

Keeping People Safe



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2020-02196

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Complaints Regarding PSNI Healthcare Professionals

### 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. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

#### Request 1

For the provision of the numbers of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and paramedics – who may variously be referred to as Forensic Medical Examiners or Forensic Medical Officers or Custody or Forensic Nurse Practitioners or Custody or Forensic Nurse Managers or Custody or Forensic Paramedics, and Clinical Directors or similar titles) who have undertaken forensic medical and healthcare roles within police custody suites (as employees or under contracts of service) for the Police Service of Northern Ireland (or relevant employing authority, company, body or organisation) in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (to date)?

#### Answer

The Number of Forensic Medical Officers (FMOs) employed in the years 2016-2020 are as follows:

2016 - not recorded

2017 - 56

2018 - 57

2019 - 51

2020 - 49

#### Request 2A

For provision of the numbers of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and paramedics – who may variously be referred to as Forensic Medical Examiners or Forensic Medical Officers or Custody or Forensic Nurse Practitioners or Custody or Forensic Nurse Managers or Custody or Forensic Paramedics, and Clinical Directors or similar titles) working for the Police Service of Northern Ireland (or relevant employing authority, company, body or organisation) who have had complaints made against them in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (to date)?

#### Answer

The number of FMOs who have had complaints made against them in the years 2016-2020 are as follows:

2016 - 5  
 2017 - 10  
 2018 - 1  
 2019 - 2  
 2020 - 3

**Request 2B**

and the nature of those complaints?

**Answer**

The following complaints were recorded:

2016 (5)	2017 (10)	2018 (1)	2019 (2)	2020 (3)
Complaint Reason	Complaint Reason	Complaint Reason	Complaint Reason	Complaint Reason
Doctor refused to give painkillers while in custody	Doctors did not take medication and treatment seriously resulting in extended time in custody	Denied access to medical treatment	Incorrect medication given	Doctor verbally aggressive
Denied Medication	Doctor gave him butterfly/paper stitches after insisting he was allergic		Doctor prescribed medication to her son that should not have been prescribed	Doctor did nothing about mental health issues
FMO had spoken to the father re meds believes this is wrong	Doctor checked him over and ignored high blood pressure			Doctor should have had proper communication and referred his son to hospital over mental health matters
Claims the FMO was discriminatory against him	Doctor did not recommend him to be taken to hospital initially, then after he collapsed he was taken to Royal Victoria Hospital			
Denied medication	Doctor did not give sufficient medical attention			
	Doctor gave insufficient medical attention which lead to person staying in custody for longer			
	Mistreatment from FMO			
	Doctor did not refer to hospital after detained person displaying mental health problems			
	Doctor did not prescribe medication for diabetes			
	Delay in providing medication			

### Request 3 A

For provision of the numbers of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and paramedics – who may variously be referred to as Forensic Medical Examiners or Forensic Medical Officers or Custody or Forensic Nurse Practitioners or Custody or Forensic Nurse Managers or Custody or Forensic Paramedics, and Clinical Directors or similar titles) who have had their contracts of service or employment terminated by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (or relevant employing authority, company, body or organisation) in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (to date)

### Request 3B

and the reasons for each termination?

### Answer to Request 3A and 3B

Year	Number of terminations	Reason for termination
2016	0	
2017	2	Vetting revoked
2018	0	
2019	1	Vetting Revoked
2020	1	Vetting Revoked

### Request 4A

For provision of the numbers of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and paramedics – who may variously be referred to as Forensic Medical Examiners or Forensic Medical Officers or Custody or Forensic Nurse Practitioners or Custody or Forensic Nurse Managers or Custody or Forensic Paramedics, and Clinical Directors or similar titles) who have had their contracts of service of employment not renewed at the time of renewal by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (or relevant employing authority, company, body or organisation) in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (to date)?

### Request 4B

and the reasons for each non-renewal?

