



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-02318

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Vagrancy Act 1824

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. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information regarding the Vagrancy Act 1824, from 2015-18.

Please provide the number of arrests made by your police force under section three of the Vagrancy Act 1824 in the financial years ranging from 2015-16, to 2017-18. I am not seeking information on the prostitution and indecency clauses of Section 3; accordingly, the police force should use the following Section 3 offences if possible:

- Wandering abroad to beg or gather alms
- Placing self in public place to beg
- Procuring child to beg
- Person other than prostitute being idle and disorderly
- Causing child to beg
- Collecting alms or endeavouring to procure charitable contribution by false pretence
- Wandering abroad and exposing wound or deformity to obtain alms
- Persistently beg
- Sleeping out

Answer

Please note: as the above legislation is not applicable in Northern Ireland a search for information was conducted using the following offences;

4202004 CAUSING CHILD TO BEG, Section 24(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968

4202005 CAUSING YOUNG PERSON TO BEG, no legislation details available

4202006 PROCURING CHILD TO BEG, no legislation details available

4202007 PROCURING YOUNG PERSON TO BEG, no legislation details available

5006001 BEGGING, Section 3 of the Vagrancy (Ireland) Act 1847

5006002 UNLAWFUL CHARITABLE COLLECTION, Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824 as amended by the Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1935

The below information has been extracted from the custody arrests data from NICHE, please note this includes those persons arrested and processed through police custody. Therefore, those arrested and street bailed or dealt with by other means e.g. community resolution, Penalty Notice for Disorder etc will not be included in the figures. The information extracted is based on the individual arrested for the offences of begging/unlawful charitable collection and covers the time period of 1 April 2015-31 March 2018. Data extracted 2nd October 2018. The information provided is a count of arrests, i.e. custody numbers.

Number of arrests for the offences of Begging/Unlawful charitable collection (1 April 2015 - 31 March 2018)

Year	Number
2015/16	47
2016/17	61
2017/18	37

Data extracted 2nd October 2018

Request 2

Of these arrests, please provide the number of individuals who:

- A. Were listed as having 'NFA'
- B. Were subsequently charged with an offence
- C. Were issued a fine
- D. Please provide the amount of each fine given

Answer

- A. Were listed as having 'NFA'

Year	Number of arrests where the arrested person was listed as having an address of 'NFA' or 'no fixed abode'
2015/16	24
2016/17	31
2017/18	17

- B. Were subsequently charged with an offence

Year	Number
2015/16	36
2016/17	44
2017/18	25

Data extracted 2nd October 2018

Please note: There were no arrests/charges for offences of causing child or young person to beg

- C. Were issued a fine

Year	Number of arrests from Request 1 which resulted in a fine
2015/16	5
2016/17	4
2017/18	6

D. Please provide the amount of each fine given

Year	Fine amount
2015/16	£150.00
2015/16	£10.00
2015/16	£40.00
2015/16	£75.00
2015/16	£50.00
2016/17	£100.00
2016/17	£50.00
2016/17	£25.00
2016/17	£20.00
2017/18	£40.00
2017/18	£100.00
2017/18	£150.00
2017/18	£75.00
2017/18	£200.00
2017/18	£75.00

Please note: This information is based on data extracted from a live system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records that are relevant.

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.psnipolice.uk

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