



# SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

**REQUEST NUMBER:** FOI Request 002170-17

**REQUEST DETAILS:**

*"I would like to know from the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, answers to the following questions (please provide a breakdown by calendar month where possible, and any personal data collected, such as age, ethnicity, sex, etc.):*

- 1) What was the total amount/number of times that police from your force/constabulary were called/requested to handle or deal with squatters in residential and non-residential properties - including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 2) Once the call/request was made, what was the total amount/number of times that the police from your force/constabulary physically went to the residential or non-residential property in question to handle or deal with the squatters - including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 3) What was the total amount/number of people that were arrested for squatting in residential and non-residential properties – including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 4) What was the total amount/number of people that received cautions for squatting in residential and non-residential properties – including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 5) What was the total amount/number of people that were charged for squatting in residential and non-residential properties, and of these how many held remand for court, and bailed to court – including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 6) What was the total amount/number of people that were released without 'charge/no further action taken' for squatting arrest in residential and non-residential properties – including separate figures for both types of property?*
- 7) What was the total amount/number of 'Crime Related Incidents (CRI)' recorded involving squatting in residential and non-residential properties? CRI related to incidents such as police assisting bailiffs to remove squatters, criminal damage, burglary, theft, drugs, anti-social behaviour etc. Please provide dates and details where possible."*

**RESPONSE:**

Suffolk Constabulary has considered your request for information and our response is below.



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*This response is correct as of 30 January 2017*

In relation to your request for information and in accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), this response serves as a formal notification of refusal for your request. Suffolk Constabulary does not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, the information you require in a retrievable format.

It is estimated that to attempt to retrieve all of the information you require would take a considerable amount of retrieval time, which would exceed 18 hours. This would exceed the appropriate limit for dealing with Freedom of Information requests, in terms of costs and therefore Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies.

In order to establish the total number of calls officers have attended relating specifically to squatters, the Constabulary would instead be required to undertake a freetext of all calls that contain the word 'squat' and review each incident to establish relevancy. Additional research would also be required to extract the grade of the call. There are 110 calls that contain the work squat, although this will not include any misspellings / other wording used.

Home office code 125/86 – squatting offences, is not recorded on the Constabularies crime system. Taking into account the arrest code, information concerning squatting would be recorded under 'RFA other – PNC' recordable. There were 322 arrests under this code and each would need to be reviewed to establish relevancy.

The Constabulary considers that the above searches, at 3 minutes per entry, would take over 35 hours.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that a Public Authority is not obliged to: "...comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit." The Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations, defines the 'appropriate limit' for the Suffolk Constabulary as £450 and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work at a standard rate of £25 per hour.

In accordance with Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter serves as a refusal notice for this part of your request.

By requesting *all* information your request is too broad to be complied with within the £450 limit imposed on Freedom of Information requests.

Although excess cost removes the Force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right



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to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

There were a total of 4 investigations located that contained the word 'squat' for which no further action was taken on any offence.