



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2021-00813

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Incidents Of Domestic Violence

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

Please can you tell me how many incidents of domestic violence were reported to you from March 23rd 2020 (the start of the first national lockdown) to March 23rd 2021?

Request 2

How does this compare to the same period last year - March 23rd 2019 to March 23rd 2020?

Answer

Please see the table below, which is based on all recorded domestic abuse incidents between the 23rd March 2019 and 22nd March 2021:-

	23/3/2019 – 22/3/2020	23/3/2020 – 22/3/2021
Domestic Abuse Incidents	31,819	31,177

Please note:

For more information on domestic abuse incidents since Covid-19 lockdown restrictions were introduced, please see section 5 of the latest Domestic Abuse Bulletin Update to 31st March 2021, which can be found via the following link: <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/2020-21/q4/domestic-abuse-bulletin-mar-21.pdf>

Definition: Domestic Abuse

The PSNI has adopted the definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Northern Ireland Government Strategy ‘Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland’ as: ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’.

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

- (a) 'Incident' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;
- (b) 'Family members' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.
- (c) 'Intimate partners' means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples.

What is a domestic abuse incident or domestic abuse crime as recorded by the police?

Police recorded crime data is a victim oriented approach to crime recording. A crime will be recorded as having a domestic abuse motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a crime being recorded. Where crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

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.psni.police.uk

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