

Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000305-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 21 January 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

“For the years 2013- ‘14, 2014 - ‘15, 2015 - ‘16, 2017 - ‘18 and 2018 - 14.12.18, please provide the number incidents of animal thefts recorded by your force in each year, broken down by the species or type of animal stolen.

Please provide a copy of free text report for each incident recorded.

For your information, multiple forces FOI teams have so far responded using a helpful format detailing the category of animal - ie "livestock" or "poultry" or "bird of prey", details of the specific breed and details of the crime incident.”

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 6 February 2019

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

A search has been completed of the Constabulary’s crime system for all theft offences recorded where the item stolen was recorded as an animal.

The total number of animal thefts is provided in the table below, by animal type and year.

Animal Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Bird	1					3	4
Cat		1	3	1	9	6	20
Cockatiel				1			1
Dog	9	3	7	8	5	10	42
Fish	9	10	3		9	2	33
Goat			1	1			2
Guinea Pig	1	1					2
Horse	3	1			2		6
Pig	7	7	1				15
Puppies						1	1

Puppy	1		2		2		5
Rabbit	1	5	5	3	1	4	19
Sheep	4	6	2	2	3	1	18
Total	36	34	24	16	31	27	168

A summary of each offence is provided within the attached spreadsheet, the investigation text has been redacted as the majority contains investigative information and persona data.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that Suffolk Constabulary, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) is to provide you the applicant with a notice ban which:

- (a) States that fact
- (b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- (c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption(s) applies.

The information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption(s);

Section 40(2) – Personal Information

Section 30(1) – Investigations

Section 40 is an absolute; class based exemption.

Section 40 pertains to third party personal data. This would not be released under the FOIA unless there is a strong public interest. This is because any release would breach the Principles contained within Article 5(1) of the GDPR and Part 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

One of the main differences between the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act is that any information released under FOI is released into the public domain, not just to the individual requesting the information. As such, any release that identifies an individual through releasing their personal data, even third party personal data, is exempted unless there is a strong public interest in its release. The public interest is not what interests the public but what benefits the community as a whole.

Personal data is defined under the Data Protection Act as data that is biographical in nature, has the applicant as its focus and/or affects the data subject's privacy in his or her personal, professional or business life.

Principle a of Article 5(1) states that information must be processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner. In this case the individuals would have a reasonable expectation that



information would not be processed if it resulted in their identification, or equally led to an individual being wrongfully identified as a consequence.

FOIA disclosures are to the world at large and will remain in the public domain indefinitely. Therefore, provision of this information would exceed the original Policing requirement for the processing of the information and would not be lawful or fair to the individuals in question.

It is for these reasons outlined above; that I feel the principle a) would be breached by this disclosure and the Section 40 exemption remains in place. I am not obliged to consider any further principle in my arguments.

This is an absolute, class-based exemption and, as such, there is no requirement to consider the public interest test.

Section 30 is a qualified class-based exemption and I am therefore obliged to consider the public interest test.

Public Interest Test - Section 30 - Investigations

(When applying a qualified exemption a public authority is required to consider whether 'in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information')

Favouring Disclosure

Investigations are expensive and use the resources provided from public funds. To disclose information about such cases would show to the public how we spend their money.

Such information would provide the general public with an understanding that we take such matters seriously and we ensure all offences are investigated thoroughly.

Favouring Non-Disclosure

Information that relates to an investigation will rarely be disclosed under the FOI Act. By doing so we could risk prejudicing this and future like investigations by providing vital information that could provide a tactical advantage over the Constabulary.

Where suspects, witnesses or the victim provides information through the course of the investigation, it is done so in the strictest of confidence for the purpose of which it was required. Provision of information that may identify an individual to the general public would breach that confidentiality, impeding any future assistance that individual can provide.



We are law enforcers and we aim to provide a sufficient and positive approach to the way we conduct our investigations, we would not want a disclosure of this nature to compromise this in any way.

Balancing Test

There is always a public interest in the provision of information that will identify where funds are being spent and that the Constabulary is effectively investigating offences.

However, there is a strong public interest in preserving the integrity of investigations and ensuring that individuals have confidence in approaching the Constabulary with any concerns they may have.

Having weighed up the factors favouring disclosure and those favouring non-disclosure, I have decided that the balance lies with non-disclosure.

Police forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide crime statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the crime data. It should be noted that for these reasons this force's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other response you may receive.

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/>

Suffolk Constabulary is 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 Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Suffolk Constabulary to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Suffolk Constabulary under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 40 working 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 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 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