



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003475-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 26 September 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

“Total number of Suffolk Police Officers and Staff assaulted whilst on duty - please give information for the last 5 years.

Total number of NHS worker assaults reported to Suffolk Police for the same period.

Total number of Prison Service Staff assaults reported to Suffolk Police for the same period.”

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 7 October 2019

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

Since April 2017, there have been offence codes relating to assaults on Police Officers which have resulted in either an injury or no injury. Additionally, from November 2018 the Assaults on Emergency Workers Act was introduced. Prior to this time there was only an offence category for assaults on officers with no injury, or assaults on emergency workers. However, if an assault had occurred, this would have been recorded under the specific offence category. Whilst there is a field on crime reports for the victim occupation, this is not a mandatory field and many are not completed.

To identify whether any of these reports relate to an assault on a Police Officer, police staff, NHS worker or prison staff, it would be necessary to case read the details of each one. This equates to over 1000 records per year to review and would take well in excess of 18 hours.

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.

The table provided below confirms the total number of assaults on emergency workers from November 2018. Each offence was then manually reviewed to establish the number that relates to NHS or Custody staff.

Assault or assault by beating of an emergency worker (except a constable)	2018	2019
Custody	5	25
NHS	3	51
Grand Total	8	76

The table provided below confirms the total number of assault on police offences recorded. Please note that we have included the offences from 2014 onwards that relates to assaults on police, but noting that the offence data will not be complete until April 2017.

*2019 Data 1 January – 31 August

Offence category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Assault or assault by beating of a constable					25	189
Assault on police	261	188				
Assault Police - Assault with Injury - Assault occasioning actual bodily harm				54	77	43
Assault Police - Assault with Injury - Malicious wounding: wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm (Minor wound or equivalent)				13	10	6
Assault Police - Assault with Intent to cause Serious Harm - Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm					1	



Assault Police – Cause GBH with intent to resist/prevent arrest.				1	1	
Assault Police - Wounding with intent to resist/prevent arrest				2	3	2
Assault without Injury on a Constable - Assaults a designated person or his assistant in the exercise of a relevant power		1	2	2	1	
Assault without Injury on a Constable - Assaults a member of a joint investigation team carrying out his functions as a member of that team					1	
Assault without Injury on a Constable - Vagrant violently resisting a constable				1	1	
Assault without injury on a constable (NOT covered by the Police Act 1996)			2	1		
Assault without injury on a constable (Police Act offence)		91	264	279	306	71
Grand Total	261	280	268	353	426	

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.



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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