



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: FOI-2020-01632

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: A1 Dual Carriageway Accident Statistics

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 some information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We further consider some information you seek in relation to the causation factor at individual collision level is exempt by virtue of section 40(2) of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

Request

As per a previous request, RPS have been appointed by DFI to progress the A1 Junctions Phase 2 road scheme. This will involve the closure of the gaps in the central median and the construction of 4 new junctions between Sprucefield and Loughbrickland on the A1 Northern Ireland. Therefore we would be interested in road accident data from 00.00am on 01 Jan 2010 to 00.00am on 01 Jan 2017 containing the information listed below, between the Hillsborough Roundabout and the end of the Grovehill Road southbound merge lane just at the northern end of the lake at Loughbrickland on the A1.

- date
- time
- road name/ location Hillsborough , Banbridge, Dromore etc
- position - co ordinate

- severity slight - serious- fatal

- No of casualties associated with severity/ accident

- If the vehicle left the carriageway i.e. crossed the central reserve/ stopped in the central reserve

- Causation Factor

- Vehicle Type

Answer

Please see attached excel spreadsheet labelled 'A1 Dual Carriageway Accident Statistics'. This contains four tabs.

For your information please note collision history requests from organisations contracted on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) roads service, can be made directly to DFI.

DFI hold PSNI data under an information sharing agreement for this purpose, and can provide the information directly to contractors on request.

The PSNI Statistics Branch advises that they only produce collision and casualty information in relation to collisions, in which an injury occurred and which was reported to Police.

Information on whether a vehicle was left in the carriageway is not collected in all collision circumstances.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not provide the causation factor at an individual collision level. This is due to the sensitive nature of the information combined with the risk of identification of individuals. Please see an explanation below as to why this information is exempt.

However a table has been provided which lists the causation factors for all collisions during the requested time period.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered are listed below:

Section 40(2)(a)(b) by virtue of Section 40(3)(A)(a) - Personal Information – Information constitutes personal data and disclosure would contravene any of the Data Protection principles

The full text of exemptions can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website www.ico.org.uk.

Section 40 (2) of the FOIA is an absolute exemption which means there is no requirement on PSNI to consider whether there is a public interest in disclosure. It is an interface exemption and we must consider whether release of the information would breach the General Data Protection Regulations ('GDPR') or the Data Protection Act 2018 ('DPA') Third party personal information constitutes 'personal data' under the GDPR (Article 4) and DPA (Part 1 s.3).

Under the Freedom of Information Act, PSNI must consider if information can be released into the public domain. We have therefore considered whether the disclosure of this personal data is subject to the exemption at Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by virtue of s40 (3)(A)(a). As this information is 'personal data', PSNI considered whether disclosure would contravene any of the six data protection principles contained within the GDPR or DPA.

The six data protection principles within the Data Protection Act are principles of good information handling standards which PSNI must comply with in relation to how it handles personal information, including deciding whether to disclose it or not. In particular the first principle requires personal data

to be processed 'fairly and lawfully'. In considering whether it is 'fair' to individuals to release this type of information about them, PSNI considered the likely expectations of those individuals and the nature of the information involved. It is unlikely that it would be within the expectations of these individuals that this type of information would be released into the public domain. Therefore disclosure would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as it would be 'unfair' to those individuals to release it. This information is therefore exempt under section 40 (2) of the FOIA as it contravenes data protection legislation to release it and PSNI has made the decision to withhold that information.

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.