



29th April 2019

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 001256/19

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 1st April 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

Please could you supply the following information in relation to armed officers?

By armed officers, I refer to all officers authorised to use firearms, including operationally deployed armed officers and those training others in the use of firearms.

- 1 How many armed police officers did you have on 31 March 2014 (or nearest available date)?
- 2 Of those referred to in question 1, how many were female?
- 3 How many armed police officers did you have on 31 March 2019 (or nearest available date)?
- 4 Of those referred to in question 3, how many were female?

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 2nd April 2019.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have located the following information as relevant to your request.

- Q1 The number of Authorised Firearms Officers as at 31st March 2014, in Norfolk and Suffolk, has been published by the Home Office. These can be accessed via the link provided below, table 3:-

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442879/polic-e-use-of-firearms-2014-tabs.ods

Under Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), public authorities are not required to provide information that is reasonably accessible to the public by other means; therefore in accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), this serves as a Refusal Notice for this part of your request.

- Q2 Of those, 3 Norfolk Officers and 1 Suffolk Officer was female.
- Q3 Verified figures as at 31st March 2019 will be published by the Home Office, therefore the exemption at section 22 has been engaged.
- Q4 As at 31st March 2019, 9 Norfolk Officers and 3 Suffolk Officers are female.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies, 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 22(1) – Information intended for future publication**

Section 22 is a qualified, class-based exemption and I am therefore required to produce a Public Interest Test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure

The information requested is of significant public interest.

Provision of the information would ensure that the public are in possession of the most up to date information and this would assist with ensuring accurate public debate regarding firearms officers in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

The FOIA legally allows members of the public to request any information held by a Public Authority. In order to supply this information, resources are allocated to locate and retrieve it. The Section 21 and 22 exemptions were specifically laid down by parliament to benefit those authorities that proactively publish information. To have to provide information that is currently being considered for publication will render these exemptions less effective and remove the benefits of the proactive publication.

There is a process in place to ensure that information is regularly published. To insist on publication at this stage would require additional resources at this time to complete this piece of work.

Balance Test

It is noted that public awareness and debate are key to the Freedom of Information Act, making Authorities more accountable and providing up to date relevant information, improving knowledge and public understanding of the Force.

However, it has been confirmed that this information will be published within the near future, this is believed to be in July 2019. Application of the exemption at this time will allow this information to be collated and produced for publication, in line with usual processes. It would not be in the best interest of the public to expedite this process if to do so would impact on resources.

Therefore the exemption at section 22 is engaged.

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*

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