



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-02511

Keyword: Organisational Information Technology and Equipment

Subject: Digital Tablet Pilot

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 (PSNI) does hold some information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We do not however hold information in relation to request number 1 below.

Request 1

'Data security features have been installed on the digital tablets which have been designed as a cost-effective alternative to paper journals.' This sentence suggests you have assessed the cost of the new tablets compared to the cost of paper journals. Please provide all information held on which you based your assessment.

Answer 1

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 (PSNI) does not hold information in relation to your requests. Enquiries made in relation to your request failed to locate any records or documents relevant to your request based on the information you have provided.

PSNI can advise as of 5 October 2022 no assessment or research has been conducted into the cost of tablets vs notebooks. No assessment was considered for saving on paper as the primary project benefit is data integrity, accountability and data security. The benefits of the original mobile application project were focused on officer time out of station and the ability to instantly access and record police related data.

Accordingly, I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold the information to which you seek access.

Request 2

Please provide all information held relating to the process by which defence lawyers can obtain access to information contained in (i) paper journals and (ii) digital tablets.'

Answer 2

PSNI can advise access to information recorded in Journals/Notebook and electronic devices by defence is governed primarily by Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (CPIA) 1996 which states:

“The prosecutor must, disclose to the accused any prosecution material which has not previously been disclosed to the accused and which might reasonably be considered capable of undermining the case for the prosecution against the accused or of assisting the case for the accused.”

This direction remains the same whether the material is stored on hardcopy or digital systems. Additionally there are also powers held by the Coroner in respect of access to police records and intelligence which requires the Chief Constable provides documents to the Coroner pursuant to his duty under Section 8 of the Coroner’s Act Northern Ireland 1959.

Request 3a

Please provide the number of tablets you have bought.

Answer 3a

A total of zero tablets have been purchased.

Please note; *Officers have been issued with mobile devices and a range of mobile applications since 2009. ‘Notebook’ is just another application within an existing application suite. The ‘Notebook’ application is deployed on mobiles and desktops which are already in possession of officers and are used for a range of tasks.*

Request 3b

The details of the pilot e.g. Time it will last and the number of officers involved.

Answer 3b

The pilot commenced in March 2022 and was completed in September 2022. The head count was approximately 300 officers.

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.psnipolice.uk

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