



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-02635

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Media Request With Reference To The Roma Community

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 with regard to ongoing PSNI enquiries in this matter.

Request 1

Under the FOI Act I request any information provided to any journalist in respect of a PSNI investigation into the Romanian Roma Community Association (RRCANI) across the period 01 October – 18 October 2018.

Request 2

I also request any logged information detailing questions/queries that any journalist asked in respect of the Romanian Roma Community Association (RRCANI) across the period 01 October – 18 October 2018.

Answers

Please find below the information requested for the time period 1st October – 18th October 2018 regarding enquiries from media outlets regarding the Romanian Roma Community Association (RRCANI) :

- **Date : 08th October 2018 : 'Query from Media Outlet'**

"I'm looking for an update/status on a PSNI inquiry/investigation- not quite sure of the exact status – into alleged misdemeanours at the Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland earlier this year. I understand there may have been suggestions of possible trafficking and/or fraud involved at the outset. So, I just want to find out what was being inquired into/investigated. And, what is the current status of said inquiries/investigations."

- **PSNI response:**

Police are making enquiries into social media posts, which are ongoing. Other matters that had been brought to police earlier in the year were received and dealt with through appropriate channels.

- **Date 09th October 2018: 'Query from Media Outlet'**

"There have been ongoing allegations relating to RRCANI and allegations of wrongdoing. Would the police have the latest line about where this investigation stands?"

- **Date 09th October 2018: 'Query from Media Outlet'**

"I am going to send you some further queries on this, in a bid to get a clearer picture in terms of the PSNI involvement/actions since the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust raised concerns with the PSNI in May.

I know that the BHSCT informed the PSNI at a meeting on the 31st May about ROMA families claiming that they had been the victims of exploitation by RRCANI.

The claims raised some concerns at the BHSCT about possible trafficking and/or fraud.

Has there been any PSNI inquiry/investigation into trafficking at RRCANI

Has there been any PSNI inquiry/investigation into fraud at RRCANI

If not, why not?

If you feel it would be useful for someone to speak to me off the record, for guidance, please feel free to arrange this."

- **Date 10th October 2018: 'Query from Media Outlet'**

I'm looking for an update on the PSNI inquiry/investigation- not quite sure of the exact status – into alleged misdemeanours at the Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland earlier this year.

I understand there may have been suggestions of possible trafficking and/or fraud at the outset.

So, I just want to find out what was being inquired into/investigated.

And, what is the current status of said inquiries/investigations.

- **Date 16th October 2018: 'Query from Media Outlet'**

"Just for the absolute avoidance of doubt in terms of what I'm looking for, my query is separate from the PSNI Inquiries/Investigation into Social Media claims related to RRCANI. My query is specific to a meeting the Belfast Health and Social Services held with the PSNI Modern Day Slavery Unit and Economic Fraud Unit on the 31st May this year. The meeting came off the back of complaints the Trust had become aware of about potential fraud and criminal activity at RRCANI, and which resulted in the Trust removing its community health workers from RRCANI the previous week, over concerns about "governance, exploitation and community control."

- **PSNI response**

"Criminal Investigation Branch officers in Belfast are continuing to make enquiries into the contents of a number of social media posts and a number of posters which had been erected in public areas in South Belfast in August.

"Information brought to the attention of specialist fraud and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) officers during a meeting with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on 31 May have been addressed through the appropriate channels. No evidence of fraud or people trafficking was identified and no complaints have been made."

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.