

Keeping People Safe



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** FOI-2021-01665

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** Children In Police Custody Awaiting Mental Health Treatment

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act. We 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.

### Request

Please can you tell me how many children under the age of 18 have spent time in police custody over the past five years while awaiting mental health treatment. Please give a total number for each year and please state the age of the child, how long they spent in custody and what the outcome was i.e. charged, released without charge, receiving treatment

In terms of context, police custody is deemed a place of safety but PSNI work continually to ensure use of custody as a place of safety is minimal.

### Answer

Year	Number Detained	Age	Time Spent in Custody
2016	1	14	12 hours
2017	0		
2018	2	17	9 & 17 hours
2019	1	17	9 hours
2020	0		
2021	3	17,17 & 16	22, 35 & 18 hours

*Please note the following caveats which apply to these figures:*

These figures indicate the number of persons detained and brought into custody under Article 130 of the Mental Health Order. If they were detained and brought elsewhere (e.g. hospital) that is not included. If they were arrested for an alleged crime and it was in custody that mental health issues

became apparent then this will not be included in the figures. None of those detained solely under Art 130 would have been charged as it is not an offence. Two of those arrested were later charged for other offences subsequent to being arrested under Art 130.

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. 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.

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](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.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/](http://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.psnj.police.uk](http://www.psnj.police.uk)

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.