

An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saoráil 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

Ríomh-phoist/Email: foi@garda.ie

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000460-2016 Part-Grant

Dear

I refer to your request, dated and received on the 19th December 2016 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.

Your request sought:

- 1) *The number of Gardai by rank that left that Garda Band in the years 2013,2014,2015 and to-date in 2016*
- 2) *The number of Gardai by rank that joined the Garda Band in the years 2013,2014,2015 and to-date in 2016*
- 3) *The year each boat in the Garda Water Unit came into service, and the year in which each boat within the Garda Water Unit is due to be replaced*
- 4) *The year each aircraft and or helicopter in the Garda Air Support Unit came into service, and the year in which each helicopter and or aircraft is due to be replaced*
- 5) *The number of dogs in the Garda Dog Unit as of 1 January 2016 and 16 December 2016 or nearest date available*
- 6) *The number of horses in the Garda Mounted unit as of 1 January 2016 and 16 December 2016 or nearest date available*

I wish to inform you that I decided to partially grant your request on the 12th January 2017.

The purpose of this letter is to explain that 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.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision

On receipt of your request, a search was conducted in the Human Resources and People Development (HRPD) Section in respect of Parts 1 and 2 of your request and the following records have been identified.

The Garda Band comprises of members of Garda rank and is headed by a Bandmaster who is of Inspector rank.

Part 1 of your request sought '*the number of Gardai by rank that left that Garda Band in the years 2013, 2014, 2015 and to-date in 2016*'. I can now advise you that there has been one (1) departure from the Garda Band during the years 2013 up to and including 22nd December 2016.

Part 2 of your request sought '*the number of Gardai by rank that joined the Garda Band in the years 2013, 2014, 2015 and to-date in 2016*'. As previously advised, members of the Garda Band are of Garda rank. I can advise you that no new members have joined the Garda Band during the years 2013 up to and including 22nd December 2016.

The Garda Band provides music for official Garda functions (such as Graduation Ceremonies at the Garda College). It also undertakes a heavy community-orientated programme each year performing at schools, festivals and sporting events. The Garda band has a long association with Landsdowne Road for Rugby and Soccer Internationals, the St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin and the Rose of Tralee Festival.

The Garda Band has travelled to many international events and has represented the county on a number of occasions at police festivals and concerts in Switzerland, Germany and Northern Ireland.

Part 3 of your request sought:

3) The year each boat in the Garda Water Unit came into service, and the year in which each boat within the Garda Water Unit is due to be replaced

The Garda Water Unit is a National Resource and provides a full dive and marine capability throughout the State. The Unit responds to requests for assistance from within An Garda Síochána and relevant agencies.

The Unit is regularly called in for investigations relating to murders and serious crime, missing persons and evidence recovery. In addition to underwater searches, it is also regularly requested to carry out surface patrols throughout the country and around the Irish coastline. This involves the enforcement of marine legislation and policing of major events taking place on or near the water.

The Garda Water Unit cross-trains with other Garda units such as Air Support Unit, Dog Unit and the Emergency Response Unit. It also carries out operations and exercises with a number of non-Garda agencies such as the Irish Coastguard, the Irish Customs Service, the Irish Naval Service, Dublin Fire Brigade and the Civil Defence.

The Unit presently consists of patrol boats, rigid inflatable boats (RIBS) and inflatable boats. The boats were purchased over a 21 year period:- 1996, 1999, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and in 2013. It is anticipated that a replacement programme for the RIBS will commence later this year. The boats and equipment currently allocated to the unit are reviewed annually and upgrades / replacement recommended when required.

Part 4 of your request sought:

4) The year each aircraft and or helicopter in the Garda Air Support Unit came into service, and the year in which each helicopter and or aircraft is due to be replaced

The Garda Air Support Unit was established in 1997 and provides a 24 hour proactive and reactive service in support of operational Gardaí on the ground and specialist units. Garda aircraft may be deployed to incidents involving, immediate threat to life, of a criminal, terrorist or

other nationally important nature , an immediate threat of serious public disorder, evidence gathering, photographic tasks and traffic management/monitoring.

The current aircraft fleet was purchased in the years 1997, 2003 and 2007.

The condition of all aircraft attached to the Unit is assessed on an ongoing basis. The year any replacement would be purchased is dependent on the serviceability of the current fleet and is not yet decided.

Parts 5 and 6 of your request sought:

5) The number of dogs in the Garda Dog Unit as of 1 January 2016 and 16 December 2016 or nearest date available

6) The number of horses in the Garda Mounted unit as of 1 January 2016 and 16 December 2016 or nearest date available

I am refusing to provide the number of dogs in the Garda Dog Unit and the number of horses in the Garda Mounted Unit as of 1st January 2016 under Section 15(1)(i) which states:

A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where –

(i) The request relates to records already released, either to the same or a previous requester where –

(i) The records are available to the requester concerned

Information in relation to the number of dogs attached to the Dog Unit and horses in the Mounted Unit as of 31st December 2015 was provided to a previous requester on 6th May 2016 and are available on the FOI Decision Log on the Garda website. You may obtain this information by following the attached link:

www.garda.ie/Documents/User/FOI-000137-2016%20Decision.pdf

However, I can advise you that the Operational Support Services section who has responsibility for the Garda Mounted and Dog Units have provided information in respect of the numbers attached to each of the units as of 16th December 2016 and this is herewith outlined in the table below:

	16th December 2016
Garda Mounted Unit	13
Garda Dog Unit	20

The Garda Dog Unit

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.

The following types of Dogs and their Specialities are attached to the Unit:

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.

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.

The Garda Mounted Unit

The Unit is deployed in the following areas;

- Crime Prevention and Crime Detection Patrols – Day to day mounted patrols are invaluable in the prevention and detection of crime. Mounted Gardai can monitor a wider area during their patrols given their height advantage. Mounted Gardai also assist other operational Gardai.
- Community Policing – The unit are regularly in attendance at community projects and school visits and talks.
- Searches for Missing Persons – The Garda Mounted Unit have the advantage during searches of accessing terrain that can be unsuitable or inaccessible to Gardai on foot or in vehicles.
- Crowd control and public order patrols at major events – The Garda Mounted Unit are an invaluable resource at events that attract a large crowd. Such events include Croke Park matches and concert days and League of Ireland soccer matches. The Garda Mounted Unit can be deployed to assist at public order situations.
- Ceremonial Duty – The Garda Mounted unit undertake many ceremonial duties, such as the St. Patricks day Parade, and other events where dignitaries are in attendance, including the Royal visit of HRH Queen Elizabeth.

2. Right of Appeal

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **F01-000460-2016**.

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 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.

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

13th January 2017