

# An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saorála Faisnéise  
An Garda Síochána  
Teach áth Luimnigh  
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail  
Baile Sheáin  
An Uaimh  
Contae na Mí  
C15 DR90



Freedom of Information Office  
An Garda Síochána  
Athlumney House  
IDA Business Park  
Johnstown  
Navan  
Co Meath  
C15 DR90

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350

Láithreán Gréasain/Website: [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

Bí linn/Join us  

Ríomh-phoist/Email: [foi@garda.ie](mailto:foi@garda.ie)

Mr Adam Higgins

## Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000019-2017. Part-Grant.

*Dear Mr. Higgins,*

I refer to your request dated and received on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) for records held by An Garda Síochána.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered. Records that relate to the functions and management of the organisation are restricted.

Your request sought:

1. How much money was spent in 2016 on training dogs for the Garda Dog Unit?
2. How many dogs are part of the Garda Dog Unit?
3. What is the breakdown of dogs in garda unit - How many German Sheppards, How many Labradors, how many Springer Spaniels?
4. How "detector dogs" are in the gardai?
5. How many "cadavar dogs" are in the gardai?
6. How much does it cost to train one "detector dogs"?
7. How much does it cost to train one "cadavar dog"?
8. How much is spend on food for the Garda Dogs each week?
9. How much was spent on grooming for the garda dogs in 2016?

I wish to inform you that I have decided to part-grant your request on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision. This explanation has the following parts:

1. An explanation of the relevant findings concerning the records to which access is denied:
2. A statement of how you can appeal this decision should you wish to do so.

Seirbhísí gairmiúla póilíneachta agus slándála a sholáthar le hiontaoibh, muinín agus tacaíocht na ndaoine ar a bhfreastalaimid  
To deliver professional policing and security services with the trust, confidence and support of the people we serve

## 1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision

On receipt of your request, the Finance Directorate was contacted in order to identify the records sought by you.

Parts 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of your request sought information in relation to the cost of training, grooming in the Garda Dog Unit during 2016 and more specifically the cost to train a detector dog and a cadaver dog.

The sections of the FOI Act which can apply to deny access to documents are known as its exemption provisions.

In this regard, I am refusing parts 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of your request under Section 15(1)(a) which states:

- (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where*  
*(a) The record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken*

Following a search in the Finance Directorate, I have been informed that the records in respect of the above do not exist in the format sought as there is no breakdown of expenditure for the Garda Dog Unit. All the costs associated with Dog Unit, including the handlers salary are included in the total expenditure figure of the overall maintenance of the unit. In this regard, I am in a position to provide you with the overall expenditure associated with the maintenance of dogs attached to the unit and this is outlined in the table below. This includes:

- Veterinary
- Animal Feed
- Grooming Services
- Kenneling Fees
- Purchase of Animals
- Salaries of staff attached to Dog Unit.

	<b>Total Expenditure (January – December 2016)</b>
<b>Garda Dog Unit</b>	€852,024

With regard to training, potential Garda dogs are assessed for 3 to 4 weeks and if suitable they start the training programme at the Dog Unit. The General Purpose course on average takes 14 weeks for a novice handler. Specialised dog courses ie explosive detection and drug/firearm take a further 8 weeks to complete. It can take up to 14 weeks to train for cadaver searching. Handlers are trained in general purpose work first and after a period of time can progress on to handle a second specialised dog. After the training is completed the dog and its handler start operational duty immediately, although on-going training is continued on a very regular basis.

Part 2 of your request has sought 'How many dogs are part of the Garda Dog Unit?' I can now advise you that there are currently 20 dogs attached to the Garda Dog Unit.

Part 3 of your request has sought 'What is the breakdown of dogs in garda unit - How many German Sheppards, How many Labradors, how many Springer Spaniels?'

The table on the below outlines the current breakdown of the Garda Dog Unit.

<b>German Shepherds</b>	<b>Labradors</b>	<b>Springer Spaniels</b>
10	7	3

The following are the types of Dogs and their Specialities that may be attached to the Unit at any time:

**General Purpose – German Shepherd.**

As the discipline suggests these dogs are used for a wide variety of policing tasks including general patrols, tracking humans, identifying property and evidence, chase and detain suspects, protection of handler and public order control.

**Drug Detection – Labrador or English Springer Spaniel.**

These dogs are trained to detect the scent of heroin, cocaine, cannabis and other drugs in indoor and outdoor locations.

**Firearm Detection – Labrador or English Springer Spaniel.**

These dogs are trained to indicate the scent of firearms and ammunition.

**Explosive Detection – Labrador or English Springer Spaniel.**

These dogs are trained to indicate the scent of several different types of explosives.

**Victim Recovery/Blood Detection- Labrador or English Springer Spaniel.**

Victim recovery /blood detection dogs specialise in the detection of bodies buried in the ground. Their extraordinary sense of smell enables them to pick up the scent of human decomposition, human blood and bodily fluids.

Parts 4 and 5 of your request sought “ *How many "detector dogs" are in the gardai? and How many "cadavar dogs" are in the gardai?*

There are 10 detection dogs currently attached to the Dog Unit and no cadaver dogs attached at present.

The Garda dogs assist in searches for suspects of crimes / evidence and missing persons. They are also trained to work in serious public order disturbances and more often than not, the mere fact that they are present acts as a sufficient deterrent to any would be aggressors.

Dogs can do what no human or machine can, by virtue of their keen sense of smell. With all of the advancements in science and technology nothing has been found that can match the dog's nose when it comes to searching. Many discoveries of people, drugs and explosives would be impossible without their assistance.

Further information regarding the work and assistance provided by the Garda Dog Unit is available in An Garda Síochána's Annual Report on the Garda Website. The Garda Síochána Annual Report for 2015 is available at the following link.

<http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/Annual%20Report%20English.ie>

## **2. Right of Appeal**

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **FOI-0000019-2017**.

Freedom of Information Office,  
An Garda Síochána,  
Athlumney House,  
IDA Business Park,  
Johnstown,  
Navan,  
Co. Meath.  
C15 DR90.

Please note that a fee applies. This fee has been set at €30 (€10 for a Medical Card holder). Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, postal order or personal cheque, and made payable to Accountant, Garda Finance Directorate, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Payment can be made by electronic means, using the following details:

**Account Name:** Garda Síochána Finance Section Public Bank Account  
**Account Number:** 10026896  
**Sort Code:** 900017  
**IBAN:** IE86B0F190001710026896  
**BIC:** BOFIE2D

**You must ensure that your FOI reference number (FOI-0000019-2017.) is included in the payment details.**


You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

Please be advised that An Garda Síochána replies under Freedom of Information may be released in to the public domain via our website at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie).

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

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact me by telephone at (046) 9036350.

Yours sincerely,

 **SUPERINTENDENT.**  
**HELEN DEELY.**  
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER.**

 **FEBRUARY 2017**