

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2021-01098

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Assault Allegations Against Officers

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

How many police officers have had allegations of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault made against them in internal matters within their force in each of the following financial years:

- a.2016-17
- b.2017-18
- c.2018-19
- d.2019-20
- e.2020-21

Answer

The following number of officers have subject to allegations of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault (investigated internally):

- 2016/17 - 1
- 2017/18 - 5
- 2018/19 - 7
- 2019/20 - 13
- 2020/21 - 10

Request 2

Of these allegations how many of these cases have led to misconduct hearings or misconduct disciplinary in each of the following financial years?

- a.2016-17
- b.2017-18
- c.2018-19
- d.2019-20
- e.2020-21

Answer

The following number of cases have led to a misconduct hearing, or disciplinary outcome (formal or informal):

2016/17 – 0
2017/18 – 1
2018/19 – 3
2019/20 – 1
2020/21 - 2

In the above information, each case relates to one officer.

Request 3

How many of these officers were dismissed in the misconduct hearings/disciplinary with regards to the allegations in the following financial years?

- a.2016-17
- b.2017-18
- c.2018-19
- d.2019-20
- e.2020-21

Answer

The following number of officers were dismissed relating to the above information:

2016/17 - 0
2017/18 - 0
2018/19 - 2
2019/20 - 0
2020/21 - 0

Request 4

How many of these officers were reprimanded or given warnings but were not dismissed in the financial years?

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

Request 5

Were any of these cases progressed to the criminal court and if so how many in the financial years:

- a.2016-17
- b.2017-18
- c.2018-19
- d.2019-20
- e.2020-21

Answer

The following number of cases progressed to criminal court:

2016/17 - 1
2017/18 - 1
2018/19 - 0
2019/20 - 1
2020/21 - 0

In the above information each case relates to one officer. It should be noted that there are still a number of cases ongoing from these years, and which may yet progress to criminal court.

Request 6

How many internal misconduct/disciplinary hearings involving officers accused of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault were subject to reporting restrictions in the financial years:

- a.2016-17
- b.2017-18
- c.2018-19
- d.2019-20
- e.2020-21

Answer

There is no policy regarding reporting misconduct/disciplinary hearings. The results of misconduct/disciplinary hearings are not publically reported regardless of the nature of the allegation. Current discipline regulations (Police (Conduct) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016) do not legislate for public reporting.

Request 7

What is your policy on reporting restrictions for misconduct/disciplinary hearings for your officers who are accused of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault?

Answer

There is no policy regarding reporting misconduct/disciplinary hearings. The results of misconduct/disciplinary hearings are not publically reported regardless of the nature of the allegation. Current discipline regulations (Police (Conduct) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016) do not legislate for public reporting.

Request 8

What is your policy for victims discussing misconduct hearings when a case is been heard. Are victims prohibited from speaking about misconduct trials to other parties after the hearing is concluded including when the officer is dismissed / suspended from their roles?

Answer

There is no policy regarding this matter. However any discussion of by any party (witness, panel etc.) regarding a misconduct hearing may be seen as a breach of the Code Of Ethics (Article 3 Privacy and Confidentiality).

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.