



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-02117

Keyword: Crime/Incident Statistics Arrests/Detainees/Outcomes

Subject: Domestic Violence

Request and Answer:

Your request for information below has now been considered. 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 does hold the information you have requested however it is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the “appropriate costs limit” under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Request 1

I would like to receive information regarding the number of arrests made in Northern Ireland for a domestic violence related offence from August 23, 2021, to August 23, 2022.

Request 2

I would also like to receive information on how many of these arrests for domestic violence related offences led to a conviction.

Request 3

If possible, could I also receive information for the most prominent forms of domestic violence related offences that led to arrests within this time period.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the “appropriate costs limit” under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 12 of FOIA allows a public authority to refuse to deal with a request where it estimates that it would exceed the appropriate limit to either comply with the request in its entirety or confirm or deny whether the requested information is held. The estimate must be reasonable in the circumstances of the case. The ‘appropriate limit’ is currently £600 for central government and £450 for all other public authorities including PSNI. The relevant Regulations which define the appropriate limit for section 12 purposes are The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004 SI 2004 No 3244. These are known as the ‘Fees Regulations’ for brevity.

Regulation 4(3) of the Fees Regulations states that a public authority can take into account the costs

it reasonably expects to incur in carrying out the following permitted activities in complying with the request:

- (i) determining whether the information is held;
- (ii) locating the information, or a document containing it;
- (iii) retrieving the information, or a document containing it; and
- (iv) extracting the information from a document containing it.

Under those regulations PSNI can calculate the time spent on each of these permitted activities at £25 per hour (thus if the activity(s) takes more than 18 hours PSNI will be in excess of the 'appropriate limit').

The PSNI to answer this request would involve a manual trawl of all daily occurrences for the requested time period August 23, 2021, to August 23, 2022. Manual searches would require a review of each record to ascertain if it contained an arrest and conviction and in addition if this occurrence was linked to Domestic Abuse. As there are many forms of Domestic Abuse, all daily occurrences would be required to be searched to ensure the accuracy of the data requested. Lastly, the data would be required to be reviewed and collated to ascertain which forms of Domestic Abuse were most prevalent. According to published PSNI statistics, there were 33,186 Domestic incidents reported to Police between 01/04/2021 and 31/03/2022, allowing eight minutes per record would equate to more than 4,424 hours, grossly exceeding the legislative cost of 18 hours as set by the Secretary of State.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit, however unfortunately on this occasion PSNI are unable to provide any refinement for this request.

You may wish to visit the PSNI website, where a wide range of statistics covering Domestic Abuse are updated regularly by Stats Branch.

Website link-

[Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crime Recorded in Northern Ireland Monthly Update to 31st March 2022 \(psni.police.uk\)](https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/)
www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/domestic-abuse-statistics/

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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 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.psnipolice.uk

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