

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2021-00880

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Police Domestic Abuse Allegations

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 each of the past five financial years, how many allegations of domestic abuse were made against officers and staff from your force? Please break the figures down by financial year as follows:

- a) 2016/17
- b) 2017/18
- c) 2018/19
- d) 2019/20
- e) 2020/21 (if data is incomplete for this year, please include data up to the most recent available point).

Answer

The following number of domestic abuse allegations were made against police officers during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17 - 15
- b) 2017/18 - 6
- c) 2018/19 - 18
- d) 2019/20 - 7
- e) 2020/21 - 9

Request 2

For each of the past five financial years, how many of these allegations...

- i) Resulted in disciplinary action being taken against the accused officer or staff member
- ii) Resulted in the accused officer or staff member having a misconduct or gross misconduct hearing
- iii) Resulted in the accused officer or staff member being dismissed
- iv) Resulted in criminal action being taken against the accused officer or staff member
- v) Resulted in the accused officer or staff member being prosecuted

Please break the figures down by financial year as follows:

- a) 2016/17
- b) 2017/18
- c) 2018/19
- d) 2019/20
- e) 2020/21 (if data is incomplete for this year, please include data up to the most recent available point).

The government's definition of domestic abuse is: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group."

Answer

i) Disciplinary action was taken against officers in the following number of domestic abuse cases during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17 - 7
- b) 2017/18 - 1
- c) 2018/19 - 5
- d) 2019/20 - 1
- e) 2020/21 - 1

ii) Officers attended a misconduct of gross misconduct hearing in the following number of domestic abuse cases during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17 -1
- b) 2017/18 - 0
- c) 2018/19 -1
- d) 2019/20 - 0
- e) 2020/21 - 0

iii) The following number of officers were dismissed for domestic abuse cases during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17 -1
- b) 2017/18 - 0
- c) 2018/19 -1
- d) 2019/20 - 0
- e) 2020/21 - 0

iv). Criminal action was taken against the following number of officers for domestic abuse cases during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17 -1
- b) 2017/18 - 0
- c) 2018/19 - 1
- d) 2019/20 - 0
- e) 2020/21 - 0

v). The following number of officers were prosecuted for domestic abuse cases during the past 5 years:

- a) 2016/17- 1
- b) 2017/18 - 0
- c) 2018/19 - 2
- d) 2019/20 - 0
- e) 2020/21 - 1

Please note

In some cases the investigation may not yet have been brought to conclusion, and may yet result in a misconduct outcome or criminal conviction.

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.