



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2020-02000

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Use Of Force

### 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

- a. Please provide the total number of times restraint techniques were used by officers in your force – i.e. the number of restraints reported by individual officers in use of force forms – for each of the past two years April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020.
- b. For each year, please provide totals for each ethnicity of the subject as perceived and provided by officers in use of force forms - i.e. the total number of white, black, Asian, or other subjects, as well as the total number not recorded/not known

### Answer

Table 1 on attached PDF shows the number of times that handcuffing, limb restraints and unarmed physical tactics were used on members of the public during April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020 by ethnicity.

Unarmed physical tactics include physical restraint, take downs, pressure points, blocks/strikes and other improvised tactics. If more than one type of unarmed physical tactic was used on the same individual, each type of force will be counted in Table 1. For example, if an officer physically restrained and took down an individual, these will both be counted. Likewise, if an individual was handcuffed and had limb restraints applied, both of these uses of force will be recorded below. Therefore the figures in Table 1 are a count of the total number of times restraint techniques were used by officers and are not a count of the number of persons on whom force was used.

Please note:

- (1) Ethnicity may be officer perceived.
- (2) Unarmed Physical Tactics include physical restraint, take downs, pressure points, blocks/strikes and other improvised tactics.
- (3) The figures in Table 1 are not a count of the number of persons on whom force was used, as an officer may have used more than one type of force on the same member of the public. Additionally, force may have been used by more than one officer on the same member of the public.

## **Request 2**

- a. Please provide the total number of Conducted Energy Device (CED, ie TASER) incidents recorded in your force over the past two years (Apr 2018 - Mar 2019 and April 2019 – Mar 2020)
- b. For each year please provide the total number of incidents in which CEDs were discharged, along with the totals for each ethnicity of the subject as perceived and provided by officers in use of force forms - i.e. the total number of white, black, Asian, or other subjects, as well as the total number not recorded/not known
- c. For each year please provide the total number of incidents in which CEDs were not discharged, along with the totals for each category of ethnicity of the subject as perceived and provided by officers in use of force forms - i.e. the total number of white, black, Asian, or other subjects, as well as the total number not recorded/not known

## **Answer**

Table 2 on attached PDF shows the number of times that Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs) were used on members of the public during April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020 by ethnicity.

Please note:

- (1) Ethnicity may be officer perceived.
- (2) Figures include CED drawn, aimed, arced, red-dotted.
- (3) The figures in Table 2 may not be a unique count of the number of persons on whom force was used, as force may be used by more than one officer on the same member of the public.

## **Request 3**

- a. Please provide the total number times irritant spray was used in your force over the past two years (Apr 2018 - Mar 2019 and April 2019 – Mar 2020)
- b. For each year please provide the total number of incidents recorded in which irritant spray was discharged, along with the totals for each ethnicity of the subject as perceived and provided by officers in use of force forms - i.e. the total number of white, black, Asian, or other subjects, as well as the total number not recorded/not known
- c. For each year please provide the total number of incidents in which irritant spray was not discharged, along with the totals for each ethnicity of the subject as perceived and provided by officers in use of force forms - i.e. the total number of white, black, Asian, or other subjects, as well as the total number not recorded/not known

## **Answer**

Table 3 on attached PDF shows the number of times that irritant spray was used on members of the public during April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020 by ethnicity.

Please note:

- (1) Ethnicity may be officer perceived.
- (2) Irritant spray includes CS spray and PAVA spray.
- (3) The figures in Table 3 may not be a unique count of the number of persons on whom force was used, as force may be used by more than one officer on the same member of the public.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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