

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

Bí linn/Join us  

Láithreán Gréasain/Website: www.garda.ie

Ríomh-phoist/Email: foi@garda.ie

Mr Darren Hassett

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000058-2017.

Dear Mr. Hassett,

I refer to your request, dated and received on the 17th February 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.

Your request sought:

I'm requesting details of all veterinary expenses relating to the operating of the Garda Mounted and Dog units from January 1, 2012 to date.

And, where possible:

Information on the number of animals that make up the Garda Mounted and Dog units and reasons for their use

A breakdown of expenses per unit according to animal feed, veterinary expenses, grooming services, kennelling fees and purchasing of animals

I wish to inform you that I have decided to part-grant your request on the 1st March 2017.

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision.

Details of your request were forwarded to the Finance Directorate within An Garda Síochána who conducted a search of their records. I understand you spoke with a

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member of staff in this office who clarified the last part of your request and advised that a breakdown of the expenses per unit according to animal feed, veterinary expenses, grooming services, kennelling fees and purchasing of animals was unavailable.

I advise that I am refusing to release the details of all veterinary expenses relating to the operating of the Garda Mounted and Dog Units from 1 January 2012 to 31st December 2015 pursuant to section 15(1)(i)(i) which states:

15. (1) 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 requestor concerned*

I advise that this information was subject of a previous Freedom of Information request (FOI-00091-2016). An Garda Síochána publishes all decisions made on requests for non-personal information, including the full decision letter, on its website. The relevant decision and released records are available at the following link: <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=16975&Lang=1>

However, I am in a position to provide you with the expenditure associated with the maintenance of animals for 2016 and for January 2017 as set out in Table A below:

	2016	January 2017
Garda Dog Unit	€52,713	€3,360
Garda Mounted Unit	€103,442	€6,240

As advised by a member of staff from this office, the table above outlines the expenditure associated with the maintenance of animals which includes:

- Veterinary.
- Animal Feed.
- Grooming Services.
- Kennelling Fees.
- Purchase of Animals.

The Garda Mounted and Garda Dog Units have a national remit and fall under the direction and control of Assistant Commissioner, Roads Policing and Major Event/Emergency Planning.

The Garda Mounted Unit currently comprises of thirteen (13) horses and is based at Áras an Uachtaráin, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

The main functions of the Garda Mounted Unit include:

- Crime Prevention and detection patrols – supporting mainstream policing.
- Searches for missing persons over rough terrain that is inaccessible to vehicles.
- Community policing including school and community project visits.
- Major event policing e.g. matches, concerts and festivals.
- Public order and crowd control.

The most important characteristics of a police horse are its temperament and its physical attributes. Police horses work in busy environments and they need to be brave and able to handle confrontational situations without becoming distressed. The Unit concentrates on

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Irish-bred horses as these tend to have the most suitable qualities. Horses are initially introduced on a 6 week trial and if suitable they are then trained to become police horses. This process involves slowly introducing them to the various hazards and problems they may encounter whilst on patrol or crowd duty.

The Garda Dog Unit is based at Kilmainham Garda Station, Dublin and also in Cork and Limerick. There are currently twenty (20) dogs attached to the Unit comprising of general purpose (GP), drugs, firearms and explosives detection dogs.

The main focus of the unit is responding to requests for assistance with various searches, however, all handlers perform routine patrols and respond to incidents either witnessed or received from Command & Control. The Unit plays an important role in supporting and assisting Operational Units and National Specialists Units in the prevention and detection of crime. The Dog Unit responds to requests ranging from public order issues to specialised searches.

Garda general purpose dogs assist in searches for suspects of crimes and for evidence which may have been discarded. The dogs are also trained to work in support of handlers at major public order disturbances, crowd segregation, and general foot patrol duties. GP dogs are also utilised in searches for missing persons. Specialist search dogs are trained to locate controlled drugs, firearms, and explosive substances.

Further information regarding the work and assistance provided by the Garda Mounted Unit and 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 of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **F01-000058-2017**.

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

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IBAN: IE86B0F190001710026896
BIC: BOFIE2D

You must ensure 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.

3RD MARCH 2017