

Keeping People Safe



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2022-00648

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Spit and Bite Guards

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1) (a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

#### Request 1

Has the PSNI stopped recording data in relation to disability? Particularly as the EQIA documentation on Spit and Bite Guards did hold statistics in relation to the number of people with a disability that Spit and Bite Guards have been used on. <https://www.psnipolice.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-policies-and-procedures/equality-diversity--good-relations/documents/stage-1-4-report-draft-amendments-v5-final-003-002-002.pdf>

#### Answer 1

No, PSNI does not record disability on either the Use of Force submission or NICHE Occurrence and Case Management System. The disability data reported in the (Equality Impact Assessment) EQIA consultation document was based on the subjective view of the reviewing officer based on the individual facts of each application where the definition of disability included subjects with drug or alcohol dependencies. Rationale will be provided within the final EQIA report in relation to this issue.

#### Request 2

Secondly I write to request updated figures in respect of: Broken down by age, how many times has a Spit and Bite Guard been used by the PSNI on a child under the age of 18 since their introduction in March 2020?

#### Answer 2

The table below shows the number of times that Spit and Bite Guards have been used on children under the age of 18 since their introduction in March 2020 until 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Age of Subject	Number of Applications
14	3
15	3
16	7
17	3

*\* Figures are provisional and subject to change.*

### **Request 3**

Broken down by religious background, what is the breakdown of use in relation to Spit and Bite Guards since their introduction in March 2020?

### **Answer 3**

The table below shows breakdown of religious background of individuals who have had a Spit and Bite Guard applied to them since their introduction in March 2020 until 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

<b>Faith / Religion</b>	<b>Number of Applications</b>
Roman Catholic	99
None	46
Protestant	45
Refused / Unknown	35
Other Christian	4
Other	2
Buddhist	1
Muslim	1

*\* Figures are provisional and subject to change. Figures have been gleaned from an operational police system and therefore may not be statistically significant.*

### **Request 4**

Broken down between those with a disability and those without, what is the breakdown of use in relation to Spit and Bite Guards since their introduction in March 2020?

### **Answer 4**

PSNI does not record disability on either the Use of Force submission or NICHE Occurrence and Case Management System.

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 Corporate Information Branch, 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 Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.police.uk).

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, 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', or use the ICO self-service portal available at [www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/](http://www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/)

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 their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psnj.police.uk](http://www.psnj.police.uk)

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