



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-01322

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Reports of Alleged Catfishing

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 information to which your request relates and the decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

Please can you tell me how many reports of alleged catfishing you have had in the calendar years (1 Jan- 31 Dec) 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017?

Request 2

Reports of alleged impersonation of an individual by using photographs or their identity online e.g. Facebook, tinder or an online chatroom

Request 3

Reports of alleged fake online profiles being used to mislead an individual

Clarification received: Further to my FOI request on catfishing I received varying responses from police forces. I would therefore like to clarify my question so that every force has the opportunity to reply in the same way.

Please could you conduct a free text search of your incident log on the words “catfish” and “catfishing”. Please can you tell me how many incidents containing the words “catfish” or “catfishing” were logged in the calendar years (1 Jan- 31 Dec) 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and so far in 2018?

Answer

Please see the table below detailing the number of incidents where “catfish” or “catfishing” appears in the Occurrence Entry Log for the period 2013 to 31 July 2018.

Please note: a keyword search has been conducted however the results returned are highly unlikely to be accurate and will not yield a result that includes all information held at the time the request was received.

Calendar year	Number of incidents
2013	0
2014	0
2015	1
2016	3
2017	4
2018 (1 Jan – 31 July)	3

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.psni.police.uk

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