



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2021-00731

**Keyword:** Complaints/Discipline

**Subject:** Complaints by Female Officers And Staff

### 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

Please can you tell me how many formal complaints female PSNI officers have made regarding sexual discrimination or sexual harassment at work over the last three years (to the present day)?

For each complaint, please can you give me:

- a) details about / a description of the complaint
- b) the outcome of the complaint

If you can also give the following info, please do, but if this will take you over the cost threshold or involve personal information, please leave it out:

- c) the current employment status of the officer(s) being complained about including if they are suspended
- d) the current employment status of the complainant

### Clarification from Requester

To clarify I mean complaints made by female PSNI police officers and staff against PSNI police officers and staff. I also meant the three years 23 March 2018 to 23 March 2021.

### Answer

This response returns complaints lodged from both officers and staff within the dates requested. Returns reflect complaints logged by the individuals who categorised their Harassment complaint as Gender related, or their Grievance complaint as Sexual Discrimination. There have been a total of 15 cases in the time period requested.

### a) details about / a description of the complaint

Bullying and Harassment based on gender – 6

Grievance (based on Sexual discrimination/marital discrimination) – 9

Summary case details

Perceived Bullying and Harassment behaviour due to complainant being a single mother
Perceived victimisation following a previous complaint
Perceived chauvinistic comments, verbal abuse and intimidating behaviour
Perceived shouting and threatening behaviour
Perceived different, demoralising, humiliating behaviour because she is a female
Perceived series of gender based related inappropriate verbal interactions and performance management decisions. Negative behaviours, hostile working environment, inaction in linked to pregnancy related issues.
Perceived preferential treatment given to men relating to postings
Breach of confidentiality/privacy - gender, disability (protected characteristics).
Inappropriate email sent out to Department
Ignored by another female officer
Pregnancy related complaint linked to Health and Safety concerns
Not selected to attend course due to gender
Inappropriate/ unprofessional behaviour highlighted
Inappropriate/ unprofessional behaviour highlighted
Dependents related complaint

**b) the outcome of the complaint**

Not upheld - no further action	Advice & guidance	Upheld	Resolved	Mediation
11	1	1	1	1

**c) the current employment status of the officer(s) being complained about including if they are suspended**

Bullying and Harassment

Active – 3  
 Leaver – 3

Grievance

Active – 5  
 No person named - 4

Not all grievance submissions have a named person, often a grievance is linked to misapplication of a process/policy rather than wrongdoing by a person. During complaint investigations of harassment or grievance, it would not be common practice to suspend staff/officers during related investigation. If there are welfare concerns temporary repositioning may be considered. Then, if further discipline concerns are to be explored further repositioning or suspension would be addressed.

**d) the current employment status of the complainant**

Bullying and Harassment

Active – 6

Grievance

Active – 8  
 Leaver - 1

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, and 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.