



5<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## **Freedom of Information Request Reference N<sup>o</sup>: FOI 000601/19**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

Which companies are your external forensic science providers and what are your service level agreements with them in terms of turnaround times for rape cases, DNA profiling cases and footwear mark cases?

With regards to your service level agreement with your external forensic science provider/s, what percentage of rape cases are not meeting your service level of agreement in terms of turnaround time in 2017 and 2018? Please provide separate figures for 2017 and 2018.

With regards to your service level agreement with your external forensic science provider/s, what percentage of DNA profiling cases are not meeting your service level of agreement in terms of turnaround time in 2017 and 2018? Please provide separate figures for 2017 and 2018.

With regards to your service level agreement with your external forensic science provider/s, what percentage of footwear mark cases are not meeting your service level of agreement in terms of turnaround time in 2017 and 2018? Please provide separate figures for 2017 and 2018.

## **Response to your Request**

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request and our response is below:-

When responding to a request for information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, a public authority is not obliged to provide information if the authority estimates that the cost of the retrieval of the information requested would be in excess of £450 (equivalent to 18 hours work).

The costs criteria relates to a request in its entirety, which means that if we cannot retrieve *all* of the information requested within the costs limit, we are not obliged to retrieve *any* of the information requested.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies estimate that to retrieve all the information you have requested would exceed cost in excess of £450 per force.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies submit over 3,000 cases to external providers each year. The turnaround times are based upon products and not case types. It is estimated that it would take approximately 10 minutes per case to retrieve the information you have requested and identify the case types.

Based on the number of submissions, this would significantly exceed the appropriate limit for dealing with a Freedom of Information request, in terms of cost, and therefore Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act applies.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 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 2004, defines the ‘appropriate limit’ for the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies as £450 each, and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work at a standard rate of £25 per hour.

In accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), this serves as a Refusal Notice for your request.

### Advice and Assistance

Although excess cost removes Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relevant to your request, which was 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.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies’ Forensic Service providers are:

- Eurofins Forensic Services
- Key Forensic Services
- Cellmark
- SOCOTEC

All critical dates set by the Constabularies or courts have been met in both years by all providers and this is the key measure.

Turnaround times are based upon products, not case types.

This response will be published on the Constabularies web-site under the Freedom of Information pages:-

<https://www.norfolk.police.uk/about-us/our-data/disclosure-log>

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/freedom-information/disclosure-logs>

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Amanda Gibson, 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 40 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  
Norfolk Constabulary  
Operations and Communications Centre  
Jubilee House  
Falconers Chase  
Wymondham  
Norfolk NR18 0WW  
OR  
Email: [freedomofinformation@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@norfolk.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](http://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