



Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 000246-18

I write in connection with your request for information received by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 17 January 2018 in which you sought access to the following information:

1. *"Please could I find out if your force breeds (or users breeders) to provide police dogs?"*
2. *If you do not use either of the above methods, please can you explain where you get your supply of new police dogs from.*
3. *Please can you tell me how many new police dogs have been trained for each year for the past five years, as in the number for 2013 through to 2017?*
4. *What is the average age (or age range) of a new dog undergoing training to become a police dog. i.e is it a puppy?*
5. *Can you please briefly explain what training entails and how long it lasts for?*
6. *Please can you tell me how many of the dogs referenced in question four above failed their training?*
7. *Please can you tell me how many police dogs that start their training fail?*
8. *Please can you tell me what happens to these dogs.*
9. *How many dogs undergoing police training to become new police dogs have been euthanised for each year between 2013 to 2017. What was the reason and how old was each dog?"*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 17 January 2018

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request for information and our response is below.

1. The Constabularies do not use specific breeders nor do we have a breeding programme.
2. Our police dogs are sourced from varying places.

Recently we have used West Midlands Police force who do have a breeding programme and have also sourced dogs from South Yorkshire Police. We have also taken on gift dogs where the owner has offered them to us for various reasons.

The Constabularies look for dogs as and when we are looking to conduct an initial course, either for novice handlers recently recruited onto the section, or for experienced handlers whose dogs will retire.

3. This information is not available per year, however over the last five years; we have trained in the region of 10 General purpose police dogs.
4. When we are looking for a dog to join the section, the ideal age range is between 12 months and 20 months. Although we have recently purchased a puppy for a handler, this is not common practise due to the time consuming nature of training a puppy. The puppy in question will be starting an initial course at the end of February 2018.
5. Training consists of teaching the dogs various skills, including tracking, which covers following a disturbance along the ground. This is started slowly and leads up to long tracks that will have been laid some time prior to the dog tracking. We cover building searches looking for individuals and property searching, looking for any items that may have been discarded. Compound and wood searches are also covered.

Bite work is covered in the syllabus as well as rigorous safety checks. Bite work covers a straight chase where the dog will chase and detain, a stand-off where the dog will chase but when the person stops, the dog will bark but not bite. Also covered is a recall where the dog is sent after a person but the handler recalls the dog as it is no longer considered safe to continue. There are many elements of an initial General Police dog course but these points are the basics that we will work to.

The training for a General purpose police dog initial course with a novice dog lasts for a period of 13 weeks.

6. Whilst ten dogs have completed the training to become licenced police dogs, in the region of 5 dogs have not made the grade.
7. As per the above question, in the region of five dogs have not made the pass requirement over the past five years in Norfolk and Suffolk.
8. In the first instance, these dogs are offered back to the previous owner for first refusal. Some owners are happy to take the dogs back so long as we deem that there is a fit place for the dog to go. Failing that, the dog will be offered for rehoming. We are regularly approached by people offering to re home dogs and again, after checks have been carried out such as a home visit, working hours and general welfare of the dog in that environment, we will then offer the dog as a pet.
9. None. Euthanasia would only occur in the most extreme of cases but this has not occurred.

Further information concerning the Constabularies police dogs can be found on our websites:

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/about-us/our-organisation/our-departments/specialist-operations>

<https://www.norfolk.police.uk/dog-section>

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Clair Pack, FOI Decision Maker, quoting the reference number shown above.

A full copy of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) can be viewed on the 'Office of Public Sector Information' web-site;

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are not responsible for the content, or the reliability, of the website referenced. The Constabulary cannot guarantee that this link will work all of the time, and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

Your Right to Request a Review of Decisions Made Under the Terms of the
Freedom of Information Act (2000).

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled, or if you think the decision is incorrect, you have the right to ask the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 20 days of the date of its response to your Freedom of Information request. Requests for a review should be made in writing and addressed to:

*Freedom of Information Decision Maker
Information Management Department
Suffolk Constabulary
Police Headquarters
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3QS
OR
Email: information@suffolk.pnn.police.uk*

In all possible circumstances Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary will aim to respond to your request for us to look at our decision again within 20 working days of receipt of your request for an internal review.

The Information Commissioner.

After lodging a request for a review with Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk or contact them at the address shown below:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700