



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-02544

Keyword: Policing Themes, Operations and Investigations Calls for Service

Subject: PSNI Calls and Mental Health Related Incidents

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. We have explained to you below that when PSNI estimates whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if certain conditions are met. In this case those conditions are met and complying with all of your requests would in our estimation exceed that appropriate limit set out in Regulation. We have explained this further below but also we followed the Information Commissioner’s Office guidance *‘Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit’* in relation to this request, which also provides further detail on the application of section 12 (1) of the FOIA. This guidance is available on the ICO website at the following link:

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf

You requested the following information from PSNI:

Could you please provide answers to the questions below for years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and if possible, 2022 so far.

Request 1

- a) How many 999 calls did you take overall, annually??
- b) How many 999 calls annually were identified as being mental ill-health related??

Request 2

- a) How many 101 calls did you take overall, annually???
- b) How many 101 calls were identified as mental ill-health related??

Request 3

- a) How many incidents did you deal with in total, annually???
- b) How many incidents were identified as mental ill-health related??

Request 4

a) Did you have any mental health triage experts (and/or triage vehicles) designated to deal with mental ill-health incidents for any of these years??

b) If yes to 4a, how many times was a mental health triage expert (and/or triage vehicle) deployed out each year?

Answers should include both police responding to someone in a mental ill-health crisis where there is no crime involved, and criminal incidents where someone involved has a mental ill-health problem.

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’).

When a public authority is estimating whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if the conditions laid out in Regulation 5 of the Fees Regulations can be satisfied. Those conditions require the requests to be:

- made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign;
- made for the same or similar information; and
- received by the public authority within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

Regulation 5(2) of the Fees Regulations requires that the requests which are to be aggregated relate “to any extent” to the same or similar information. This is quite a wide test but public authorities should still ensure that the requests meet this requirement.

Enquiries made in relation to your request has identified that retrieval of information would exceed the 18 hour cost limit set under the FOI Act by the Secretary of State.

In relation to Request 4b, the information requested is held electronically, however it is not held in a

format that enables the data to be extracted without manual intervention. The relevant business area has advised, so far for 2022, there have been a total of 14,922 mental health related calls. Each call would have to be manually reviewed in an attempt to retrieve the desired information. Even to allow a minimum of 2 minutes to examine each serial to identify if the Multi-Agency Triage Team (MATT) were tasked would equate to approximately 500 hours, grossly exceeding the 18 hour cost limit. This would be further increased for the remaining years requested,

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, if any part of the request exceeds the cost threshold then the whole request will be excess costs and there is no obligation to answer any part of the request.

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.

Advice and Assistance

Under Section 16 of the FOIA PSNI will always try to assist you to refine your request and provide advice where we can. PSNI have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Unfortunately, as a manual trawl of records would be required for retrieval of any relevant information for Request 4b, it is not possible to offer any refinement.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, we have provided below the information that was retrieved prior to realising that the fees limit would be exceeded. We trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

Response to Requests 1a, 2b and 3a

The information is publically available on the PSNI website. For your convenience I have provided the link below.

[police-service-of-northern-ireland---emergency-and-non-emergency-telephone-call-statistics.docx](https://www.psni.gov.uk/police-service-of-northern-ireland---emergency-and-non-emergency-telephone-call-statistics.docx)
(live.com)

Response to Requests 1b, 2b and 3b

Please see table below.

Mental Health			
Year	999	101	Incidents
2017	5918	12349	21074
2018	7122	11529	20760
2019	7172	9853	19100
2020	7527	8938	18645
2021	9003	10884	22451
2022	7422	7500	17071

Response to Request 4a

PSNI have a Multi-Agency Triage Team (MATT) who work in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service on designated nights. Their role is to identify mental health related calls and attend instead of a Local Policing Team (LPT) crew.

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 Corporate Information Manager, 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, if you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/) (<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>).

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

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