



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2022-01039

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Dog Attacks 2017-2021

### 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 does hold some information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We do not however hold information in relation to request numbers 1, 3, 4 or 5 below. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

### Request 1

Whether your police force records dog attacks as a separate offence?

### Request 3

The number of arrests made in relation to dog attacks by your force in each of the years from 2017 to 2021.

### Request 4

How many dangerous dogs were seized by your force in each of the years from 2017 to 2021?

### Request 5

How many dogs were destroyed in your force area each of the years from 2017 to 2021?

### Answers 1, 3, 4 & 5

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 does not apply to Northern Ireland, with the exception of S.8 which makes provision for corresponding legislation to be made here. That corresponding legislation is The Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and is enforced by district councils. Police do not have any powers conferred by this Order. Please see the links provided below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1991/2292/contents/> which also amends The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1983/764/contents>.

Statistics Branch has advised that offences within this legislation (Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991) are not included in PSNI crime statistics.

The Council Dog Warden is responsible for enforcing offences under the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 as amended to the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

Please see the following link in relation to statistics published by Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which includes a breakdown of dog attacks on persons including investigations, prosecutions and convictions.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/council-dog-summary-statistics>

## Request 2

The number of dog attacks recorded by your police force in each of the years from 2017 to 2021.

## Answer 2

PSNI do record statistics on a separate database and they are provided in the table below , however the data is incomplete for the following reasons:

- Due to a change in recording of the PSNI's central database in May 2019, statistics on the database the information for 2019 are incomplete
- Inputting the data for 2020 was suspended during the year in an attempt to update and complete statistics in 2021

<b>2017</b>	<b>565</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>512</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>173 (up to and including 31/05/2019)</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>35 (up to and including 30/06/2020)</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>466</b>

## Please Note

These figures are operational and therefore subject to change.

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.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.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.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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