

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2020-00630

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Vagrancy Act 1824

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.

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information regarding the Vagrancy Act 1824 (or its equivalent(s) in Northern Ireland), from 2017-2019

Request 1

Please provide the number of arrests made by your police force under section three of the Vagrancy Act 1824 in the financial years ranging from 2017-18, to 2018-2019.

I am not seeking information on the prostitution and indecency clauses of Section 3; accordingly, the police force should use the following Section 3 offences if possible:

- Wandering abroad to beg or gather alms
- Placing self in public place to beg
- Procuring child to beg
- Person other than prostitute being idle and disorderly
- Causing child to beg
- Collecting alms or endeavouring to procure charitable contribution by false pretence
- Wandering abroad and exposing wound or deformity to obtain alms
- Persistently beg
- Sleeping out

Clarification sought

The Vagrancy Act 1824 does not apply in Northern Ireland. The PSNI record owner has advised they may be able to search for the following offences;

CAUSING CHILD TO BEG, Section 24(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968

CAUSING YOUNG PERSON TO BEG, no legislation details available

PROCURING CHILD TO BEG, no legislation details available

PROCURING YOUNG PERSON TO BEG, no legislation details available

BEGGING, Section 3 of the Vagrancy (Ireland) Act 1847

UNLAWFUL CHARITABLE COLLECTION, Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824 as amended by the Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1935

Can you advise if you would like me to proceed using the above offences?

Clarification received

Yes, please proceed with those listed offences.

Answer

For the financial year 2017/18 there a total of 37 arrests and 2018/19 a total 60 arrests.

Please note this refers to a total of 76 persons. Please note an individual may have been arrested on more than one occasion.

Request 2

Of these arrests, please provide the number of individuals who: were listed as having 'NFA'.

Answer

A total of 18 individuals were listed as having No fixed Abode. ('NFA').

Request 3

Were subsequently charged with an offence.

Answer

Please see in the table below the number of arrests where the arrested person was subsequently charged for the offence of Begging/Unlawful charitable collection (1 April 2017 - 31 March 2019).

Financial Year	Total Number
2017/18	25
2018/19	44

Please note there were no arrests/charges for offences of causing child or young person to beg.

Request 4

Were issued a fine.

Request 5

Please provide the amount of each fine given.

Answers

Please see the information provided in the table below which provides the number of fines from the arrest data:

Financial Year	Fine Details
2017/18	Fine £100, Offender Levy £15
2017/18	FINE £75, Offender Levy £15
2017/18	FINE £75, Offender Levy £15
2017/18	FINE £200, Offender Levy £15
2017/18	FINE £40, Offender Levy £15
2017/18	FINE £150, Offender Levy £15
2018/19	FINE £100, Offender Levy £15
2018/19	FINE £50
2018/19	FINE £20, Offender Levy £15
2018/19	FINE £1
2018/19	FINE £150

2018/19	FINE £100
2018/19	FINE £100
2018/19	FINE £75, Offender Levy £15
2018/19	FINE £200

Notes

The data has been extracted where a person has been arrested and processed in police custody for the offence of begging, unlawful charitable collection or causing a child/young person to beg, this will not include persons arrested and street bailed or those dealt with by other means e/g. community resolution, penalty notice of disorder etc. will not be included in the figures.

Data extracted 13th March 2020.

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 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

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