



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-01057

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Use of Algorithms or Artificial Intelligence Software

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 and the decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information about the use of any algorithms or machine-learning systems by your police force. Specifically, I am asking the following: Is your force using any algorithms and/or artificial intelligence software at any point in the process of investigating, detecting, or preventing crime?

Answer

Yes.

Request 2

If Yes, please provide details:

- (i) Of the algorithms or artificial intelligence software you use;
- (ii) Of whether you use a commercial product or whether you have developed your own system;
- (iii) Of the purpose for which the algorithm and/or artificial intelligence software operates;
- (iv) Of the decisions the algorithm and/or artificial intelligence software is asked to make or assist;
- (v) Of the type, classification and amount of data that the algorithm and/or artificial intelligence software uses in the decision making process;
- (vi) Of the weight given by an officer or member of the police force to any decision reached by algorithm and/or artificial intelligence software when making an investigative, operational or resource-allocating decision;
- (vii) Of the process by which you inform an individual that they have been subject to a decision made or aided by an algorithm and/or artificial intelligence software?
- (viii) Of the process by which a member of the public can challenge a decision that has been made or aided by an algorithm and/or artificial intelligence

Answer

- (i) ROP (Reducing Offending in Partnership) Matrix on Niche. No artificial software, Niche runs the matrix for selection/deselection of nominals.
- (ii) Niche – a commercial product.
- (iii) The Niche matrix produces a list of nominals that are then reviewed and deemed

suitable/unsuitable for inclusion on the ROP programme.

(iv) As above

(v) The Niche matrix is run twice a year in April and October. It will produce a list of around 400 nominals across Northern Ireland from which nominals are selected to be involved in the ROP programme. Certain classification of offences, mostly acquisitive, are searched under and are weighted.

(vi) Albeit the matrix produces a list it is the staff at ROU that have the ultimate decision as to who are included. This is in collaboration with ROP partners i.e. Northern Ireland Prison Service/Youth Justice Agency/ Probation Service for Northern Ireland.

(vii) Inclusion on the ROP list and the programme is explained by the "owning officer" at the on-set of the programme and on re-selection or de-selection. Part of this conversation will involve the selection process.

(viii) The member may challenge the decision and the normal route would be via their legal representative. In conjunction with legal services a review/response will be returned. Reference to Niche/PSNI systems will be included.

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.psni.police.uk

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