



Police Service of Northern Ireland

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: FOI/17646
Category: Incident and Crime Statistics Sexual Offences
Subject: Sexual Offences 2025

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 (PSNI) 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 and this will be further explained below. PSNI have followed the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) 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:

ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/guide-to-managing-an-foi-request/charging-a-fee-and-cost-limits/

Request

Provide the following information for the calendar year 2025, from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

If full-year 2025 data is not yet available, please provide the latest available 2025 data and state the date range covered.

For sexual offences where an individual was charged, summonsed, postal requisitioned, or otherwise proceeded against, please provide:

Question 1

The total number of cases/offences/proceedings recorded.

Question 2

A breakdown by nationality as recorded by the force.

Question 3

A summary breakdown showing:

- a. British national;
- b. foreign national;
- c. unknown / not recorded / refused.

Question 4

Where held, a breakdown by detailed offence type or Home Office offence classification.

Question 5

A short explanation of the counting basis used, for example whether the figures count individuals, arrests, offences, custody records, charges, proceedings, or another category.

Where any nationality has fewer than 5 results, please suppress the exact figure and mark it as "<5".

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 to respond to your request would exceed the FOI legislative cost of 18 hours as set by the Secretary of State. Whilst the information you seek is held electronically by the PSNI, the information is not held in a format that would allow its retrieval without manual intervention. To extract the data you have sought in your request would require a manual search of multiple different PSNI records, hence putting the request grossly over the 18 hour cost limit set out under the FOIA. Approximately this would consist of 1 occurrence at roughly 2 minutes x 3000 records= 6000 hours and is therefore overcost.

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Please note that the Public Prosecution Service, may be best placed to provide figures for summons issued.

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

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, we have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. As a refinement we may be able to provide persons charged on at least one occasion between January and December 2025 with at least one sexual offence; nationality can be provided where 5 or more persons of that nationality have been charged.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me at the e-mail address listed below. When contacting the Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are a member of the media or press, you may wish to direct your enquiry to our News and Media Desk via e-mail CorporateComms-PressOffice@psni.police.uk. Further information on this can be found at the following link <https://www.psni.police.uk/about-us/our-departments/strategic-communications-and-engagement>. Please note that enquiries submitted via this process will be handled separately at the Organisation's discretion, outside of the provisions of the FOIA, and there is no obligation to provide requested information through this route.

If you are dissatisfied with how your request was handled by the PSNI under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), or with the outcome of your request, you can submit a request for an internal review to be undertaken by an independent decision maker. In the event that you require a review, please outline the reason for your dissatisfaction, in writing, by emailing CorporateInfoBranch@psni.police.uk. Alternatively, you can write to: Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE.

Please submit your written request for review within 40 working days of receiving our initial response. Regrettably, and in line with the Information Commission's guidance, requests for review submitted after this timeframe will not be accepted. Further information can be found at the following link: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/freedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations/request-handling-freedom-of-information/>

If, following receipt of the PSNI's internal review response, you remain dissatisfied with how your request has been handled you have the right, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to make a written complaint to the Information Commission via their website: [Make a complaint | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/) (<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>). Alternatively, you can write to: 'Information Commission'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 their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website at the following link: [Freedom of Information | PSNI](#).

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

confidentiality.

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