

Keeping People Safe



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** FOI-2021-00402

**Keyword:** Complaints/Discipline

**Subject:** Substance Misuse Tests

### 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 A – D

Please tell me, with reference to the 2019/20 financial year, the number of:

- a) Substance misuse tests undertaken at random by your force's officers?
- b) Substance misuse tests administered with cause by your force's officers?
- c) Substance misuse tests given on a pre-employment basis?
- d) The number of positive tests to number of tests undertaken in total?

#### Answers 1 A – D

During the financial year 2019/20 PSNI can advise of the following responses:

- a) A total of 140 police officers/police staff have been subject to 'random' substance misuse tests.
- b) A total of 9 police officers/police staff subject to 'with cause' substance misuse tests.
- c) A total of 1031 substance misuse tests have been carried out for 'Pre-employment purposes'.
- d) A total of 12 of substance misuse tests had positive results.

#### Request 2 A – C

Please break down 1d (the number of positive tests) by:

- a) The drug detected (e.g. cannabis, cocaine)?
- b) The disciplinary measures resulting (e.g. final warning, dismissed, job offer withdrawn)?
- c) Whether the substance misuse test was given at random, with cause or on a pre-employment

basis?

## **Answers 2 A- C**

During the financial year 2019/20 PSNI can advise of the following responses with regards to the 12 positive substance misuse tests:

However PSNI consider this information to be low level and identifiable. Therefore to mitigate the risk of identification whilst we have provided the data, for these reasons it has been provided in an uncorrelated format.

a) The following drugs detected were: Cannabis, Cocaine, Ecstasy, Tramadol and Diazepam. The breakdown is as follows: 4, 3, 2, 2 and 1.

b) Police staff members were dismissed. PSNI applicants were removed from the recruitment process.

c) Tests were carried out either 'with cause' or for 'pre-employment purposes'.

The breakdown for responses to request numbers 2 B and 2 C are as follows: a total 3 and a total of 9.

Please note: PSNI are unable to differentiate between tests relating to officers, and tests relating to staff, other than as provided in response to request number 2 B and pre-employment checks which only relate to officers.

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.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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