



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-01394

Keyword: Organisational Information Police/Staff Misconduct and Complaints

Subject: Domestic Violence Allegations Against Serving PSNI Officers

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered and we apologise for the delay in reverting to you. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('FOIA') we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland ('PSNI') does hold information to which your requests relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the information you have sought. We have also provided links to the various Service Instructions and Codes of Ethics which we hope are of assistance to you.

Request 1

Does the PSNI have a formal policy in relation to the possible suspension or disciplining of officers who are subject to domestic violence allegations? If so, what is the policy?

Answer

The PSNI investigates all allegations of domestic violence in accordance with Service Instruction 12/17 'Domestic Abuse'. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/advice--information/our-publications/policies-and-service-procedures/domestic-abuse-190418.pdf>.

Police officers who face allegations of domestic violence will be subject to criminal and misconduct investigations. Decisions on possible duty restrictions will be considered dependent upon the facts and circumstances of the case. All decisions on whether to suspend an officer from duty are made in line with the Police (Conduct) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Request 2

Does the PSNI require officers to report to its professional standards division if an allegation has been made against them of domestic violence? If so, how is it enforced and what sanction is there if officers do not report an allegation?

Answer

All PSNI officers are required under Article 7.4 of the Code of Ethics to report any legal proceedings initiated against them, whether in relation to a criminal offence such as a motoring offence, or a civil action. The Code of Ethics is issued under section 52 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and revised in 2008 is available at the following link:

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/psni-code-ethics>

Failure to do so could result in misconduct proceedings being initiated against that officer in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice referenced above.

Request 3

How many PSNI officers are currently subject to allegations that they committed domestic violence?

Answer

There are currently 21 PSNI officers under investigation in relation to allegations of domestic violence.

Request 4

Are officers who are subject to domestic violence allegations suspended?

Answer

Officers subject to allegations of domestic violence may be suspended or repositioned to alternate duties. Decisions on an officer's duty status will be taken on a case by case basis, considering all the relevant facts and circumstances. All decisions on whether to suspend an officer from duty are made in line with the Police (Conduct) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Request 5

How many PSNI officers who are currently subject to domestic violence allegations continuing to work for the service?

Answer

All of the 21 PSNI officers currently under investigation for allegations of domestic violence continue to be employed by the PSNI. Please note investigations will be at different stages and some of those officers are suspended – see Request 6 below.

Request 6

How many PSNI officers who are currently subject to domestic violence allegations at present suspended? For how long have they been suspended?

Answer

Of the 21 PSNI officers currently under investigation for allegations of domestic violence, 5 are suspended from duty. Please see below table which outlines the period of time they have been suspended for. Please note PSNI have banded this information as we consider specific times may lead to an identification of an officer and attract the exemption at section 40 (2) of the FOIA in relation to the personal data of those individuals.

0-1 year	2 officers
1 year – 2 years	3 officers

Seven officers are also repositioned to alternate duties in relation to allegations of domestic violence.

Request 7

Does the PSNI have a policy in relation to officers who have been accused of domestic violence against a fellow officer? Does this involve ensuring the two officers do not serve together? If so, which officer is moved?

Answer

There is no specific PSNI policy in relation to allegations of domestic violence between serving officers. Decisions around duty adjustments will be made based upon the individual circumstances of the case. The PSNI investigates all allegations of domestic violence in accordance with Service Instruction 12/17 'Domestic Abuse' <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/advice--information/our-publications/policies-and-service-procedures/domestic-abuse-190418.pdf>.

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.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, 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', or use the ICO self-service portal available at www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/

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 their 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.