



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2021-02267

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Taser Use on Children

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 information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

In each of the last five years, and the current calendar year to date please state the number of occasions that Tasers were used against a person under the age of 18 by an officer of your force.

Answer

Please note that ‘Taser®’ is a proprietary term and a registered trademark belonging to the company Taser International Inc. Therefore for the purposes of this request, PSNI will use the term Conductive Energy Devices in our responses.

Table 1 displays the number of under 18 year olds on whom PSNI officers used a conductive energy device (CED) between 1st January 2016 and 30th September 2021.

Table 1 ⁽¹⁾

Calendar Year						Total
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ⁽²⁾	
19	4	10	11	8	9	61

(1) The figures in Tables 1 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.

(2) Figures for 2021 cover the period 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2021 are provisional and subject to change.

Request 2

Please provide a breakdown of the number of these occasions in each year by whether the taser was:

- a) Discharged against the child.
- b) Not discharged (etc. only drawn or aimed at the person but not discharged) against the child.

Answer

Table 2 displays the number of under 18 year olds on whom PSNI officers used a conductive energy device (CED) between 1st January 2016 and 30th September 2021 by method of use.

Table 2 ⁽¹⁾

Force used	Calendar Year						Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ⁽²⁾	
CED drawn ⁽³⁾	19	3	10	11	8	8	59
CED fired ⁽⁴⁾	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Total	19	4	10	11	8	9	61

(1) The figures in Tables 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.

(2) Figures for 2021 cover the period 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2021, are provisional and subject to change.

(3) Includes drawn, aimed, arced, red-dotted.

(4) Includes drive-stun.

Request 3

Please provide a breakdown of the number occasions in each year by the recorded ethnicity of the child.

Answer

Table 3 displays the number of under 18 year olds on whom PSNI officers used a conductive energy device (CED) between 1st January 2016 and 30th September 2021 by ethnicity.

Table 3 ⁽¹⁾

Ethnicity ⁽³⁾	Calendar Year						Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ⁽²⁾	
White	19	4	10	9	8	7	57
Black African	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Black Other	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	19	4	10	11	8	9	61

(1) The figures in Tables 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.

(2) Figures for 2021 cover the period 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2021, are provisional and subject to change.

(3) Ethnicity may be officer perceived.

Request 4

Please provide a breakdown of the number occasions in each year by the recorded age of the child at the time of the incident.

Answer

Table 4 displays the number of under 18 year olds on whom PSNI officers used a conductive energy device (CED) between 1st January 2016 and 30th September 2021 by age.

Table 4 ⁽¹⁾

Age ⁽³⁾	Calendar Year						Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 ⁽²⁾	
10	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
12	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
13	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
14	1	0	1	1	0	2	5
15	2	0	1	0	0	3	6
16	5	3	0	4	2	1	15
17	11	1	6	3	6	3	30
Total	19	4	10	11	8	9	61

(1) The figures in Tables 4 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.

(2) Figures for 2021 cover the period 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2021, are provisional and subject to change.

(3) Age may be officer perceived.

Request 5

For incidents that occurred in September 2021, please provide a copy of the modus operandi report, or other short form summary report held in your recording system describing what happened.

Answer

There have been no reported uses of conductive energy devices on under 18 year olds by PSNI officers in September 2021⁽¹⁾.

(1) Correct as at 4 November 2021.

Please note: Any use of force by PSNI, including Conductive Energy Devices is rigorously recorded by means of an electronic use of force recording system. The data is collected and analysed for scrutiny and accountability mechanisms. PSNI has a number of key safeguards and oversight mechanisms in place, both internally and externally. This includes oversight of any use of force on children and young people.

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.psnj.police.uk

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