



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2020-01220

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Drug-related Diversion Schemes

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.

You have asked the PSNI the following

I am requesting information on the operation of drug related diversion schemes being run by your constabulary, or third party schemes that involve partnership working with the police. I appreciate that this information will be recorded differently across all the different authorities receiving this request, and may not be readily available in the format, so I've further described the information I'd like to receive below. I would be happy to discuss ways to tailor my request if what I've asked for is too cumbersome or vague or simply doesn't exist in the way that I've asked for it. If you are unsure whether a scheme fits the criteria, please include it and I can judge whether or not it is relevant to my research.

Request 1

A list of all the drug-related diversion schemes currently being used by your constabulary

Request 2

A summary description of what each scheme does and how they work. Hopefully this will be present in a pre-existing document rather than having to be a newly written summary, but if so it does not need to be particularly long.

Request 3

The number of people going through each scheme in the last year. Preferably this would be the financial year 2019/20, but please note if you can only provide a calendar year or the most recent 12 month period.

Answer for Requests 1 to 3

Craigavon & Armagh Area - In relation to Juveniles – there is a Drug / Alcohol Scheme that is run by the Youth Justice Agency (YJA). This is usually for those young people who are eligible for a Community Resolution Notice (CRN) for either offence and they are all offered this course as a proviso for receiving the CRN. In relation to numbers, Craigavon & Armagh Area made 79 referrals in total from January 2019 to December 2019 for both Drugs and alcohol referrals.

G District (Fermanagh & Omagh) - In normal restriction times PSNI run two courses in G District in relation to drugs and alcohol. One is a youth course which is usually every 6/8 weeks. Referrals are generally used as a method to complete CRNs although referrals are taken without them. Both parents and the young people attend and are then separated for separate presentations. Police present to the young people and Youth Justice present to the parents. The second course is similar in idea only is for adults only. It is run every four weeks. It is jointly presented by police and ASCERT. Both are voluntary, funded by Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP). 124 adults attended and 37 young people attended in the 12 month period March 2019 to March 2020. This may not be 100 % accurate as some people fail to attend on their first date and are given a second opportunity and will therefore be on this list twice.

B & C Districts (Lisburn/Castlereagh and Ards & North Down) - The Community Resolution Notice Drugs Education Scheme ran across B and C Districts from June 2019 – February 2020. It was paused in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic as the scheme involved classroom education sessions. The scheme will be re-launched when it is safe to do so taking into consideration the relevant legislation. 97 people had completed the CRN Drugs Education Scheme between June 2019 and Feb 2020. The CRN Drugs Education Scheme's education sessions were delivered by a third party provider – Ascertainment

D District (Newry, Mourne and Down) - The Education Authority has previously run programmes. Referrals can be made to their hub and other non-statutory agencies can provide assistance. The Magnet Centre in Newry and Community Restorative Justice has also run schemes. Ascertainment has run a number of programmes however their funding was pulled by the Trust so there is nothing ongoing with them in this area at the moment. Youth Diversion Officers (YDO's) have also liaised with the Youth Justice Agency who will provide programmes via the CRN scheme or the children's diversion forum.

Carrickfergus & Larne Area - YDOs refer Young People who are detected by Police of being in possession of drugs (CRN eligibility criteria applies) to the Youth Justice Agency for a drug education awareness session which is stipulated as the resolution for issue of a Community Resolution Notice. Year To Date there have been approximately 12 referrals to YJA, In 2019 there were approximately 43 referrals to YJA

Schools Officers in Carrickfergus and Larne deliver Alcohol and Drug education sessions.

Request 4

A document outlining the scope of the scheme - ideally I would like to see the most recent document that outlines the scheme or its efficacy. Where there are many such reports on a particular scheme, I would be happy with just the most recent – but feel free to send more.

Answer

The PSNI do not have any documents outlining the scope of this scheme.

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.