

Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 001264-19

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

- 1) *“How many missing persons incidents have been reported to the force in the last three years? For this and all questions in point 2, please break down the figures by financial year: 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and the following age ranges: 0-17, 18-35, 36+”*
- 2) *Out of those:*
 - i. *How many have been solved? Please give a further breakdown of the number with those found dead or alive.*
 - ii. *How many still remain open or active? Please give a further breakdown of the number with gender, ages and dates (month/year) of when they were first reported missing.*
 - iii. *How many of all the missing person cases were highlighted as being at risk of:*
 - a. *Child sexual exploitation*
 - b. *Abuse*
 - c. *Trafficking*
 - d. *Mental health concerns*
 - iv. *How many of all the missing person cases resulted in murder investigations?*

As stated previously, please break down figures for all the above questions by financial year: 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and the following age ranges: 0-17, 18-35, 36+

- 3) *Which are the five longest running unsolved missing persons inquiries on record? Please provide the following details for each one: names, ages and dates of when they were first reported missing.*
- 4) *Which are the five longest running closed missing persons cases on record? Please provide the following details for each one: names, ages and dates of when they were first reported missing, date of when the case closed, whether the person was found dead or alive or if no body was recovered.”*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 8 April 2019

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



The Constabulary is unable to provide information concerning the specific details of missing person investigations. The data is contained within the COMPACT database; however the Constabulary is unable to break the data down further as the system does not have the search functionality to break data down. The Constabulary would be required to manually review all missing persons' entries to extract the relevant data requested to answer the request in its entirety.

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.

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

A search has been completed of the Constabulary's missing persons database, COMPACT, for all missing persons reports recorded for the 2016/17 – 2018/19 financial year.

Year	Age (years)		
	0-17	18-35	36+
2016/17	2,605	608	503

2017/18	2,834	681	559
2018/19	2,849	593	562

Of those missing person reports referred above, the number of found reports is provided below, including whether the individual was found alive or deceased:

Year	Found Reports					
	0-17		18-35		36+	
	Alive	Deceased	Alive	Deceased	Alive	Deceased
2016/17	2,597	0	606	4	502	10
2017/18	2,824	0	679	4	558	6
2018/19	2,833	0	596	6	557	5

Information concerning the number of cases that remain active is not available by month or by the details of the missing person. The table provided below confirms the number of active cases that are considered long term missing i.e. those persons who were reported missing prior to the current reporting year and who were still missing on the last day of the reporting year.

Year	Missing Children	Missing Adults
2016/17	120	171
2017/18	122	174
2018/19	122	178

The Constabulary has located one missing person enquiry, which subsequently became a homicide. This relates to the murder of Peter and Sylvia Stuart, reported missing from their home and has resulted in a conviction for both murders. Both missing persons were aged 36+ years.

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