

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: FOI-2021-01860

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: Road Traffic Collisions in Northern Ireland

Request and Answer:

Your request for information below has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold the information you have requested however it is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the “appropriate costs limit” under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We have explained to you below that when PSNI estimates whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if certain conditions are met. In this case those conditions are met and complying with all of your requests would in our estimation exceed that appropriate limit set out in Regulation. We have explained this further below but also we followed the Information Commissioner’s Office guidance ‘*Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit*’ in relation to this request, which also provides further detail on the application of Section 12 (1) of the FOIA. This guidance is available on the ICO website at the following link:

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf

You requested the following information from PSNI:

Request 1

The most dangerous (All injury road traffic collision and fatal road traffic collisions) roads (top 12) in Northern Ireland according to the number of accidents in 2009, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Request 2

Brief details about the accidents, how many people died, how many cars involved, cause of the accident (speeding, overtaking etc). Answer Please see attached documents which show the breakdown of injury collisions and fatal collisions on the roads specified.

Request 3

DCU and fatal road traffic collisions in the years 2009, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 on the following roads:

Upper Newtownards road, East Belfast
Antrim road, North Belfast
Lisburn road, South Belfast
Ormeau Road, South Belfast
Andersonstown road West Belfast
Falls Road West Belfast
Springfield Road West Belfast
Westlink West Belfast
Saintfield Rd Castlereagh
Moirra Rd Lisburn
Hillsborough Rd Lisburn
Shore Rd Newtownabbey
Ballyhill Rd Antrim
Frosses Rd Balleymoney
Ballybogy rd Coleraine
Ballygawley rd Dungannon and s Tyrone
Belfast road North down
Belfast rd Newry and Moirne
Newry rd Newry and Moirne
Dublin rd Newry and moirne
Broad Rd, Limarvady

Request 4

The total number of road traffic accidents in northern Ireland involving a vehicle: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 12 of FOIA allows a public authority to refuse to deal with a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to either comply with the request in its entirety or confirm or deny whether the requested information is held. The estimate must be reasonable in the circumstances of the case. The 'appropriate limit' is currently £600 for central government and £450 for all other public authorities including PSNI. The relevant Regulations which define the appropriate limit for section 12 purposes are The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004 SI 2004 No 3244. These are known as the 'Fees Regulations' for brevity.

Regulation 4(3) of the Fees Regulations states that a public authority can take into account the costs it reasonably expects to incur in carrying out the following permitted activities in complying with the request:

- (i) determining whether the information is held;
- (ii) locating the information, or a document containing it;
- (iii) retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- (iv) extracting the information from a document containing it.

Under those regulations PSNI can calculate the time spent on each of these permitted activities at £25 per hour (thus if the activity(s) takes more than 18 hours PSNI will be in excess of the 'appropriate limit').

When a public authority is estimating whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if the conditions laid out in Regulation 5 of

the Fees Regulations can be satisfied. Those conditions require the requests to be:

- made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign;
- made for the same or similar information; and
- received by the public authority within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

Regulation 5(2) of the Fees Regulations requires that the requests which are to be aggregated relate “to any extent” to the same or similar information. This is quite a wide test but public authorities should still ensure that the requests meet this requirement.

Enquiries made in relation to your request have identified that retrieval of this information would exceed the 18 hour cost limit set under the FOI Act by the Secretary of State

In relation to request 1, PSNI can advise at present that this information is not held in a format that provides the information without manual intervention and a comprehensive search would need to be conducted to retrieve this information. This would involve a detailed mapping and data extraction exercise for each individual year which would take approximately 8 hours per individual dataset year equating to a total of 40 hours.

In relation to request 2, PSNI can advise at present that this would involve completing a collision history for each of the top 12 roads in each of the 5 calendar years specified. At approximately 30mins per collision history the total time would be 30 hours. Additional information regarding number of vehicles involved is not included in a standard collision history and may have to be extracted and included manually at an additional 15mins per collision history totalling 15 hours.

In relation to request 3, The list comprises 21 roads and the request has asked for details of collisions on these roads for the 5 calendar years specified. One data extract from the mapping system could cover each road for all years requested and then split across individual collision histories by year. At approximately 60mins per collision history covering all the years for one road the total estimated time to retrieve this information would be 21 hours.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

Advice and Assistance

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the ‘appropriate limit’. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, we have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit unfortunately in relation to requests 1,2 and 3 no refinement can be offered.

In relation to request 4, PSNI cannot provide the total number of road traffic accidents in Northern Ireland involving a vehicle however we could provide information on the number of injury involved collisions in Northern Ireland involving a vehicle for the years specified.

Please note that PSNI cannot provide details for the entirety of 2021 as data is currently only available for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st August 2021.

You may also find the below link useful in relation to Road Traffic Collision Statistics

<https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/road-traffic-collision-statistics/>

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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.psni.police.uk

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