



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-02964

Keyword: Organisational Information Police/Staff Misconduct and Complaints

Subject: Officers investigated for sending grossly offensive messages

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.

I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please can I request the following information:

Please note: in responding to your requests below we have provided answers based on investigations by the PSNI's Professional Standards Department which will not include those investigated by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

Request 1

How many serving officers in your force have been investigated for sending grossly offensive messages contrary to section 127 of the communications act between January 1, 2017, and October 21, 2022? Please break down the figures by calendar year.

Answer

The following number of officers have been investigated for sending offensive messages:

2017 – 1

2018 – 0

2019 – 0

2020 – 4

2021 – 2

2022 – 2

Request 2

If any serving officers have been investigated for sending grossly offensive messages in the manner specified above, how many were on duty at the time the messages were allegedly sent? Please break down the figures by calendar year.

Answer

The following number of officers were on duty:

2017 – 1
2018 – 0
2019 – 0
2020 – 1
2021 – 1
2022 – 0

Request 3

If any serving officers have been investigated for sending grossly offensive messages in the manner specified above, how many were alleged to have sent the grossly offensive messages to serving colleagues? Please break down the figures by calendar year.

Answer

The following number of officers sent messages to colleagues:

2017 – 0
2018 – 0
2019 – 0
2020 – 1
2021 – 0
2022 – 1

Request 4

If any serving officers have been investigated for sending grossly offensive messages in the manner specified above, what was the outcome of the investigations? Please break down the outcomes by calendar year.

If the answers to any of the component parts of my request are not available to be released, I would be grateful if you could still nonetheless provide as much information as possible in accordance with the rest of my request, rather than rejecting it wholesale.

Answer

The outcomes of the investigations was as follows:

2017 – Written warning x 1
2018 – N/A
2019 – N/A
2020 – Dismissed without notice x 1, Written warning x 1, Ongoing x 2
2021 – Resigned x 1, Retired x 1
2022 – Written warning x 1, Ongoing x 1

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 Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, 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 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

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