



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-00133

**Keyword:** Human Resources

**Subject:** Sergeant Interviews

### 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

Having taken a good look through your published data it is clear that there are some MAJOR differences in outcomes for candidates who were interviewed by 2 panels in particular during the final stage of the most recent promotion process for those hoping to attain the rank of Sergeant.

I would request that you share with me your policy/guidance/ procedure/process to be followed by panel members. I am hopeful this will include what guidance was to be followed with regards 'prompting' candidates as I am aware of Candidates who were prompted and others who were not.

#### Answer

Please see below excerpt from the assessor guidance provided by the College of Policing to all panel members:

*Assessors should take some time during the planning of the interview to consider possible probing questions that may be helpful during the interview. Some examples of useful general probing questions have been provided later in the document. Assessors are encouraged to use appropriate probing questions to seek further information and evidence from candidates and test the thinking behind their evidence. Candidates will be informed that their response may be interrupted and assessors should feel confident to do so at different points within the candidate's response (e.g. if they are not answering the question or they have 'glossed over' an area which is relevant). 'Closed questions' may also be appropriate here to seek clarification from a candidate on a specific point. However, assessors should only ask questions that will allow candidates to demonstrate evidence of the personal behaviours and should adopt a style of questioning that is supportive and non-aggressive; it is the questions that should be challenging, not the style of questioning.*

#### Request 2

Can I also ask if there were agreed time limits for each question/each interview and if these were adhered to during the interviews in question?. (As I am aware of some lasting almost twice as long as others).

## Answer

Please see below excerpt from the assessor guidance provided by the College of Policing to all panel members:

*The assessors are responsible for managing the time and for ensuring that equal time is devoted to each question. Assessors should not allow the interview to under or overrun, each candidate should be given the same time and opportunity to demonstrate evidence of the personal behaviours being assessed.*

There is no record of any interviews that did not adhere to agreed time limits.

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.