



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Please note the text of this request has been reproduced exactly as received.

**FOI Reference number: FOI 61/2024**

**Date:** 12 December 2024

**Request:**

**Please provide details of the average waiting times for a SMP appointment pre COVID in 2019, during COVID and post COVID for each year to present day.**

**Answer:**

The Freedom of Information Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority. Having conducted a search of our records it has been established that the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the **Board**) does hold this information however, it would require us to access each file in turn to determine (a) when a claim was made and (b) the date of Selected Medical Practitioner (**SMP**) appointment, which would fall outside the financial limit (Appropriate limit) of this request.

As such Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) applies. The appropriate limit has been specified in the Regulations and for the Board it is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours in determining whether the Board holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

If you narrow the scope of your request to new claims received in a week, for example, one week commencing 06 May 2019 pre-Covid and one week commencing 04 May 2020 during Covid and one week commencing 03 May 2021 post-Covid, the Board may be able to provide the information required because it would cost less than the appropriate limit to do so.

**Request:**

**Please provide details of correspondence from NIPB to PSNI regarding the reason for delays in the IHR process post COVID.**

**Answer:**

In 2021 correspondence was issued from the Board to PSNI regarding revised arrangements at Waterside Tower following amendments to the Covid-19 Regulations.

In 2023 further correspondence was issued from the Board to PSNI regarding the Board's relocation to James House.

In 2023 any correspondence received by the Board, including from PSNI, was acknowledged explaining that due to the 'McCloud project', all resources within Police Pensions and Injury Benefits Directorate (**PPIB**) were focusing on managing and completing the reassessment project as quickly as possible.

**Request:**

**The reason for the current delays in obtaining a SMP appointment and the length of time it takes for the IHR process to complete.**

**Answer:**

As per our answer to question 2, in 2023 a temporary pause was placed on all medical assessments due to the physical move to James House which required all resources within Police Pensions and Injury Benefits (**PPIB**) Directorate to be diverted to pack, sort and unpack all hard copy files. Furthermore, business as usual medical assessments continued to be paused for a period of time after this to facilitate the completion of the McCloud Reassessment project by the legislative timeframe, whereby over 300 Former Officers were eligible for reassessment. No additional resources were provided to undertake either project.

Following completion of the first phase of the McCloud project, PPIB resumed business as usual medical assessments on Wednesday 23 August 2023 for serving officers, as standard.

If you have queries about this request or the decision please contact the Board quoting the reference number above. If you are unhappy with the service you have received and wish to make a complaint or request a review you should contact the Board's Chief Executive -

Via Email: [foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk](mailto:foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk)

Or in writing at the following address:

Northern Ireland Policing Board  
James House  
Block D  
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue  
The Gasworks  
Belfast  
BT7 2JA

You should contact the Board within 40 working days of this response.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally, the Information Commissioner's Office cannot investigate or make a decision on a case unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Board. You should make complaints to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at the following web link –

[www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints)

or in writing at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
SK9 5AF

Telephone: - 0303 1231114

Email: - [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

Please be advised that Policing Board replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk).

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.