

Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000530-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 5 February 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

“Could you please provide a response to each question for the years (inclusive January – December) 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018:

- 1. How many reports of sexual offences were recorded by your police force?*
- 2. How many of these reports led to an individual being charged with a sexual offence?*
- 3. How many reports of sexual offences linked to online dating websites and applications were recorded by your police force?*
- 4. How many of these reports (linked to online dating) led to an individual being charged with a sexual offence?*
- 5. How many reports of rape (or assault by penetration) were recorded by your police force?*
- 6. How many of these reports led to an individual being charged with rape?*
- 7. How many reports of rape (or assault by penetration) linked to online dating websites and applications were recorded by your police force?*
- 8. How many of these reports (linked to online dating) led to an individual being charged with rape?*

If available, for the following questions please provide responses about reports of sexual offences linked to online dating websites and applications only for the years (inclusive January – December) 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018:

- 9. How many victims were aged: 10-14, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89.*
- 10. How many of the reports were male to female offences?*
- 11. How many of the reports were male to male offences?*
- 12. How many of the reports were female to male offences?*
- 13. How many of the reports were female to female offences?*
- 14. In how many of the reports had the victim and the offender had their first initial contact online within a week/seven days of the alleged offence?*
- 15. In how many of the reports had sexual communication formed part of the online contact/conversations?*
- 16. In how many of the reports did the offence take place in the victim’s home?*
- 17. In how many of the reports did the offence take place in the alleged offender’s home?*
- 18. In how many of the reports was the app Tinder used in the first form of communication?*
- 19. In how many of the reports was the app Grindr used in the first form of communication?*
- 20. In how many of the reports was the app Bumble used in the first form of communication?*



21. *In how many of the reports was the website Match used in the first form of communication?*
22. *How many of the reports mentioned other non-specified dating apps or websites?*

If available, for the following questions please provide responses about reports of rape (or assault by penetration) linked to online dating websites and applications only for the years (inclusive of January – December) 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018:

23. *How many victims were aged: 10-14, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89.*
24. *How many of the reports were male to female offences?*
25. *How many of the reports were male to male offences?*
26. *How many of the reports were female to male offences?*
27. *How many of the reports were female to female offences?*
28. *In how many of the reports had the victim and the offender had their first initial contact online within a week/seven days of the alleged offence?*
29. *In how many of the reports had sexual communication formed part of the online contact/conversations?*
30. *In how many of the reports did the offence take place in the victim's home?*
31. *In how many of the reports did the offence take place in the alleged offender's home?*
32. *In how many of the reports was the app Tinder used in the first form of communication?*
33. *In how many of the reports was the app Grindr used in the first form of communication?*
34. *In how many of the reports was the app Bumble used in the first form of communication?*
35. *In how many of the reports was the website Match used in the first form of communication?*
36. *How many of the reports mentioned other non-specified dating apps or websites?"*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 19 February 2019

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

The Constabulary does not have a marker for offences that are linked to online dating sites. We can research those offences that contain relevant keywords, however this would potentially return offences that are not relevant and would most certainly exclude relevant offences that did not contain the specific keyword. To provide information concerning the level of detail requested with any degree of accuracy would require us to manually review all sexual offences recorded to extract those that specifically relate to an online dating website.

Considering there are over 2000 sexual offences recorded in any one year, the Constabulary anticipates it would take in excess of 100 hours based on a reserved average search of 4 minutes per offence.



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. The Constabularies do not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, all of 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, exceeding 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.

It is considered that to provide an answer to your request will take in excess of 36 hours to provide the information.

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 Constabularies as £450 and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work per force at a standard rate of £25 per hour. This equates to 36 hours of work, or £900, for joint responses.

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

The total number of sexual offences recorded by Suffolk Constabulary is as follows:

Year	Sexual Offences
2014	1175
2015	1635
2016	1529
2017	2051
2018	2310



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