



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-01796

Keyword: Human Resources

Subject: Scientific Support Manager

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

How many Scientific Support Manager competitions have been run since the last substantive SSM retired?

Answer

A total of 4 external advertisements for the post Head of Scientific Support and an internal process in 2012.

Request 2

What has the financial cost been to the PSNI for each individual competition? And collectively?

Answer

PSNI Human Resources conducted searches however they failed to locate the full records or documents relevant to your request based on the information you have provided.

Accordingly, I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold all the information to which you seek access.

However there are only records held for the following 2 competition numbers:

Competition number HOHOSS0418 – Tender cost £13,500

Competition number HRHSS3118 – approximately £25,000 for 2 advertisements.

Request 3

What were the essential qualifications for each individual competition?

Answer

Please find below the essential qualifications for each competition:

Competition number: GRHSS1211

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL
Qualifications	Bachelor's degree or equivalent

Competition number: HOHOSS0616

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL
Qualifications	A degree in a relevant physical science subject such as biology, physics, chemistry or other similar subject

Competition number: HOHOSS00418

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL
Qualifications	A degree in a relevant subject such as business management, accountancy, financial management or similar management based discipline.

Competition number: HRHSS3118

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL
Qualifications	Possess a degree level qualification in a related discipline.

Please find in the table below the criteria for the internal process:

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full current driving licence that enables you to drive in Northern Ireland and a car available for official business use or access to a form of personal transport that will enable you to meet the requirements of the post in full.
DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A degree in a relevant physical science subject such as biology, physics, chemistry or other similar subject would be an advantage.
ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate significant experience (5+ years) of leadership and programme/project management and have a good working knowledge of a broad range of subjects to equip them to direct the development and implementation of strategies and policies. He/she will be in a position to provide comprehensive and authoritative recommendations in relation to scientific support that will influence senior decision makers. Experience of business and financial management which includes: - Planning and managing budgets. Demonstrate sound analytical ability and be competent at assimilating and making sense of complex or conflicting perspectives and information. He/she will be expected to demonstrate good knowledge of the principles of strategic planning and policy formulation and their application across a range of different functions.
DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Request 4

How many people applied for each individual competition?

Answer

PSNI Human Resources conducted searches however they failed to locate the full records or documents relevant to your request based on the information you have provided.

Accordingly, I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold all the information to which you seek access.

The information for competition number 'GRHSS1211' is not held by PSNI Human Resources Branch as the file was destroyed under the 'Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Competition number 'HOHOSS0616' = 8

Competition number 'HOHOSS0418' = 16

Competition number 'HRHSS3118' = 15

A total of 9 persons applied for the internal competition in 2012.

Request 5

How many people made it through to final interview stage of each individual competition?

Answer

Competition number 'HOHOSS0616' = 4

Competition number 'HOHOSS0418' = 5

With regards to competition number 'HRHSS3118' as this completion is ongoing this information is not available.

A total of 2 persons made it through to interview for the internal competition in 2012.

Request 6

To date no one has been successful in passing the final interview – is there a fault with the process?

Request 7

Is there a particular area that applicants are failing the interview on? If so can you tell me what this is?

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>

Your question is therefore not valid request as PSNI does not hold information on the speculative element of this question.

However as to date no candidate has met the minimum acceptable score at interview and therefore the examples that candidates have presented in these competitions in relation to situational questions (both forward facing and experiential) has not demonstrated the level of competence required for the role.

Request 8

Has there been analysis done to ascertain why no-one has been deemed fit for the post since the retirement of the last substantive SSM?

Answer

No, the interview is the analysis of the behaviours contained within the examples being used by each candidate. These examples are assessed against the 'Policing Professional Framework Personal Behavioural Competency' areas which are set against National Occupational Standards.

Request 9

If so what are the results of this analysis?

Answer

No candidates have been found to meet the minimum level of competence requirements for appointment.

Request 10

If notwhy has this analysis not been undertaken?

Answer

Not applicable.

Request 11

Are there plans to run another SSM competition?

Answer

The completion for the Head of Scientific Support was re-advertised on 8th November 2018 and closed on 30th November 2018.

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.

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