



Department of
Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Männystrie O tha Laa
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REFERENCE: FOI\24\37

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST - INDEPENDENT MEDICAL REFEREES 2024

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information received by the Department of Justice on the 26 March 2024, detailed below: -

Request

Please could you supply me with the following information you hold:

1. When and how did you advertise the latest role of Independent Medical Referee's in relation to the Police Pension Schemes?
2. When did your previous contract expire with the last set of Independent Medical Referee's in relation to the Police Pension Schemes?
3. How many Doctors applied and how many were shortlisted/interviewed. What dates did this take place between?
4. When did you appoint the successful candidates and what training, or guidance have you given them?
5. When did they start their assessments of applicants?
6. What are their names and qualifications?

7. How many appointments will they undertake per week/month?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access when you write to us asking for information. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption.

Freedom of Information is request for recorded data that the Department of Justice holds, consequentially some of your queries do not fall under the FOI Act. To be helpful, some of the answers are answered under Line of Business.

This response addresses your questions:

1. When and how did you advertise the latest role of Independent Medical Referee's in relation to the Police Pension Schemes?

This is answered under Line of Business

All public procurements comply with NI Public Procurement Policy (NIPPP) and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

This is a niche work area with a significant lack of resources and competitive market.

A supplier was appointed via an authorised Direct Award Contract under the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

2. When did your previous contract expire with the last set of Independent Medical Referee's in relation to the Police Pension Schemes?

This is answered under Line of Business

The previous contract for Independent Medical Referee (IMR) services expired in early 2023.

3. How many Doctors applied and how many were shortlisted/interviewed What dates did this take place between?

This information is not held by the Department.

4. When did you appoint the successful candidates and what training, or guidance have you given them?

We do not hold this information, under line of business I can confirm that the Department appointed a supplier mid-February 2024 to provide these services.

The supplier's doctor was provided with induction and awareness training by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Department on the 28/02/2024.

5. When did they start their assessments of applicants?

This is answered under line of business

The supplier services commenced work on 04/03/2024.

6. What are their names and qualifications?

I have not included the supplier names or the IMR names and qualifications as they cannot be released for security reasons. In Northern Ireland the Department of Justice do not publish details of successful tenderers due to the threat level in Northern Ireland against contractors delivering services to the Authority. Therefore, this information has been withheld under s38 (Health and Safety) of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.

S38 (Health & Safety) public interest test

Section 38 (Health and safety) is a qualified exemption therefore we are required to consider whether the public interest in withholding information outweighs the public interest in releasing it. Please find the results of the public interest test below;

In favour of release:

The DOJ accepts that there is a public interest in placing as much information as possible in the public domain which will allow for debate and improve transparency and accountability. The public have a general interest in information that increases its knowledge and understanding of how Government works.

In favour of non-disclosure:

Given the sensitive nature of some of the work carried out by the DOJ, some individual or corporate suppliers might be, or might be likely to be, exposed to increased risk of targeting or attack should their involvement with the DOJ be made public. The risk of attack or targeting could vary depending on where the supplier is based, the nature of their business and the security situation at any given time. There is obviously a strong public interest in avoiding risks to individual and corporate suppliers, and those individuals associated with suppliers either as directly as employees or indirectly as members of employee's families.

Conclusion:

We have concluded that the public interest in withholding the names of suppliers falls within the criteria described above for s38 outweighs the public interest in release.

7. How many appointments will they undertake per week/month?

This information is not held.

Under line of business Injury on Duty appeals are based on individual medical circumstances, it is not possible to say how many appointments will be conducted on any given day or in a week or month.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review, please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review, you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DOJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Records & Information Manager