



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-03070

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Staff Absence Due To Psychological Illness From 2008 -2018

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information below has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold the information you have requested however it is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the “appropriate costs limit” under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please find below a request for data from your force in relation to leave due to psychological reasons.

### Request 1 A - G

Please provide the individual annual figures of staff who have taken a period of absence due to psychological illness or stress between 2008-2018.

Please break this down to provide figures/data in relation to (at the time of taking absence):

- a. Specific department/command within the Force (including police staff)
- b. Rank
- c. Age
- d. Gender
- e. Time in the Force
- f. Reason for being signed off (Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Trauma)
- g. Reason for illness

### Request 2

Please provide the individual annual figures of staff employed by your force between 2008-2018.

- a. Please break this down by specific department (including police staff)

### Request 3

Please provide the individual annual figures of staff who have returned to duties after taking a period of absence due to psychological illness or stress between 2008-2018.

### Request 4 A - G

Please provide the figures in relation to the number of staff who have taken more than one leave of absence between 2008-2018 due to psychological illness/ stress.

Please break this down by:

- a. Specific department/command within the Force (including police staff)
- b. Rank
- c. Age
- d. Gender
- e. Time in the Force
- f. Reason for being signed off (Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Trauma)
- g. Reason for illness

### **Request 5**

Please provide individual annual figures of staff who have retired on health grounds related to stress/ psychological functioning between 2008-2018.

### **Request 6**

Please provide individual annual figures of staff who have been referred to your force support services for stress/ psychological functioning (e.g. counselling) between 2008-2018).

A. Please break this down by the number of individuals who attended the support service which they were referred to.

### **Answers**

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 12 of FOIA allows a public authority to refuse to deal with a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to either comply with the request in its entirety or confirm or deny whether the requested information is held. The estimate must be reasonable in the circumstances of the case. The 'appropriate limit' is currently £600 for central government and £450 for all other public authorities including PSNI. The relevant Regulations which define the appropriate limit for section 12 purposes are The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004 SI 2004 No 3244. These are known as the 'Fees Regulations' for brevity.

Regulation 4(3) of the Fees Regulations states that a public authority can take into account the costs it reasonably expects to incur in carrying out the following permitted activities in complying with the request:

- (i) determining whether the information is held;
- (ii) locating the information, or a document containing it;
- (iii) retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- (iv) extracting the information from a document containing it.

Under those regulations PSNI can calculate the time spent on each of these permitted activities at £25 per hour (thus if the activity(s) takes more than 18 hours PSNI will be in excess of the 'appropriate limit').

PSNI Human Resources Department have advised that the information requested is held in both an electronic and manual format. Due to the PSNI recording system to provide responses to request number 5, would require a manual trawl of a total of 607 files and to respond to request 6 a total of 800 files would also require manually trawled. Allowing a conservative estimate of 15 minutes per file would total 351 hours for these 2 requests alone which would grossly exceed the FOI legislative cost of 18 hours.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a

Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit: and it might be possible to provide responses for requests 1 – 3 (please note that point G is not held by PSNI) and requests 2 and 4, however 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 this 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.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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