

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2021-01228

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Body Worn Video Dog Handling

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 information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

Is BWV currently used by dog handlers within your force?

Answer

Yes

Request 2

When was it introduced and is it mandatory?

Answer

In 2016 and Guidance on use has evolved with the current guidance stating

WHEN TO USE BWV

4.1 BWV can be used to gather evidence across a wide range of operational situations.

The following are key issues;

Domestic abuse incidents should be recorded. Any Domestic Abuse incidents without a recording will require a reasoned explanation why this is so, which will need to be agreed by a supervisor and noted

Stop and Search encounters must be recorded in their entirety. Any Stop and Search incidents without a recording will require a reasoned explanation why this is so, which will need to be agreed by a supervisor and noted

Spit and Bite Guards. Body Worn Video must be used when applying Spit and Bite Guards outside the custody suite. Any encounters without a recording will require a reasoned explanation why this is so, which will need to be agreed by a supervisor and noted.

Use of Force. Officers must use BWV to capture any incident where it is reasonably foreseeable that the use of force may be necessary. The entirety of the incident should be recorded. Any Use of Force encounters without a recording will require a reasoned explanation why this is so, which will need to be agreed by a supervisor'.

Custody. BWV must be turned off before entering a Custody Suite. The custody suite is defined as the area inside the building which is covered by CCTV. The car park or vehicle dock are classed, in this instance, as outside the Custody Suite.

Whilst it is a matter of individual officer discretion regards when BWV might be used, there is an expectation the officer will use BWV to record (unless there are legal or operational reasons not to do so) in cases involving:

- Public order
- Traffic offences
- Arrests
- Searching premises/land/vehicles
- Critical incidents
- Use of force against persons or property,&;
- Giving a direction to an individual or group under any statutory power.

Request 3

Please confirm the number of police dog bite incidents involving members of the public (including suspects and detainees) in the following periods: 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2019-20, 2020-21.

Answer

2013/14 - Forms archived, unable to retrieve information.

2014/15 - Forms archived, unable to retrieve information.

2015/16 - 3

2016/17 - 11

2017/18 - 15

2018/19 - 4

2019/20 - 12

2020/21 - 12

Request 4

Please confirm the number of complaints made by the public regarding a police dog bite incident in the following periods: 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2019-20, 2020-21.

Answer

2013/14 - 3

2014/15 - 5

2015/16 - 0

2016/17 - 0

2017/18 - 1

2018/19 - 0

2019/20 - 1

2020/21 - 3

Please note: There is no data available for March 2020, or for November 2020 to March 2021. The Office for Police Ombudsman have the statutory responsibility for investigating complaints against police which are made directly and if you wish to obtain accurate figures you should submit an FOI to that body who provide figures to the PSNI.

Request 5

Please confirm the amount of money paid out in compensation to members of the public who have been bitten by a police dog in the following periods: 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2019-20, 2020-21.

Answer

We can advise the amount of compensation paid to members of the public who have been bitten by a police dog in the timeframe required is as follows –

2013/14 – Nil

2014/15 - £1,500

2015/16 – Nil

2016/17 - £3,500

2017/18 - £20,000

2018/19 – Nil

2019/20 – Nil

2020/21 – Nil

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.

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/

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

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