



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: FOI-2023-01410

Keyword: Crime/Incident Statistics Drugs and Alcohol

Subject: Driving under the influence of alcohol

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 some information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the data for period 1st January 2022 – 28th February 2023.

We further consider the information requested for period 1st March 2023 - 27th April 2023 is exempt by virtue of section 22 of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

Request

The number of motorists caught drink driving / under the influence of alcohol in your force area, broken down by month for 2022 and 2023 to date.

Clarification sought:

Although the data requested is held electronically by PSNI Statistics Branch, it is held collectively for both 'drink and drug driving'. Due to the PSNI recording system, to extract the data specifically for 'drink driving', would require a manual trawl of all records - this process is estimated to exceed the FOI legislative cost of 18 hours.

To assist in the processing of your request, PSNI may be able to provide the data collectively for 'drink and drug driving'. Please confirm if this is acceptable.

Clarification received:

Yes this is acceptable.

Answer

Due to specific group of offences: 'driving when unfit', which applies to either drink, drugs or both categories we are unable to provide statistics for drink driving offences only, without a manual trawl of each of the cases. Therefore figures for both drink and drug driving detections have been provided amalgamated.

Please see below a breakdown of number of Drink and Drug Driving Offences Referred by PSNI for prosecution between 1st January 2022 - 28th February 2023.

	2022	2023
January	217	181
February	204	175
March	240	-
April	225	-
May	261	-
June	245	-
July	294	-
August	305	-
September	277	-
October	271	-
November	236	-
December	262	-
Total	3,037	356

Please note figures are provisional and subject to change.

Partial exemption

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

With reference to the information requested for period 1st March 2023 - 27th April 2023 - the following exemption has been applied:

Section 22 – Information intended for future publication

The full text of exemptions can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website www.ico.org.uk

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it has been decided to refuse access to the information you have requested. Under Section 22(1)(a) of the Act the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is not obliged to disclose information that is held with a view to its publication at some future date.

Although the information requested is held by PSNI, requires a quality assurance and will be published on PSNI website in the next 2 months. Please refer to Police Recorded Crime Statistics section in *Our Publications* on www.psni.police.uk

Section 22 is a qualified exemption, therefore the PSNI is obliged to carry out a Public Interest Test.

Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Release

Disclosure of requested information would demonstrate PSNI's openness and transparency. Will also highlight to the Public scale of drink and drug driving offences in Northern Ireland.

Factors Favouring Retention

The spending of additional funds in order to facilitate this FOI request would not be in the public interest as this information is due to be released in the near future. This also might harm trust in PSNI, as early release of unprocessed figures may undermine the future reports and provide Public

with an incorrect statistics.

Decision

There needs to be a real and valid reason which identifies a tangible benefit to the public from disclosure of information. As the information is intended to be published at a future date, it is reasonable to exempt it as publication is imminent.

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.psni.police.uk

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