



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2018-02495

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** 999 Calls

### 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.

### Request 1

In each of the last three years (up to and including 2017/18), how many 999 calls did the PSNI take where no unit was immediately available to respond

### Request 2

In each year, state the target time for a response, and how many calls/incidents fell outside this target. In each year, state the proportion of 999 calls as a percentage that fell outside the target.

### Request 3

State in each year the 10 longest times it took to respond to a 999 call.

### 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').

I contacted the relevant Branch to respond to your request Call Management Centre (CMC). The information although held on the call recording system Command and Control (C&C) would require a manual trawl of each call logged as there are no statistics routinely held to answer your request. Once a call is logged on the system, there are a number of factors to consider for the recorded arrival times i.e. call signs not providing updating specific arrival times at all or giving late arrival times or the incident being scheduled to a later time or date to be attended either due to call volume or by agreement with the caller. To provide an accurate response would require each and every call being examined and assessment carried out for the number of 999 calls received. To assist quantify the records required to search a dip sample of the system was carried out for 2016 and it returned a total of 87965 calls. Allowing a conservative estimate of 3 minutes per log to assess each of incidents would take well in excess of 4000 hours. Therefore to respond to your request would be well in excess of the FOI legislative cost of 18 hours.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act 'Duty to Assist', please note that PSNI aim to have police arrive at the relevant location in the shortest possible time, whilst taking full account of safety and security risks to our officers and the public. Where an officer has been unable to arrive at the scene of an emergency graded call within 15 minutes, CMC aim to contact the caller to provide an update on the status of their call, provide further advice and an estimated time of arrival (ETA) if available.

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; unfortunately due to the PSNI recording system on this occasion refinement of your request is not possible.

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.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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