



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2019-00025

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Sexual And Domestic Crimes Against Women

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

I'd like to request the following information under the FOI Act.

I would like to know how many reports of:

- a) sexual harassment
- b) sexual assault
- c) rape
- d) domestic abuse/violence
- e) how many requests for restraining orders

Of/from women aged 60 and over there have been in your force area - I AM SPECIFICALLY KEEN TO KNOW THESE STATISTICS IN RELATION TO THESE WOMEN'S PARTNERS.

I am aware of the data protection laws and concerns surrounding identification. However because victims of sexual assault are entitled to automatic anonymity, there is no reason why you should be unable to answer this question. If, for some reason, you're unable to provide this information specifically in relation to these women's partners, please call me. If you are unable to provide this specific element of information, please answer the question as fully as you can.

I would like this information broken down by annual year for every year from 2013 to 2018. If it is possible, I would also like the ages of the women. If you are unable to provide this specific element of information regarding age, please answer the question as fully as you can.

Please present the information clearly. For example:

2013: XXX reports of of sexaul harassment (of women aged 67-90), XXX reports of sexual assault (of women aged 60-84), XXX reports of rape (of women aged 63-87).

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').

The record owner within the PSNI has advised A search was conducted of the Command & Control system for the opening and closing code of SXIN, this is the only code for incidents of a sexual nature, ranging from historical abuse, rape, sexual assault through to street urination. It covers a range of possible offences and types. For the year 2018 there was 4480 reports, for 2017 there was 4616 and for 2016 there was 4537. Each one of these incidents would need to be manually checked to see if they met the criteria for the request. This manual trawl is estimated to take well over the 18 hours appropriate limit.

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 even if the time frame of your request were to be reduced it may still be over cost with this in mind I am unable to provide any refinement at this time. However please use the link below that may be of interest to you, it details domestic abuse motivated crimes and incidents available in the Domestic Abuse Annual Trends Bulletin and accompanying spreadsheet on our website:

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

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.

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.