



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-01328

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Autism and Police Training

### 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.

**Please note:** The Freedom of Information Act 2000 legislates for the rights of an individual to seek access to **recorded information**. The Act only extends to requests for **recorded information** as defined by Section 84 of the Act and does not require public authorities to answer questions with a yes/no response unless already held in recorded information.

Further information on what constitutes a valid request can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1164/recognising-a-request-made-under-the-foia.pdf>

However, on this occasion, I can advise you of the following:

### Request 1

Please indicate which Police force you are responding on behalf.

### Answer

Police Service of Northern Ireland.

### Request 2

Do you provide autism training for Police Officers/Staff? If you select yes there are a maximum of six further questions. No/Yes.

### Answer

No specific standalone training package is provided however awareness around autism is provided.

### Request 3

Is autism training a stand-a-lone training package? No/Yes.

**Answer**

No.

**Request 4**

If training has been provided, which of the following do you provide?

Training devised in-house by Police Officers/staff/E- learning/

Training created and delivered by an external provider

**Answer**

Training is delivered within the Police College by training staff to student officers. Whilst there is no standalone training package in relation to autism or ASD's, different aspects of the 23 week student officer training programme make reference. An example being the student officer training on Hate Crime whereby the students conduct an investigative enquiry where the victim has an ASD. This element of the course was designed by a trainer Constable within the Police College who hold a foundation degree in psychology (specialism: educational psychology) who has also completed an Autism Awareness course with Autism NI.

In addition, the police college provides awareness of ASD's to custody officers and detention officers during their training. The autism alert card is displayed on the wall of the training room.

The police college also hosts a community engagement evening for student officers during the training programme. During this evening, a number of advocacy groups attend the police college to raise awareness. One of the groups who attend is a social enterprise supporting people with learning difficulties. They introduce the student officers to the concept of the 'JAM' or 'Just a minute' card.

All content of training delivered within the Police College is created by Police Staff. Some content is created in consultation with subject matter experts.

**Request 5**

What autism qualification does the trainer hold? No formal qualification in autism/ A college certificate in autism/An undergraduate qualification in autism/A post graduate qualification in autism

**Answer**

Police trainers hold no specific formal or informal training qualifications in relation to autism which has been provided by the police service. Some members of police staff may hold relevant qualifications however the police college does not hold a record.

**Request 6**

Is autism training compulsory? No/Yes

**Answer**

No. Whilst there is no specific autism training package, all elements of the Student Officer Training Programme are compulsory.

**Request 7**

Which of the following roles receive autism training? Police Officers/  
Student Police Officers/Police Community Support Officers/Special Constables/Custody Staff/Designated Detention Officers/Civilian Investigation Officers/Communication Officers/Scene of Crime/Officers/Investigators/Other Civilian Staff/Dispatch Officers

**Answer**

Whilst there is no standalone autism training package, awareness around autism is discussed in different aspects of the student officer training programme. In addition, awareness is also provided to custody officers and detention officers.

## **Request 8**

Have you adopted the Autism alert card scheme? No/Yes

### **Answer**

Whilst the Autism Alert Card Scheme is not adapted, Custody officers and detention officers are provided with awareness in relation to the autism alert card.

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.