



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-02119

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Police Officers Bitten on Duty

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.

Clarification received: *Please can I have the figures for both human and dog bites. Can these figures be separated and clearly marked.*

Request 1

How many police officers have been bitten whilst on duty in the last three years?

Answer

Human Resources conducted a keyword search of records for the period 21.11.2015 - 21.11.2018, using the multiple terms: 'BITE', 'BIT', 'BITTEN' and 'TEETH' for on duty officers.

Please see the tables below detailing the number of officers bitten on duty with the requested breakdown by year and gender and a further breakdown for human and animal bites.

| Period | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------------|------|--------|-------|
| 21/11/15 - 31/12/15 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 2016 | 63 | 9 | 72 |
| 2017 | 70 | 14 | 84 |
| 01/01/18-21/11/18 | 41 | 7 | 48 |
| | 178 | 30 | 208 |

Human Bites

| Period | Male | Female |
|--------|------|--------|
| 2015 | 2 | 0 |
| 2016 | 43 | 5 |
| 2017 | 54 | 13 |
| 2018 | 30 | 3 |
| Total | 150 | |

Animal Bites

| Period | Male | Female |
|--------|------|--------|
| 2015 | 2 | 0 |
| 2016 | 20 | 4 |
| 2017 | 16 | 1 |
| 2018 | 11 | 4 |
| Total | 58 | |

Please note: this may not reflect a true overview of all injury/ill health accidents sustained by PSNI officers during the requested timeframes, ONLY those that have been reported to Health & Safety Branch via the e23/10 accident/incident form and also the correct fields being selected for injury/ill health.

Request 2

How many police officers have required a hepatitis shot after being bitten on duty?

Request 3

How many police officers have required hospital treatment (e.g. stitches) as a result of being bitten whilst on duty?

Please provide the answers to the above questions broken down into each year and into if the police officer was male or female.

If it is not possible to answer this request in its entirety due to one or more questions exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please answer the ones that do not exceed the limits and disregard the ones that do.

If it is not possible to provide any of the information requested due to the request exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under your Section 16 obligations, as to how I can refine my request to be included in the scope of the Act.

In any case, if you can identify ways that my request could be refined please provide further advice and assistance to indicate this.

Answer

As per the clarification contained in your initial request, PSNI has provided information in relation to Request 1 as this could be retrieved within the 18 hour cost limit. PSNI have followed your direction and disregarded Request 2 and 3 as retrieval would place the whole request over cost. Under Section 16, I can advise you that a manual trawl of each individual record would be required to retrieve any relevant information; however it may be possible to retrieve information for a shorter time-frame i.e. 6 months – 1 year. **Please note:** Human Resources have advised there is no mandatory field to record such information and it may not be held on each record.

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 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.