

FOI DOF/2024-0084

Request

Under a FOI request I would like to know the following:

1. How many staff have NIPS recruited between April 2012 to the present day
2. How many applications for these posts were submitted
3. From April 2012 how many NIPS staff members have been dismissed on discipline grounds

Can all of these please be broken down by year.

Clarification received 21 February 2024

to confirm that is uniformed personnel

DoF Response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information requested.

Department of Finance (DoF) NICS HR was set up in April 2017. Before this, a Northern Ireland Prison Service Department of Justice (NIPS DoJ) HR Team handled NIPS recruitment covering the period 2012 to April 2017.

For information prior to April 2017, you may wish to contact the NIPS FOI Team at: NIPS.FOI@justice-ni.gov.uk

Question 1.

Financial Year	Number of Staff Recruited
1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	138
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	115
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	121
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	92
1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	41
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	131
1 April 2023 to 29 February 2024	137
Total	775

Question 2.

Some information you have requested is held by the department but is exempt under Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 21 applies to

information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and the department is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

This information is included in the 'Recruitment to the NICS Annual Report'. Reports from 2017 – 2022 can be found [here](#).

Please note that Section 22 of the FOI Act (Intended for future publication) has been applied to the 2023 report. It is envisaged that this data will be available in the first quarter of the 2024/25 Financial Year.

By applying Section 22 Exemption of the FOI Act, we are required to carry out a Public Interest Test. This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).

Question 3.

The department holds the information requested; however, portions are being withheld as they are exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act due to the low number individuals involved. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018). The information requested also falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – Annex C), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

Where the numbers are less than five, the exact figure cannot be provided as it may identify specific individuals.

Financial Year	Number of Staff Dismissed on Discipline Grounds
1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018	≤5
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	≤5
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	≤5
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	≤5
1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	≤5
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	≤5
1 April 2023 to 29 February 2024	≤5
Total	13