



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-02641

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Fitness Test Using The Push / Pull Machine

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.

I am aware that for a period of time both the RUC GC and PSNI used what was known as a push/pull machine. This machine was used to test fitness levels of members in certain branches of the organisation.

Request 1

When was this equipment introduced?

Answer

In 1995.

Request 2

How was this equipment stored, when not in use?

Answer

It was stored in secure locked sports hall stores within various PSNI sites.

Request 3

Was it tested for accuracy, when removed from storage and before use?

Answer

The Freedom of Information Act requires PSNI to provide a response to a request for 'recorded' information which is held (s.1 FOIA). A question will not necessarily constitute a 'valid request' if it is asking PSNI to speculate or to provide information which is not recorded. 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>

Yes.

Request 4

How often was the equipment calibrated and by whom?

Answer

Prior to its use the equipment was calibrated every time it was removed from storage.

Request 5

Was the applicant shown the digital readout of the result on the machine, or was this reported later verbally by the instructor. If so why?

Answer

If the “applicant” was a candidate applying for PSNI, they would not have been shown the digital readout of the result on the machine. However the PSNI Physical Training Instructor would have recorded the result on the individual’s Physical Competence Assessment (PCA) Result Sheet and this information would have been transferred to a PCA result letter which would have been provided to each candidate.

If the “applicant” was a serving Police Officer, the digital readout of the result was available to be seen.

Request 6

Did the equipment discriminate against any type of candidate, who would otherwise be suitable e.g. height, weight, build and gender?

Answer

The Freedom of Information Act requires PSNI to provide a response to a request for ‘recorded’ information which is held (s.1 FOIA). A question will not necessarily constitute a ‘valid request’ if it is asking PSNI to speculate or to provide information which is not recorded. 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>

No.

Request 7

When was this equipment decommissioned and why?

Answer

The Push/Pull Machine was removed from the PSNI Recruitment Process, for Student Officers and Probationer Officers in June 2015 as result of a direction from Service Executive Team.

However it is currently still in use within specific Specialist Unit Physical Competence Assessments (PCAs) as a functional measuring device.

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.