### Answer to 4A and 4B

Year	Number and reasons for non-renewal of contract
2016	3 Resigned; 1 Retired; 2 Did not renew their contract
2017	6 Resigned; 2 Retired, 2 Did not renew their contract
2018	2 Resigned; 1 Retired
2019	0
2020	0

### Request 5

For provision of copies of any disciplinary and dispute processes utilised by the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the management of complaints about healthcare professionals working in the police custodial and forensic medical services settings?

### Answer

Please find under relevant extract from PSNI FMO Contract document:

#### ***Termination of events by default***

*The PSNI reserves the right to suspend services pending an investigation into any issue, complaint or concern or any other matter until such times as the*

*investigation has been completed. During this time, payment arrangements will be in accordance with paragraph 12.4.*

*The FMO will inform his AFMO, AFMO Forum and ROSC (through the Change of Circumstances Declaration form) if he is subject to a complaint or an investigation and the result of such investigation by his designated body.*

*In accordance with The Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, PSNI will inform the FMO's Responsible Officer if the FMO has not completed annual appraisals, or is subject to a complaint or investigation. The FMO is responsible for advising PSNI of any complaints/investigations relating to him that the PSNI may not be aware of e.g. other non PSNI work commitments. PSNI should be notified with immediate effect.*

*In consultation with the AFMO Forum the PSNI may terminate the Engagement by giving one months' notice in the terms set out in clause 2.1.2 of this contract but with immediate effect if the FMO:*

- 8.4.1 Is guilty of gross misconduct or commits any serious or repeated or continued material breach of his obligations to the FMO.*
- 8.4.2 Becomes bankrupt or makes any arrangement or composition with or for the benefit of his creditors.*
- 8.4.3 Is convicted of any criminal offence (other than an offence under any road traffic legislation in the United Kingdom or elsewhere for which a fine or non-custodial penalty is imposed) which involves dishonesty or which the PSNI reasonably considers is incompatible with the Engagement.*
- 8.4.4 Becomes of unsound mind or a patient under any statute relating to mental health.*
- 8.4.5 Fails in the opinion of the PSNI and/or his Responsible Officer (but only where such failure can be reasonably established) to perform his duties to a satisfactory standard.*
- 8.4.6 Fails to comply with The Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010; and obtains a negative recommendation from their Responsible Officer.*
- 8.4.7 Fails to secure PSNI vetting; and is therefore unable to enter the PSNI estate and/or conduct duties as an FMO.*
- 8.4.8 Does anything which brings the PSNI into serious disrepute.*
- 8.4.9 Acts in a way which is materially adverse to the interests of the PSNI.*
- 8.4.10 Is guilty of a serious breach of the rules and regulations as amended*

*from time to time of any regulatory authority relevant to the PSNI.*

- 8.4.11 *Is in receipt of a sanction by the General Medical Council, which is found by PSNI to be materially adverse to the interests of PSNI and/or brings PSNI into serious disrepute.*
- 8.4.12 *Fails to provide PSNI with information/documentation required in ensuring clinical governance is upheld.*
- 8.4.13 *Any reasonable delay by the PSNI in exercising such right to terminate after the matter in question comes to the attention of PSNI will not constitute a waiver of it.*

#### **Request 6 A**

For provision of the numbers of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and paramedics – who may variously be referred to as Forensic Medical Examiners or Forensic Medical Officers or Custody or Forensic Nurse Practitioners or Custody or Forensic Nurse Managers or Custody or Forensic Paramedics, and Clinical Directors or similar titles) who have been referred to their respective professional bodies (namely the General Medical Council, the Nursing & Midwifery Council, and the Health & Care Professions Council) by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (or relevant employing authority, company, body or organisation) in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (to date)?

#### **Request 6B**

and the reasons for each referral?

#### **Answer to 6A and 6B**

No referrals have been made in respect of FMOs in the time period requested.

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 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.psnj.police.uk](http://www.psnj.police.uk)

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

