have requested. Under Section 22 (1) of the Act the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is not obliged to disclose information that is held with a view to its publication at some future date.

The information you requested from January 2018 is intended to be published by PSN and I can advise that the financial year 2017/18 will be published on 17<sup>th</sup> May and will be made available on the PSNI Statistics website

## **Public Interest Considerations – Section 22**

### Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosure at this time would provide the public with an awareness of domestic incidents up to January 2018.

### Factors favouring non-disclosure

As a decision has been made to publish this information in future the spending of additional funds in order to answer this request in full would not be in the public interest.

### Decision

There needs to be a real and valid reason which identifies a tangible benefit to the public from disclosure of information. For the reasons outlined above the balancing test at present would be to not release the requested information.

However to assist I can advise that Domestic Incidents and Crimes recorded by the police in Northern Ireland are published on the PSNI website. The latest annual trends bulletin provides figures for each year 2004/05 to 2016/17. The latest quarterly update covers to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

Information on gender and age of perpetrator/accused is available in the annual trends publication tables 4.2 and 4.3 in the summary spreadsheet, with further background information on offender characteristics available in the bulletin. Offender characteristics for 2017/18 will be updated when the annual trends bulletin 17/18 is published. Offender characteristics information is not available in the quarterly updates published on the website.

Domestic abuse statistics – <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics-archive/>

Annual trends bulletin (section 4) – <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our->

[statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic-abuse-incidents-and-crimes-in-northern-ireland-2004-05-to-2016-17.pdf](https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic-abuse-incidents-and-crimes-in-northern-ireland-2004-05-to-2016-17.pdf)

Annual trends spreadsheet (tables 4.2/4.3) – <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/domestic-abuse-incidents-and-crimes-in-northern-ireland-2004-05-to-2015-16.pdf>

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.