

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 DR 90

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350

Láithreán Gréasain/Website: www.garda.ie

Bí linn/Join us  

Ríomh-phoist:/Email: foi@garda.ie

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000103-2015 Request Part Grant

Dear

I refer to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and your submission to An Garda Síochána, dated and received on the 28th October 2015 and further to my correspondence to you dated 24th November 2015.

Your request sought:

I wish to receive data in relation to PR firms and consultants hired by An Garda Síochána under the Freedom of Information Act.

- 1) Please provide me with all details of all external PR firms and consultants that have been hired by An Garda Síochána since 2012.*
- 2) This should include a list of each firm, when their service was employed, how long they were engaged with An Garda Síochána for, and how much money has been given to them to date. This should include a breakdown of the number of payments made to them and copies of all invoices received from them.*
- 3) I would also like to be supplied with the copies of tenders submitted by all firms and consultants.*
- 4) I would also like to be supplied with details of how many staff there has been on the internal public relations/communications team since 2012. I would like to be supplied with information for how long each member spent with the force, if they are still working there, when they were hired and their salary range."*

I wish to inform you that your request has been **part granted**.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision

Part 1 of Schedule 1(n) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 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.

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

(1)&(2) There was no expenditure identified in the period outlined in relation to PR Firms and Consultants. An Garda Síochána completed one tender in respect of media training for Officers and Senior Managers in An Garda Síochána. For your ease of reference please see www.etenders.gov.ie Reference Number T.003/2015 – System ID 95429. Following the tender evaluation, the Communications Clinic was the most economically advantageous tender and was awarded the contract. The tender result was published on etenders on 6th October 2015. The contract expires on the 30th September 2016 and no payments have been made to date under this contract.

(3) Further to this, you have requested copies of tenders submitted by all firms and consultants. After reviewing the tender submissions, I wish to advise you that I am refusing your request under 36(1)(b) as follows:

“Commercially sensitive information

36. (1) Subject to subsection (2), a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains—

(b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation, or

In arriving at this decision, I have applied both a public interest and harm tests to your request, which I have outlined below.

Public Interest Test – Commercial Sensitivity

I have considered the public interest issues which arise in this case and have taken account of the following factors in favour of release of the submissions for tender:

- There is serious interest by the community in this matter which is not just curiosity.
- There is an interest in ensuring that An Garda Síochána is accountable to the public for the decisions that they make.
- Maximum openness, transparency, accountability and value for money in the use of public funds.

In considering the public interest factors which favour withholding the records I have taken account of the following:

- That the companies concerned not be unduly impeded in the effective pursuit of their business.

- There is a public interest in An Garda Síochána being able to make informed decisions in the course of carrying out its functions and in being able to maintain the confidentiality of their deliberative process in purchasing services.
- To ensure that An Garda Síochána gain the best advantage from procurement competitions ensuring best value for money for public funds.
- Protecting the vital interests of the business community.

Having balanced these factors, I consider that the public interest in preserving and protecting the commercial sensitivity of the information involved outweighs the public interest that would be served were the records to be released to you. Taking this into consideration, I also wish to advise that I am unable to release the names of the companies who responded to An Garda Síochána's request for tender. This information could reasonably be expected to impair or prejudice the ability of the companies to successfully tender for future business. Inferences could be drawn from the fact that these companies were unsuccessful in previous tender applications for An Garda Síochána. This is due to the unique position An Garda Síochána holds in society.

(4) The Garda Press Office is the main point of contact for media seeking information about Garda operations, criminal investigations, missing person appeals, fatal road traffic collisions and a wide range of other information concerning the Garda Síochána organisation. Other functions of the office personnel include attendance at major emergencies/incidents, organising and setting up press conferences, facilitating interviews, and liaison with film makers/documentary makers.

The Garda Press Office handles a large volume of calls and e-mails from 7am to 11pm seven days a week. These opening hours means a rota is necessary. Staffed by Garda members and civilian staff, it provides a professional service to the media.

The Press Office also operates An Garda Síochána's social media channels. An Garda Síochána is highly active on social media.

The attached Table shows the number of personnel assigned to the Garda Press and Public Relations Office for years 2012 to 2015 (2nd December). The Table shows when a person was assigned to the office by month and year and when they vacated their position in the office. It can be seen from the Table that as positions become vacant another person of the same rank or role was assigned. For example there have been four Superintendents assigned the Garda Press office since 2012. As each Superintendent vacated his/her position another Superintendent was assigned thus keeping the continuation of the personnel structure within that section. The position of Corporate Communications Superintendent was a new position created in 2015 therefore there is no previous Superintendent in this position prior to 2015.

The movement of staff within the Garda Press Office can be attributed to promotions, transfers, retirements and resignations.

Both the Garda and Civilian Pay Scales are available on the Garda Website at the following URL: <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=10127&Lang=1>

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 **FOI-000103-2015**.

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: IE86BOFI90001710026896
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,

7th January 2015

<i>Role in PRO</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015 *</i>	<i>Years Service in An Garda Síochána</i>	<i>Assigned to PRO</i>	<i>Current Status in PRO</i>
Director of Communications							
Director of Communications(1)	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since March-13			2	Oct-08	Not assigned to PRO since March-13
Director of Communications(2)		Assigned to PRO Oct-13	In situ	In situ	2	Oct-13	In situ
Press Office Superintendent							
Superintendent(1)	Not assigned to PRO since July-12				30	Oct-08	Not assigned to PRO since July-12
Superintendent(2)	Assigned to PRO July-12	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since June-14		32	Jul-12	Not assigned to PRO since June 14
Superintendent(3)			Assigned to PRO June-14	Not assigned to PRO since May-15 (Retired)	31	Jun-14	Not assigned to PRO since May-15
Superintendent(4)				Assigned to PRO Jul-15	24	Jul-15	In situ
Corporate Communications Superintendent							
Superintendent(1)				Assigned to PRO March-15	35	Aug-08	In situ
Press Office Inspector							
Inspector(1)	In situ	In situ	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since March-15	35		Unfilled
Higher Executive Officers							
Higher Executive Officer(1)	In situ				4	Nov-08	Not assigned to PRO since Nov-12
Higher Executive Officer(2)	In situ since Nov-12	In situ	In situ	In situ	3	Nov-12	In situ
Sergeants							
Sergeant(1)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	31	Dec-00	In situ
Sergeant(2)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	23	Jul-07	In situ
Sergeant(3)		Assigned to PRO Jun-13	In situ	In situ	21	Jun-13	In situ
Sergeant(4)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	20	May-08	In situ
Sergeant(5)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	18	Apr-09	In situ

Sergeant(6)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	24	Apr-09	In situ
Sergeant(7)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	30	May-08	In situ
Clerical Officers							
Clerical Officer(1)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	32	Sep-07	In situ
Clerical Officer(2)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	8	Sep-08	In situ
Clerical Officer(3)	In situ	In situ	In situ	In situ	13	Sep-08	In situ
Clerical Officer(4)	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since Aug 2013				Mar-09	Not assigned to PRO since Aug 2013
Clerical Officer(5)		Assigned to PRO Aug 2013	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since Jun 2015	5	Aug-13	Not assigned to PRO since Jun 2015
Clerical Officer(6)		Assigned to PRO Dec 2013	In situ	Not assigned to PRO since May 2015	8	Dec-13	Not assigned to PRO since May 2015

* Figures provided are operational and liable to change and are correct as of 2nd December 2015