



Department of
Justice
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Máinnystrie O tha Laa
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Department of Justice
Records & Information Team
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10th November 2021

REFERENCE: FOI\21\52

Dear Sir

Thank you for your request for information dated 11th October 2021 and detailed below:

Dear FOI team,

Under Freedom of Information legislation can the State Pathologist's Office for NI please provide me with a breakdown of how many times it has recorded injuries/damage to a patient's body after death (e.g. fractures/broken bones/lacerations), when this body has been sent to pathologist's department from one of Northern Ireland's hospital. Please consider this request as asking for unusual or unplanned injury to a body after death e.g. those that are not related to the normal processes of a post-mortem examination or autopsy.

Please provide the following information for the last ten calendar years (January 2011 to December 2021). If you cannot provide this time period because of cost and time exemptions, please provide this information for the most recent five calendar years or the longest time period possible to comply with cost and time exemptions.

Please provide the information in a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet or table with the following column headings for each incident:

- *Year injury recorded*
- *Hospital location body came from*
- *Short description of type of injury/break/fracture/laceration*
- *Short description of how injury is believed to have occurred*



Please provide as much information above that you hold as possible to comply with cost and time exemptions and at the very least please provide the number of instances of such post mortem injuries to a body.

I am not asking for any details on the month, age or gender of patient to avoid any data protection issues.

On the 10th October 2021, you provided clarification that you were seeking information relating to (i) injuries to a patient which occurred after death but before the body arrived at the State Pathology Department (i.e. an injury caused by the hospital or transportation after death) and (ii) injuries that could have been sustained after the body arrived at the State Pathology Department.

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.

The Department has considered your request in line with these obligations and can advise as follows:

In relation to question 1 of your request, the Department does not hold any records relating to injuries sustained after death but before the body arrived at the State Pathologist's Department (i.e. an injury caused by the hospital or transportation after death).

In relation to question 2, there were two incidents relating to injuries that could have been sustained after the body arrived at the State Pathologist's Department within the period 1st January 2011 to 31st October 2021 and the details of these incidents are provided in the attached spreadsheet.

For further information, it should be noted that a total of 17,659 bodies were cared for in the Northern Ireland Regional Forensic Mortuary during the time period of 1st January 2011 to 31st October 2021.



If you are unhappy at the way in which your request has been handled 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

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner can be found at:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

DoJ Records & Information Manager

