



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 002643-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies on 22 July 2019 which you sought access to the following information:

1. *“How many crimes were committed in your police jurisdiction involving firearms/ shotguns in 2017-2018 & 2018/2019? This includes numbers arrested, charged and/ or criminally prosecuted.*
2. *What was the status of the weapons involved (i.e. licenced, unlicensed or unknown)?*
3. *How many fresh applications for firearm/ shotgun licences were made in 2017-2018 & 2018/2019? How many were refused?*
4. *How many applications for renewals for pre-existing firearm/shotgun licences were made in the year 2017-2018 & 2018-2019? How many were refused?*
5. *How many revocations of firearm/ shotgun licences were made by the police force in 2017-2018 & 2018-2019? How many were successfully appealed by the applicant?*
6. *How many firearms/ shotguns were seized by police in 2017-2018 & 2018-2019? How many of these were subsequently returned to their owners? How many of these were destroyed?*
7. *Any local policies or guidance regarding systems for firearm and shotgun control and monitoring.”*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 30 July 2019

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies have considered your request for information and the response is below.

Information regarding offences involving firearms/shotguns is extracted from the crime system using the method of keywords, as to use just the offence categories would only identify possession offences that specifically mention firearms, and would exclude offences such as violent offences and criminal damage etc.

This method is not available for arrest data and consequently, we can only extract information for arrests where there is a custody record attached to the associated crime report. This may therefore mean some arrests aren't included as a result of them not being linked properly to their investigations.

The Constabularies are also unable to confirm the status of the weapon without reviewing each offence manually and this would also require an element of interpretation as the information may not be recorded in the format requested.

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.

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 information provided in the table below confirms the total number of arrests and investigations recorded by Constabulary and includes the total number of investigations recorded, the total number of investigations that led to an arrest, the total number of persons arrested and the number that subsequently resulted in a charge. Please note that there are other available positive outcomes and some investigations will be under investigation.

As above, the arrest data has been based on the number of investigations linked to a custody record, there may have been occasions where an arrest was made but it was not linked to a subsequent investigation report.

	Norfolk		Suffolk	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
Total Investigations	61	68	49	46
Total Arrests (resulting from investigations)	35	42	29	29
Total persons arrested	53	52	40	40
Total Charged	11	12	6	10

Information concerning applications and revocations can be found via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/firearm-certificates-in-england-and-wales>

The number of firearms that were seized is provided below including the number returned to their owners and the numbers destroyed, noting that some firearms will be held by the Constabulary, pending an outcome.

		2017/18			2018/19		
		Seized	Returned	destroyed	Seized	Returned	destroyed
Norfolk	Shotguns	175	172	3	208	184	3
	Firearms	38	37	1	88	68	0
Suffolk	Shotguns	220	160	4	316	208	9
	Firearms	55	49	3	58	38	1

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/>

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 20 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 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary will aim to respond to your request for us to look at our decision again within 40 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